

SCENE TWO: *The Journey Home*

NARRATOR 1: Hubert travelled on horseback through the fields and woods and across the Vale of Blackmore to the town. The errand took a little while to complete and it was getting dark when they finally set off for home.

JERRY and HUBERT enter. They mime travelling cautiously and nervously.

NARRATOR 4: The journey home was much spookier in the dark. The Vale of Blackmore was a large, lonely place, full of winding paths and crooked lanes. In those days, too, a great part of it was thickly wooded. Naturally, Hubert and Jerry were very nervous about travelling there late at night.

HUBERT: *(To NARRATOR 4)* Not VERY nervous.

NARRATOR 4: All right, quite nervous. Is that better?

JERRY: *(Nodding his head)* Much.

HUBERT and JERRY continue travelling nervously around the stage. HUBERT sings a carol, such as 'Away in a Manger' or something similar.

NARRATOR 5: It must have been about 9 o'clock when, riding along through this spooky place and singing a carol to cheer himself up, Hubert thought he heard a noise among the bushes.

The ROBBERS enter. They are whispering to each other and hide from HUBERT. ROBBER 1 hides in a different place from ROBBERS 2 and 3. As they enter, HUBERT pauses briefly, causing JERRY to stop moving. He listens for a moment and then continues moving slowly and cautiously.

NARRATOR 5: He then remembered that this very spot was well known for robbers and highwaymen. He tried to make himself feel better about this.

HUBERT: What do I care?

NARRATOR 5: He said out loud.

HUBERT: Jerry is a fast horse and will outrun any robbers who dare to take a chance with me!

NARRATOR 1: Hubert was to regret that remark as suddenly, at that very moment, he realized with horror that he was not alone.

The ROBBERS are all still hiding.

ROBBER 3: What have we here? A traveller all alone and far from home.

ROBBER 2: And so late at night, too. He must be very brave.
(Pause) Or stupid.

ROBBER 1: Fast is he? Outrun any robbers can he? Ha! Ha! We'll see about that!

NARRATOR 1: And then, with tremendous speed, two men darted from the bushes on his left-hand side and another man from behind the trees on his right.

The ROBBERS all emerge quickly from their hiding places. The actions are then mimed according to the narrative.

NARRATOR 2: Hubert was pulled from his horse, and although he tried to fight them off they overpowered him. His arms were tied behind him, his legs bound together and he was thrown into a ditch. The robbers, wearing masks to hide their identities, left the area quickly, taking Jerry the horse with them.

The ROBBERS all exit, leading JERRY away.

JERRY: *(As he is being led away)* Master! Master! Help, help!

HUBERT reacts according to the following narrative.

NARRATOR 5: As soon as Hubert recovered from his ordeal he was able, with a bit of struggling, to free himself from the ropes which bound his legs. Fortunately, the robbers had failed to check that the ropes were secure.

NARRATOR 1: *(To NARRATOR 5)* Criminals always make a mistake, don't they?

NARRATOR 5: So they say... *(Pause)* ...Anyway, Hubert was able to free his legs but his arms remained firmly tied behind him, and so all that he could do was to try to find someone who could help him out of his predicament.

HUBERT moves around the stage slowly, trying to find some means of escape or help.

NARRATOR 1: His what?

NARRATOR 5: His fix. His problem. The difficult situation he was in.

NARRATOR 1: ...All right, I've got it now!

NARRATOR 4: Hubert knew that he would not be able to reach home on foot and so it was his aim to find help as quickly as possible. However, in his dazed and confused state, he lost his way. He became very tired and would have laid down for the night where he stood, except for the fact that the cold would have probably killed him, having no blankets or fire or anything.

HUBERT: Thank you for stating the obvious!

NARRATOR 3: So he wandered on, travelling further and further, his arms aching and numb from the ropes which bound him and his heart aching for the loss of his horse, Jerry, feeling great despair at his sorry situation.

HUBERT exits.

ALL NARRATORS: *(Together)* Aaah!