

Heus Abbas

by Señor Alfredo el Bufón, Order of the Maunche
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- Abbot: When I first heard her Excellency's name, "Hodierna," I thought, "Isn't that the Latin word for 'today'?" Of course, I was wrong. The Latin word for "today" is "hodie." "Hodierna" is the feminine form of "hodiernus," which means "today's," in "today's paper." But her name piqued my curiosity, so I ransacked the library until I found what I think is the earliest mention of the name "Hodierna" in the Period.
- Gentlewoman: Since it was written down in the form of a dialogue, we've decided to perform it.
- Abbot: Now the entire dialogue is in Latin --
- Gentlewoman: -- but we've translated it into English.
- Abbot: -- so you'll just have to bear wi-- What do you mean, "we've translated it into English?"
- Gentlewoman: What word didn't you understand? You found this dialogue of a man and a woman talking in Latin, and we decided that I would translate the Lady's part, and you -- You did remember to translate the abbot's lines, didn't you?
- Abbot: Well, maybe "remember" is too strong a word.
- Gentlewoman: Now what are we gonna do?
- Abbot: How about if you perform your part in English, and I'll perform my part in Latin. This is an intelligent crowd; they'll figure it out.
- Gentlewoman: All right, but don't blame me if this doesn't work.
- Abbot: So, imagine, if you will, that I am an Italian abbot, walking down an equally Italian street, in a small principality in the north of Italy.
- Gentlewoman: And imagine that I am a Norman noblewoman visiting from England.
- Abbot: And imagine that we are *both* speaking in Latin. We begin ...

HEUS ABBAS

Gentlewoman: Hey, Abbot!

Abbot: Salve, o mea domina. Possumne esse auxilio tibi?

Gentlewoman: Yes, you can be of some assistance to me. Please tell me the names of the nobility in your principality so when I go see them in court I'll be able to know those fellows.

Abbot: Ita, te docebo. Tamen, incredible auditu, ridiculissima nomina nobiles hodie habent.

Gentlewoman: You say the nobles have funny names nowadays?

Abbot: Ita, ridicula nomina. In nostro principitate, Quis est princeps, Quid est dux, Ignoro est vicecomes, --

Gentlewoman: Do you know the fellows' names?

Abbot: Ita.

Gentlewoman: Well then, who is the prince?

Abbot: Ita.

Gentlewoman: I mean, the name of the prince.

Abbot: Quis.

Gentlewoman: The prince.

Abbot: Quis est princeps.

Gentlewoman: Well, what are you asking me for?

Abbot: Non te quaero, immo, te dico. QUIS EST PRINCEPS.

Gentlewoman: I'm asking you. Who's the prince?

Abbot: Illud est viri nomen.

Gentlewoman: That's who's name?

Abbot: Ita.

Gentlewoman: Well, go ahead and tell me his name.

Abbot: Quis.

Gentlewoman: The prince.

Abbot: Quis.

Gentlewoman: The principal man in the principality.

Abbot: Quis est princeps.

Gentlewoman: Does this principality have a prince?

Abbot: Certe.

Gentlewoman: And who is the prince?

Abbot: Absolute.

Gentlewoman: Who wears the princely coronet?

Abbot: Ita. Dignus eo vir est.

Gentlewoman: Who is entitled to it?

Abbot: Ita.

Gentlewoman: Well, all I'm trying to find out is, what's the prince's name?

Abbot: Oh, non, non. Quid est nomen ducis.

Gentlewoman: I'm not asking you who's the duke.

Abbot: Quis est princeps.

Gentlewoman: That's what I'm trying to find out.

Abbot: Ergo, noli nomina mutare.

Gentlewoman: I'm not changing their names!

Abbot: Defervesce.

Gentlewoman: All right, I'll calm down. Now, what is the prince's name?

Abbot: Quid est nomen ducis.

Gentlewoman: I'm not asking you who's the duke.

Abbot: Quis est princeps.

Gentlewoman: I don't know.

Abbot: Ille est vicecomes. De illo non dicimus.

Gentlewoman: I know we're not talking about the viscount.

Abbot: Mentionem vicecomitis fecisti.

Gentlewoman: If I just mentioned the viscount, who did I say was the viscount?

Abbot: Non. Quis est princeps.

Gentlewoman: That's what I want to know: What is the prince's name?

Abbot: Quid est nomen ducis.

Gentlewoman: I'm not asking you who's the duke.

Abbot: Quis est princeps.

Gentlewoman: I don't know.

Abbot: Ille est vicecomes.

Gentlewoman: There we go with the viscount again.

Abbot: Non possum mutare nomina.

Gentlewoman: I don't want you to change their names, just tell me their names. Since we're on the subject of the viscount, how about telling me his name.

Abbot: Ignoro.

Gentlewoman: I thought you knew the names of all the noblemen.

Abbot: Ita. Omnium nobilium.

Gentlewoman: But when I asked you the name of the viscount just now, you said, "I don't know."

Abbot: Ita. Ignoro.

Gentlewoman: Is the viscount a nobleman?

Abbot: Ita.

Gentlewoman: Do you know the names of all the noblemen?

Abbot: Ita.

Gentlewoman: Then, what is the viscount's name?

Abbot: Quid est nomen ducis.

Gentlewoman: I'm not asking you who's the duke!

Abbot: Quis est princeps.

Gentlewoman: I don't know.

A&G: The viscount.

Gentlewoman: Does the viscount have a wife?

Abbot: Ita.

Gentlewoman: She's the viscountess, right?

Abbot: Correcte mundo.

Gentlewoman: Please tell me her name.

Abbot: Cur.

Gentlewoman: Well, I just thought I'd ask.

Abbot: Ergo, ego statuo te dicere.

Gentlewoman: Then go ahead and tell me, who is the viscountess.

Abbot: Ausculta, mea domina. Quis non est vicecomitessa. Quis est --

Gentlewoman: I'll break your arm if you say, "Who's the prince?"

Abbot: Mea domina!

Gentlewoman: Forgive me, your Eminence.

Abbot: Tibi veniam do.

Gentlewoman: Thank you. Now, what's the viscountess's name?

Abbot: Quid est ducis nomen.

Gentlewoman: I'm not asking you who's the duke!

Abbot: Quis est princeps.

Gentlewoman: I don't know.

A&G: The viscount!

Abbot: Defervesce, defervesce, mea domina.

Gentlewoman: All right, I'll calm down. I'm calm. Now tell me the viscountess's name.

Abbot: Cur.

Gentlewoman: Because.

Abbot: Est episcopus.

Gentlewoman: The bishop!

Abbot: Noli vexari, mea domina.

Gentlewoman: All right, all right. Will there be any knights in court?

Abbot: Certe.

Gentlewoman: Tell me the name of the first knight of the realm. The most experienced knight. The one with the strongest --

Abbot: Cras.

Gentlewoman: Pardon me? Did you just say "tomorrow"?

Abbot: Ita, Cras.

Gentlewoman: You don't want to tell me now?

Abbot: Etiam nunc te dico.

Gentlewoman: Then go ahead.

Abbot: Cras.

Gentlewoman: What time tomorrow are you gonna tell me?

Abbot: Nunc te dico.

Gentlewoman: Then what is the knight's name?

Abbot: Quid est nomen ducis.

Gentlewoman: I'm not asking you who's the duke!

Abbot: Quis est princeps.

Gentlewoman: I don't know.

A&G: The viscount.

Gentlewoman: Is there a princess?

Abbot: Ita.

Gentlewoman: And her name?

Abbot: Hodierna Principissa.

Gentlewoman: Today's princess! And tomorrow, knight!

Abbot: Nunc vera dicis.

Gentlewoman: Now, I'm right, huh? You have a couple of days in your court, that's all.

Abbot: Fieri non potest aliter.

Gentlewoman: Does this court have a herald?

Abbot: Certe. Praeco habendus est.

Gentlewoman: All right. Don't try to tell me his name. I don't want to know. Now, I have pretty loud voice, right?

Abbot: Oh, certe magnam vocam habes. Summam vocam. De tua magna voce non est disputandum.

Gentlewoman: A simple "yes" would suffice. Let's say I use my voice as herald at your principality's court.

Abbot: Plerumque praeco est indigena.

Gentlewoman: Yes, I'm sure the herald usually is a native but let's just suppose, okay? I'm in a subjunctive mood now.

Abbot: Ut libet.

Gentlewoman: Okay, so I'm the herald, and court is about to begin, so I say, "All rise for --" who?

Abbot: Nunc vera dicis.

Gentlewoman: I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

Abbot: Est usitata formula.

Gentlewoman: That's the standard formula around here? "All rise for who"?

Abbot: Ita.

Gentlewoman: So I say that, and who comes in?

Abbot: Certe.

Gentlewoman: And who sits on the throne?

Abbot: Certe.

Gentlewoman: Certainly.

Abbot: Certe.

Gentlewoman: Okay.

Abbot: Nunc comprehendis.

Gentlewoman: So Certainly comes in ...

Abbot: Non, non. Princeps introit.

Gentlewoman: Then who sits on the throne?

Abbot: Certe.

Gentlewoman: Okay. So Certainly comes in ...

Abbot: Non. Quis introit.

Gentlewoman: Certainly.

Abbot: Ita.

Gentlewoman: So, I announce the prince, and Certainly sits down on the throne, --

Abbot: Non. Tu pronuntias principem, --

Gentlewoman: And who sits on the throne?

Abbot: Certe.

Gentlewoman: That's what I'm saying.

Abbot: Non sic dicis tu.

Gentlewoman: Certainly sits on the throne.

Abbot: In solio sedet Quis.

Gentlewoman: Certainly.

Abbot: Certe. Ergo, dic sic.

Gentlewoman: That's what I'm saying!

Abbot: Defervesce, defervesce.

Gentlewoman: I announce the prince.

Abbot: Et Quis in solio sedet.

Gentlewoman: He better sit there!

Abbot: Defervesce.

Gentlewoman: So I announce the prince, and whoever he is comes in with today's princess. They want to see the chivalry, so I call for what and tomorrow and I don't know -- a triple play.

Abbot: Fieri potest.

Gentlewoman: Then the prince asks me to summon the viscount and his wife. Why? I don't know. And I don't give a damn.

Abbot: Visne illud iterare?

Gentlewoman: I said, "I don't give a damn!"

Abbot: Oh, that's our king!

- finis -

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