

King John abbreviated

Act 5, Scene 4

Courtesy

Situation: King John learns that the Dauphin's reinforcements "are wracked three nights ago on Goodwin Sands. The French fight coldly and retire themselves." A seriously wounded Melun, a Frenchman with English bloodlines, tells Salisbury, Pembroke and Bigot that the Dauphin "means to recompense the pains you take by cutting off your heads."

MELUN: Lead me to the rebels of England here.

SALISBURY: When we were happy, we had other names.

PEMBROKE: It is the Count Melun.

SALISBURY: Wounded to death.

MELUN: Fly, noble English; you are betrayed. Seek out King John and fall before his feet, for if the French be lords of this loud day, the Dauphin means to recompense the pains you take by cutting off your heads.

SALISBURY: May this be true?

Melun to Salisbury

I hold what's left of life as if it were
A statue of wax losing his figure
'Gainst the fire. What would make me now deceive
Since I must lose the profit of deceit?
Why should I be false since I must soon leave
Here for heaven since I cannot defeat
Death; to live in the hereafter by truth?
If Louis wins the day, I say in sooth,
He hath sworn those eyes of yours shall never
Again behold the break of day. I yield,
For my grandsire was an Englishman. Sir,
Bear me from the din of the battlefield
Where I may part this shell where less doth stir
And quietly contemplate my future.

SALISBURY: My arm shall give thee help to bear thee hence, for I do see the cruel pangs of death right in thine eye. Away, my friends! New flight, and happy newness, that maintains old right.