

A King, and No King

by

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Persons Represented in the Play

ARBACES, King of Iberia.

TIGRANES, King of Armenia.

GOBRIAS, Lord Protector, and Father of Arbaces.

BACURIUS, another Lord.

MARDONIUS, BESSUS, Two Captains

LIGONES, Father of Spaconia.

Two Gentlemen.

Three Men and a Woman.

PHILIP, a servant, and two Citizens Wives.

A Messenger.

A Servant to Bacurius.

Two Sword-men.

A Boy.

ARANE, The Queen-Mother.

PANTHEA, Her Daughter.

SPACONIA, A Lady Daughter of Ligones

MANDANE, A waiting woman, and other attendants.

Act I

Enter Mardonius and Bessus, Two Captains.

Mar.

Bessus, the King has made a fair hand on't, he has ended the Wars at a blow, would my sword had a close basket hilt to hold Wine, and the blade would make knives, for we shall have nothing but eating and drinking.

Bes.

We that are Commanders shall do well enough.

Mar.

Faith Bessus, such Commanders as thou may; I had as lieve set thee Perdue for a pudding i'th' dark, as Alexander the Great.

Bes.

I love these jests exceedingly.

Mar.

I think thou lov'st 'em better than quarrelling Bessus, I'll say so much i'thy behalf, and yet thou 'rt valiant enough upon a retreat, I think thou wouldst kill any man that stopt thee if thou couldst.

Bes.

But was not this a brave Combate Mardonius?

Mar.

Why, didst thou see't?

Bes.

You stood wi'me.

Mar.

I did so, but me thought thou wink'dst every blow they strook.

Bes.

Well, I believe there are better souldiers than I, that never saw two Princes fight in lists.

Mar.

By my troth I think so too Bessus, many a thousand, but certainly all that are worse than thou have seen as much.

Bes.

'Twas bravely done of our King.

Mar.

Yes, if he had not ended the wars: I'me glad thou dar'st talk of such dangerous businesses.

Bes.

To take a Prince prisoner in the heart of's own Country in single combat.

Mar.

See how thy blood curdles at this, I think thou couldst be contented to be beaten i'this passion.

Bes.

Shall I tell you truly?

Mar.

I.

Bes.

I could willingly venture for't.

Mar.

Um, no venture neither Bessus.

Bes.

Let me not live, if I do not think 'tis a braver piece of service than that I'me so fam'd for.

Mar.

Why, art thou fam'd for any valour?

Bes.

Fam'd! I, I warrant you.

Mar.

I'me e'en heartily glad on't, I have been with thee e're since thou cam'st to th'wars, and this is the first word that ever I heard on't, prethee who fames thee.

Bes.

The Christian world.

Mar.

'Tis heathenishly done of'em in my conscience, thou deserv'st it not.

Bes.

Yes, I ha' don good service.

Mar.

I do not know how thou mayst wait of a man in's Chamber, or thy agility of shifting of a Trencher, but otherwise no service good Bessus.

Bes.

You saw me do the service your self.

Mar.

Not so hasty sweet Bessus, where was it, is the place vanish'd?

Bes.

At Bessus desp'rate redemption.

Mar.

At Bessus desp'rate redemption, where's that?

Bes.

There where I redeem'd the day, the place bears my name.

Mar.

Pray thee, who Christened it?

Bes.

The Souldiers.

Mar.

If I were not a very merrily dispos'd man, what would become of thee? one that had but a grain of choler in the whole composition of his body, would send thee of an errand to the worms for putting thy name upon that field: did not I beat thee there i'th' head o'th' Troops with a Trunchion, because thou wouldst needs run away with thy company, when we should charge the enemy?

Bes.

True, but I did not run.

Mar.

Right Bessus, I beat thee out on't.

Bes.

But came I not up when the day was gone, and redeem'd all?

Mar.

Thou knowest, and so do I, thou meantst to flie, and thy fear making thee mistake, thou ranst upon the enemy, and a hot charge thou gav'st, as I'll do thee right, thou art furious in running away, and I think, we owe thy fear for our victory; If I were the King, and were sure thou wouldst mistake alwaies and run away upon th' enemy, thou shouldst be General by this light.

Bes.

You'll never leave this till I fall foul.

Mar.

No more such words dear Bessus, for though I have ever known thee a coward, and therefore durst never strike thee, yet if thou proceedest, I will allow thee valiant, and beat thee.

Bes.

Come, our King's a brave fellow.

Mar.

He is so Bessus, I wonder how thou cam'st to know it. But if thou wer't a man of understanding, I would tell thee, he is vain-glorious, and humble, and angry, and patient, and merry and dull, and joyful and sorrowful in extremity in an hour: Do not think me thy friend for this, for if I ear'd who knew it, thou shouldst not hear it Bessus. Here he is with his prey in his foot.

Enter &c. Senet Flourish.

Enter Arbaces and Tigranes, Two Kings and two Gentlemen.

Arb.

Thy sadness brave Tigranes takes away
From my full victory, am I become
Of so small fame, that any man should grieve
When I o'ecome him? They that plac'd me here,
Intended it an honour large enough, (though he
For the most valiant living, but to dare oppose me single,
Lost the day. What should afflict you, you are as free as I,
To be my prisoner, is to be more free
Than you were formerly, and never think

The man I held worthy to combat me
Shall be us'd servilely: Thy ransom is
To take my only Sister to thy Wife.
A heavy one Tigranes, for she is
A Lady, that the neighbour Princes send
Blanks to fetch home. I have been too unkind
To her Tigranes, she but nine years old
I left her, and ne're saw her since, your wars
Have held me long and taught me though a youth,
The way to victory, she was a pretty child,
Then I was little better, but now fame
Cries loudly on her, and my messengers
Make me believe she is a miracle;
She'll make you shrink, as I did, with a stroak
But of her eye Tigranes.

Tigr.

Is't the course of Iberia to use their prisoners thus?
Had fortune thrown my name above Arbace,
I should not thus have talk'd Sir, in Armenia
We hold it base, you should have kept your temper
Till you saw home again, where 'tis the fashion
Perhaps to brag.

Arb.

Be you my witness earth, need I to brag,
Doth not this captive Prince speak
Me sufficiently, and all the acts
That I have wrought upon his suffering Land;
Should I then boast! where lies that foot of ground
Within his whole Realm, that I have not past,
Fighting and conquering; Far then from me
Be ostentation. I could tell the world
How I have laid his Kingdom desolate
By this sole Arm prop't by divinity,
Stript him out of his glories, and have sent
The pride of all his youth to people graves,
And made his Virgins languish for their Loves,
If I would brag, should I that have the power
To teach the Neighbour world humility,
Mix with vain-glory?

Mar.

Indeed this is none.

Arb.

Tigranes, Nay did I but take delight
To stretch my deeds as others do, on words,
I could amaze my hearers.

Mar.

So you do.

Arb.

But he shall wrong his and my modesty,
That thinks me apt to boast after any act
Fit for a good man to do upon his foe.

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