

Playstage
Junior

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MAGNIFICENT MAGNA CARTA!



A light hearted but informative romp through some important history

Written by
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MAGNIFICENT MAGNA CARTA

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

REPORTER

KING JOHN

QUEEN

PEMBROKE (Earl of)

SALISBURY (Earl of)

WOMAN 1

WOMAN 2

WOMAN 3

MAN 1

MAN 2

MAN 3

ALARIC THE MONK

ROBIN HOOD

2 MONKS (non-speaking)

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

BISHOP OF LONDON

EARL OF ARUNDEL

CONSTABLE OF SCOTLAND

17 speaking parts. 2 non-speaking. More could be added in the form of extra ordinary people or barons.

RUNNING TIME APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES.

PLEASE NOTE : THERE IS NO MUSIC IN THIS PLAY.

MAGNIFICENT MAGNA CARTA

The scene is the Throne Room of the Palace (SEE PRODUCTION NOTES). Two “thrones” are in the centre of the stage. KING JOHN is counting out lots of coins from a box. The QUEEN is sitting next to him, eating bread and honey and playing with lots of jewels in another box. Enter a REPORTER, carrying a microphone. He speaks to the audience.

REPORTER

All is not well in the Kingdom of England. The *level* of complaints about life in general has reached enormous proportions. It seems that the complete absence of law and order is beginning to stir the people up into something close to revolution. So, we decided to investigate just how bad the system is. We intend to interview as many people from all levels of society, so that we can build an accurate picture of what exactly is happening and that is why I am here, in King John's palace. We shall start at the top and work our way downwards. The King, of course, is in his counting house, counting out his money, whilst the Queen is eating bread and honey.

(The REPORTER approaches KING JOHN and bows).

Your Majesties. Thank you for granting me an audience.

KING JOHN

Drat! You've made me lose my place! Now I can't remember whether I've got fifty thousand pounds or fifty five thousand pounds.

REPORTER

Apologies Your Majesty. Either way it sounds as though you have quite a lot of money.

KING JOHN

Oh no. There's never enough money. My brother, Richard the Lionheart, spent a fortune on endless wars, I need to keep fighting wars to try and get my lands back in France which were...ahem...unfortunately lost, and the Queen here spends a fortune on jewellery.

QUEEN

Yes. I like jewellery. It's a good investment. But I'm afraid I've got honey over everything. They will have to be cleaned.

REPORTER

Well, be careful you don't lose your Crown Jewels in the wash, Your Majesties. *(He winks at the audience)* Geddit?

(KING JOHN and the QUEEN look at him blankly)

REPORTER

Oh, well, never mind. King John, can I just ask you why England seems such an unhappy place at the moment? The people seem to be very dissatisfied.

KING JOHN

Oh, they're always whingeing! It's the weather! It makes them all miserable.

REPORTER

No, with all due respect, Your Majesty, it seems to be more than the weather. Word on the street is that there seems to be a complete lack of justice in the country.

KING JOHN

Oh that! People are always moaning about who owns what bit of land, and how many taxes they have to pay. I haven't got time for it all! Stupid petty problems! I have local officials to deal with all that. You know, sheriffs and the like.

REPORTER

I see. So you are not personally concerned with day to day matters like the price of bread?

QUEEN

Let them eat cake, that's what I say.

KING JOHN *(to QUEEN)*

Didn't someone else say that once?

REPORTER

Not yet - but they will.

QUEEN

Whatever.

KING JOHN

No, as I say, I haven't got time for all these peasant problems. I'm much too busy. Besides, I don't even speak their language. I speak French and my subjects speak...er...I'm not quite sure...

REPORTER

English, Your Majesty?

KING JOHN

That's it!

REPORTER

May I ask what occupies your time, Your Majesty?

KING JOHN

Well, you know - counting money, hunting, fighting wars, eating - king stuff.

REPORTER

Well, Your Majesty, don't you think that maybe you should be making new laws and dispensing justice, that sort of thing?

KING JOHN

No. The present system seems to work. I don't believe in meddling.

REPORTER

But does it work, Your Majesty? We have been hearing all sorts of tales of corruption and a general lack of justice.

KING JOHN

Poppycock! People will moan about anything! The system works, I tell you!

QUEEN

And if the King says it works, then it works.

KING JOHN

Anyway, time for lunch, my dear. Can't sit around all day answering silly questions.

(KING JOHN and QUEEN get up. REPORTER bows)

REPORTER

Thank you for your time, Your Majesty.

KING JOHN

Don't mention it. Good luck with your, whatever it is.

(KING JOHN and QUEEN exit. Two monks come on and remove the thrones.)

REPORTER *(to audience)*

So, there we have it. A King who neither knows nor cares about the state of his country. A sorry state of affairs. It is time for us to speak to some of the English people and view things from their perspective. So, now we have come to Runnymede, near the castle and forest of Windsor, to get a different perspective on things.