

Becket

By **Jean Anouilh**

Play no. 230

Opening show 18/11/1967

Creative team

Directed by: Hy Kalus

Hebrew By: Amos Kenan

Set and Costumes: Arthur Goldrich

Lighting: Natan Panturin

Cast

Tomas Becket: Misha Asherov

King Henry The Second: Oded Teomi

A. Page: Ishak Heskia

1st Soldier: Yehiel Amir

The Archbishop of Canterbury: Haim Amitai

The Bishop of Oxford: Meir Zoref

The Bishop of York: Shai Danon

The Bishop of London: Ari Kutai

1st Baron: Rolf Barin

2nd Baron: Ilan Toren

3rd Baron: Israel Marianko

4th Baron: Arieh Lish

Saxon Father : Mordechai Sandak

Saxon Girl : Gan Cohen

Saxon Boy : David Shein

Gwendolyn : Yael Yaakov

French Girl : Denise Roulah

Little Monk : Rami Danon

Provost Marshal: Judah Berkovitz

French Priest : Mordechai Sandak

French Choirboy : Eran Chemed

1st Servant: Izhar Ophir

2nd Servant: Giora Zur

Queen Mother: Shoshana Duer

Young Queen: Bracha Neaman

English Priest: Ishak Heskia

1st Monk: Yehiel Amir

2nd Monk: Giora Zur

King Louis of France: Baruch David

The Pop; Nissim Azikri

A Cardinal: Shai Danon

Sentry: Meir Zoref

Young Sentry: Ishak Heskia

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Act 1

King Henry II is being whipped at the tomb of Thomas Becket to make his peace with the Archbishop. We pass into the realm of memory: The youthful and elegant Becket is the beloved companion of the young king. Before his assembled Council Henry unexpectedly appoints Becket, a Saxon, to the office of Chancellor of England. The assembly is stunned by the nomination, Becket more than all. The Church delegation, headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Gilbert Foliot, Bishop of London, expresses its displeasure, but Henry insists upon the appointment.

Henry and Becket go out on a hunt. In a hut in the woods, Henry finds a pretty girl and plans to make her a palace whore. Becket asks for the girl in order to set her free. Henry grants his request on condition that Becket return the favor. Later, in Becket's palace, Henry asks for Gwendolen, Becket's mistress, in exchange for the girl from the forest. Becket is obliged to yield her. But Gwendolen, who loves Becket dearly, kills herself in Henry's bed. The frightened king Becket's room.

Act 2

King Henry's troops are encamped at the gates of besieged French town. His barons are disgruntled by the smooth victory Becket has managed by means of tactful diplomacy. Inside the King's tent Becket warns Henry of the rising power of the Church in England. Back outside he encounters a young Saxon monk who has been caught with a knife. Seeing in the youth a ghost of himself when young, Becket spares him and delivers him to a monastery in England.

In the cathedral of the captured town, Henry receives news stroke to the Church – the election of the Archbishop's death. There upon he conceives of a brilliant elevation of his Becket as Primate of England. He then gives his possessions to the beggars.

Act 3

The two queens try hard to bring Becket into disfavor with his king. A messenger informs Henry that Becket demands the punishment of a lord who has taken the law into his own hands in chastising a wayward priest. When they meet, Becket refuses to compromise and returns the Chancellor Seal to Henry. Present at the meeting is the young Saxon monk who has been brought again before the Archbishop, and now remains to wait upon him. With the help of Foliot, Henry tries to incriminate Becket and dispose of him by charging him with embezzlement during his Chancellorship. Becket flees to France secretly.

Act 4

King Louis of France decides to hand Becket over to Henry, but first tries to mediate a reconciliation. Henry and Becket meet again. Although he refuses to budge from his stand concerning the Church Law, Becket is prepared to compromise over other items. Henry allows him to return to England. To demonstrate his independence of the Church, Henry announces his decision to crown his eldest son king in his own lifetime, without the Archbishop. But at the end of the ceremony Henry breaks down and asks who will rid him of Becket in the presence of his barons. The barons gird on their swords and depart. The little monk dresses Becket for Vespers. The four barons break into the cathedral and murder them both.

Memories fade now, and we see King Henry again, kneeling at Becket's tomb. He proclaims Becket saint, and entrusts one of the responsibility and seeking out the murderers.