

# KING JOHN

## THE LIFE AND DEATH OF KING JOHN.

By William Shakespeare

### CAST

#### The English

KING JOHN.

ELEANOR, Queen, Widow of Henry II, mother to King John

PRINCE HENRY, Son to King John, afterwards King Henry III

BLANCHE, Lady of Spain, niece to King John

PEMBROKE Earl of Pembroke

ESSEX Earl of Essex

SALISBURY Earl of Salisbury

BIGOT Lord Bigot

HUBERT de Burgh, citizen of Angiers, follower of King John

LADY FALCONBRIDGE, Widow of Sir Robert, mother to Philip the Bastard and Robert Falconbridge

FALCONBRIDGE, Robert Falconbridge, Son to Sir Robert and Lady Falconbridge

BASTARD, Philip the Bastard, Son to Lady Falconbridge and King Richard I, half-brother to Robert

GURNEY, James Gurney, Servant to Lady Falconbridge

PETER of Pomfret, a prophet

ENGLISH HERALD

MESSENGER

EXECUTIONER, 2nd Executioner

English Trumpeter

Sheriff.

#### The French

KING PHILIP of France

DAUPHIN Lewis, the Dauphin

ARTHUR, Duke of Britaine, nephew to King John

CONSTANCE, Mother to Arthur

AUSTRIA, Limoges, Archduke of Austria

MELUN, a French Lord

CHATILLON, Ambassador from France

FRENCH HERALD

MESSENGER

French Trumpeters

CITIZEN and other Citizens of Angiers

PANDULPH, Cardinal Pandulph, the Pope's legate

Attendants, English Soldiers, French Soldiers, Lords

Scene: Sometimes in England, and sometimes in France.

# ACT 1.

## Scene 1. A Room of State in the Palace.

**Enter** KING JOHN, QUEEN ELEANOR, PEMBROKE, ESSEX, SALISBURY, with CHATILLON of France.

King John                    Now say, Chatillon, what would France with us?

Chatillon                    Thus, after greeting, speaks the King of France  
In my behaviour to the majesty,  
The borrowed majesty, of England here.

Eleanor                     A strange beginning - "borrowed majesty".

King John                   Silence, good mother; hear the embassy.

Chatillon                   Philip of France, in right and true behalf  
Of thy deceased brother Geoffrey's son,  
Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim  
To this fair island and the territories,  
To Ireland, Poitiers, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,  
Desiring thee to lay aside the sword  
Which sways usurpingly these several titles,  
And put the same into young Arthur's hand,  
Thy nephew and right royal sovereign.

King John                   What follows if we disallow of this?

Chatillon                   The proud control of fierce and bloody war,  
To enforce these rights so forcibly withheld.

King John                   Here have we war for war and blood for blood,  
Controlment for controlment. So answer France.

Chatillon                   Then take my king's defiance from my mouth,  
The furthest limit of my embassy.

King John                   Bear mine to him, and so depart in peace.  
Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France;  
For ere thou canst report I will be there;  
The thunder of my cannon shall be heard.  
So, hence! Be thou the trumpet of our wrath  
And sullen presage of your own decay.  
An honourable conduct let him have,  
Pembroke, look to't. Farewell, Chatillon.

**Exeunt** CHATILLON and PEMBROKE.

Eleanor                    What now, my son! Have I not ever said  
How that ambitious Constance would not cease  
Till she had kindled France and all the world  
Upon the right and party of her son?  
This might have been prevented and made whole  
With very easy arguments of love,  
Which now the manage of two kingdoms must  
With fearful-bloody issue arbitrate.

King John                   Our strong possession and our right for us.

Eleanor                    Your strong possession much more than your right,  
Or else it must go wrong with you and me.  
So much my conscience whispers in your ear,  
Which none but heaven, and you and I, shall hear.

**Enter** a SHERIFF, who whispers to ESSEX.

Essex                        My liege, here is the strangest controversy

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Come from the country to be judged by you  
That e'er I heard. Shall I produce the men?

King John            Let them approach.

**Exit** SHERIFF.

Our abbeyes and our priories shall pay  
This expeditious charge.

**Enter** ROBERT FALCONBRIDGE and PHILIP, his bastard brother.

What men are you?

Bastard            Your faithful subject I, a gentleman  
Born in Northamptonshire, and eldest son,  
As I suppose, to Robert Falconbridge,  
A soldier, by the honour-giving hand  
Of Coeur-de-lion knighted in the field.

King John            What art thou?

Falconbridge        The son and heir to that same Falconbridge.

King John            Is that the elder, and art thou the heir?  
You came not of one mother then, it seems.

Bastard            Most certain of one mother, mighty king,  
That is well known; and, as I think, one father.  
But for the certain knowledge of that truth  
I put you o'er to heaven and to my mother;  
Of that I doubt, as all men's children may.

Eleanor            Out on thee, rude man! Thou dost shame thy mother,  
And wound her honour with this diffidence.

Bastard            I, madam? No, I have no reason for it;  
That is my brother's plea, and none of mine,  
The which if he can prove, 'a pops me out  
At least from fair five hundred pound a year.  
Heaven guard my mother's honour, and my land!

King John            A good blunt fellow. Why, being younger born,  
Doth he lay claim to thine inheritance?

Bastard            I know not why, except to get the land;  
But once he slandered me with bastardy.  
But whe'er I be as true begot or no,  
That still I lay upon my mother's head;  
But that I am as well begot, my liege,  
- Fair fall the bones that took the pains for me! -  
Compare our faces and be judge yourself.  
If old Sir Robert did beget us both  
And were our father, and this son like him,  
O old Sir Robert, father, on my knee  
I give heaven thanks I was not like to thee.

King John            Why, what a madcap hath heaven lent us here.

Eleanor            He hath a trick of Coeur-de-lion's face;  
The accent of his tongue affecteth him.  
Do you not read some tokens of my son  
In the large composition of this man?

King John            Mine eye hath well examined his parts,  
And finds them perfect Richard.  
[To FALCONBRIDGE] Sirrah, speak.  
What doth move you to claim your brother's land?

Bastard            Because he hath a half-face like my father.  
With half that face would he have all my land:  
A half-faced groat five hundred pound a year!

Falconbridge        My gracious liege, when that my father lived,

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

- Your brother did employ my father much -
- Bastard Well sir, by this you cannot get my land:  
Your tale must be how he employed my mother.
- Falconbridge And once dispatched him in an embassy  
To Germany, there with the emperor  
To treat of high affairs touching that time.  
Th' advantage of his absence took the king,  
And in the meantime sojourned at my father's,  
Where how he did prevail I shame to speak.  
But truth is truth: large lengths of seas and shores  
Between my father and my mother lay,  
As I have heard my father speak himself,  
When this same lusty gentleman was got.  
Upon his death-bed he by will bequeathed  
His lands to me, and took it on his death  
That this my mother's son was none of his,  
And, if he were, he came into the world  
Full fourteen weeks before the course of time.  
Then, good my liege, let me have what is mine,  
My father's land, as was my father's will.
- King John Sirrah, your brother is legitimate;  
Your father's wife did after wedlock bear him,  
And if she did play false, the fault was hers -  
Which fault lies on the hazards of all husbands  
That marry wives. Tell me, how if my brother,  
Who, as you say, took pains to get this son,  
Had of your father claimed this son for his?  
In sooth, good friend, your father might have kept  
This calf bred from his cow from all the world;  
In sooth he might. Then, if he were my brother's,  
My brother might not claim him, nor your father,  
Being none of his, refuse him. This concludes:  
My mother's son did get your father's heir;  
Your father's heir must have your father's land.
- Falconbridge Shall then my father's will be of no force  
To dispossess that child which is not his?
- Bastard Of no more force to dispossess me, sir,  
Than was his will to get me, as I think.
- Eleanor Whether hadst thou rather be a Falconbridge,  
And like thy brother to enjoy thy land;  
Or the reputed son of Coeur-de-lion,  
Lord of thy presence, and no land beside?
- Bastard Madam, an if my brother had my shape  
And I had his, Sir Robert's his, like him;  
And if my legs were two such riding-rods,  
My arms such eel-skins stuffed, my face so thin  
That in mine ear I durst not stick a rose  
Lest men should say "Look where three-farthings goes!"  
And, to his shape, were heir to all this land,  
Would I might never stir from off this place,  
I would give it every foot to have this face;  
It would not be Sir Nob in any case.
- Eleanor I like thee well. Wilt thou forsake thy fortune,  
Bequeath thy land to him, and follow me?  
I am a soldier, and now bound to France.
- Bastard Brother, take you my land, I'll take my chance.  
Your face hath got five hundred pound a year,  
Yet sell your face for fivepence and 'tis dear.  
Madam, I'll follow you unto the death.
- Eleanor Nay, I would have you go before me thither.

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Bastard                    Our country manners give our betters way.

King John                 What is thy name?

Bastard                    Philip, my liege, so is my name begun;  
Philip, good old Sir Robert's wife's eldest son.

King John                 From henceforth bear his name whose form thou bearest.  
Kneel thou down Philip, but rise more great.  
[Knighting him] Arise Sir Richard, and Plantagenet.

Bastard                    Brother by th' mother's side, give me your hand;  
My father gave me honour, yours gave land.  
Now blessed be the hour, by night or day,  
When I was got, Sir Robert was away.

Eleanor                    The very spirit of Plantagenet!  
I am thy grandam, Richard: call me so.

Bastard                    Madam, by chance but not by truth - what though?  
Something about, a little from the right,  
In at the window, or else o'er the hatch;  
Who dares not stir by day must walk by night,  
And have is have, however men do catch.  
Near or far off, well won is still well shot,  
And I am I, howe'er I was begot.

King John                 Go, Falconbridge; now hast thou thy desire:  
A landless knight makes thee a landed squire.  
Come, madam, and come, Richard, we must speed  
For France, for France, for it is more than need.

Bastard                    Brother, adieu; good fortune come to thee!  
For thou wast got i'th' way of honesty.

**Exeunt** all but BASTARD.

A foot of honour better than I was,  
But many a many foot of land the worse.  
Well, now can I make any Joan a lady.  
"Good-den, Sir Richard" - "God-a-mercy, fellow!"  
And if his name be George, I'll call him Peter,  
For new-made honour doth forget men's names;  
'Tis too respective and too sociable  
For your conversion. Now your traveller,  
He and his toothpick at my worship's mess,  
And when my knightly stomach is sufficed,  
Why, then I suck my teeth and catechize  
My picked man of countries: "My dear sir,"  
Thus, leaning on mine elbow, I begin  
"I shall beseech you", that is Question now;  
And then comes Answer like an Absey book:  
"O sir," says Answer "at your best command,  
At your employment, at your service, sir".  
"No, sir," says Question "I, sweet sir, at yours."  
And so, ere Answer knows what Question would,  
Saving in dialogue of compliment,  
And talking of the Alps and Apennines,  
The Pyrenean and the river Po,  
It draws toward supper in conclusion so.  
But this is worshipful society  
And fits the mounting spirit like myself;  
For he is but a bastard to the time  
That doth not smack of observation;  
And so am I, whether I smack or no;  
And not alone in habit and device,  
Exterior form, outward accoutrement,  
But from the inward motion to deliver  
Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth;  
Which, though I will not practise to deceive,  
Yet, to avoid deceit, I mean to learn;  
For it shall strew the footsteps of my rising.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

But who comes in such haste in riding-robos?  
What woman-post is this? Hath she no husband  
That will take pains to blow a horn before her?

**Enter** LADY FALCONBRIDGE and JAMES GURNEY.

O me, 'tis my mother! How now, good lady!  
What brings you here to court so hastily?

Lady

Falconbridge Where is that slave, thy brother? Where is he  
That holds in chase mine honour up and down?

Bastard

My brother Robert? Old Sir Robert's son?  
Colbrand the giant, that same mighty man?  
Is it Sir Robert's son that you seek so?

Lady

Falconbridge "Sir Robert's son"? Ay, thou unreverend boy,  
Sir Robert's son. Why scorn'st thou at Sir Robert?  
He is Sir Robert's son, and so art thou.

Bastard

James Gurney, wilt thou give us leave awhile?

Gurney

Good leave, good Philip.

Bastard

Philip? - Sparrow! James,  
There's toys abroad; anon I'll tell thee more.

**Exit** GURNEY.

Madam, I was not old Sir Robert's son.  
Sir Robert might have eat his part in me  
Upon Good Friday and ne'er broke his fast.  
Sir Robert could do well - marry, to confess -  
Could he get me. Sir Robert could not do it:  
We know his handiwork. Therefore, good mother,  
To whom am I beholding for these limbs?  
Sir Robert never help to make this leg.

Lady

Falconbridge Hast thou conspired with thy brother too,  
That for thine own gain shouldst defend mine honour?  
What means this scorn, thou most untoward knave?

Bastard

Knight, knight, good mother, Basilisco-like.  
What! I am dubbed, I have it on my shoulder.  
But, mother, I am not Sir Robert's son;  
I have disclaimed Sir Robert and my land:  
Legitimation, name, and all is gone.  
Then, good my mother, let me know my father;  
Some proper man, I hope. Who was it, mother?

Lady

Falconbridge Hast thou denied thyself a Falconbridge?

Bastard

As faithfully as I deny the devil.

Lady

Falconbridge King Richard Coeur-de-lion was thy father.  
By long and vehement suit I was seduced  
To make room for him in my husband's bed:  
- Heaven, lay not my transgression to my charge -  
Thou art the issue of my dear offence,  
Which was so strongly urged past my defence.

Bastard

Now, by this light, were I to get again,  
Madam, I would not wish a better father.  
Some sins do bear their privilege on earth,  
And so doth yours. Your fault was not your folly.  
Needs must you lay your heart at his dispose,  
Subjected tribute to commanding love,  
Against whose fury and unmatched force

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The aweless lion could not wage the fight,  
Nor keep his princely heart from Richard's hand.  
He that perforce robs lions of their hearts  
May easily win a woman's. Ay, my mother,  
With all my heart I thank thee for my father.  
Who lives and dares but say thou didst not well  
When I was got, I'll send his soul to hell.  
Come, lady, I will show thee to my kin;  
And they shall say, when Richard me begot,  
If thou hadst said him nay, it had been sin.  
Who says it was, he lies - I say 'twas not.

**Exeunt**

## ACT 2.

### Scene 1. France. Before the Walls of Angiers.

**Enter**, before Angiers, on one side AUSTRIA and his FORCES; on the other, PHILIP KING OF FRANCE, Lewis the DAUPHIN, CONSTANCE, ARTHUR and FRENCH FORCES.

King Philip            Before Angiers well met, brave Austria.  
 Arthur, that great forerunner of thy blood,  
 Richard, that robbed the lion of his heart  
 And fought the holy wars in Palestine,  
 By this brave duke came early to his grave;  
 And for amends to his posterity  
 At our importance hither is he come  
 To spread his colours, boy, in thy behalf,  
 And to rebuke the usurpation  
 Of thy unnatural uncle, English John.  
 Embrace him, love him, give him welcome hither.

Arthur                 God shall forgive you Coeur-de-lion's death  
 The rather that you give his offspring life,  
 Shadowing their right under your wings of war.  
 I give you welcome with a powerless hand,  
 But with a heart full of unstained love;  
 Welcome before the gates of Angiers, duke.

Dauphin                Ah, noble boy, who would not do thee right?

Austria                Upon thy cheek lay I this zealous kiss,  
 As seal to this indenture of my love:  
 That to my home I will no more return  
 Till Angiers and the right thou hast in France,  
 Together with that pale, that white-faced shore,  
 Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides  
 And coops from other lands her islanders,  
 Even till that England, hedged in with the main,  
 That water-walled bulwark, still secure  
 And confident from foreign purposes,  
 Even till that utmost corner of the west  
 Salute thee for her king. Till then, fair boy,  
 Will I not think of home, but follow arms.

Constance            O, take his mother's thanks, a widow's thanks,  
 Till your strong hand shall help to give him strength  
 To make a more requital to your love.

Austria                The peace of heaven is theirs that lift their swords  
 In such a just and charitable war.

King Philip            Well, then to work! Our cannon shall be bent  
 Against the brows of this resisting town.  
 Call for our chiefest men of discipline,  
 To cull the plots of best advantages.  
 We'll lay before this town our royal bones,  
 Wade to the market-place in Frenchmen's blood,  
 But we will make it subject to this boy.

Constance            Stay for an answer to your embassy,  
 Lest unadvised you stain your swords with blood.  
 My Lord Chatillon may from England bring  
 That right in peace which here we urge in war,  
 And then we shall repent each drop of blood  
 That hot rash haste so indirectly shed.

**Enter** CHATILLON.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

- King Philip           A wonder, lady! - lo, upon thy wish  
Our messenger Chatillon is arrived.  
What England says, say briefly, gentle lord;  
We coldly pause for thee. Chatillon, speak.
- Chatillon             Then turn your forces from this paltry siege  
And stir them up against a mightier task.  
England, impatient of your just demands,  
Hath put himself in arms. The adverse winds,  
Whose leisure I have stayed, have given him time  
To land his legions all as soon as I:  
His marches are expedient to this town,  
His forces strong, his soldiers confident.  
With him along is come the mother-queen,  
An Ate, stirring him to blood and strife;  
With her her niece, the Lady Blanche of Spain;  
With them a bastard of the king's deceased;  
And all th' unsettled humours of the land,  
Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,  
With ladies' faces and fierce dragons' spleens,  
Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,  
Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs,  
To make a hazard of new fortunes here.  
In brief, a braver choice of dauntless spirits  
Than now the English bottoms have waft o'er  
Did never float upon the swelling tide  
To do offence and scathe in Christendom.  
[Drum beats.  
The interruption of their churlish drums  
Cuts off more circumstance. They are at hand,  
To parley or to fight; therefore prepare.
- King Philip           How much unlooked-for is this expedition!
- Austria               By how much unexpected, by so much  
We must awake endeavour for defence,  
For courage mounteth with occasion.  
Let them be welcome then; we are prepared.
- Enter KING JOHN, BASTARD, Queen ELEANOR, BLANCHE, and ENGLISH FORCES.**
- King John            Peace be to France, if France in peace permit  
Our just and lineal entrance to our own.  
If not, bleed France, and peace ascend to heaven,  
Whiles we, God's wrathful agent, do correct  
Their proud contempt that beats His peace to heaven.
- King Philip           Peace be to England, if that war return  
From France to England, there to live in peace.  
England we love; and for that England's sake  
With burden of our armour here we sweat.  
This toil of ours should be a work of thine;  
But thou from loving England art so far  
That thou hast underwrought his lawful king,  
Cut off the sequence of posterity,  
Outfaced infant state, and done a rape  
Upon the maiden virtue of the crown.  
Look here upon thy brother Geoffrey's face:  
These eyes, these brows, were moulded out of his;  
This little abstract doth contain that large  
Which died in Geoffrey; and the hand of time  
Shall draw this brief into as huge a volume.  
That Geoffrey was thy elder brother born,  
And this his son; England was Geoffrey's right,  
And this is Geoffrey's. In the name of God,  
How comes it then that thou art called a king,  
When living blood doth in these temples beat  
Which owe the crown that thou o'ermasterest?
- King John            From whom hast thou this great commission, France,

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

To draw my answer from thy articles?

King Philip From that supernal judge that stirs good thoughts  
In any beast of strong authority  
To look into the blots and stains of right.  
That judge hath made me guardian to this boy,  
Under whose warrant I impeach thy wrong,  
And by whose help I mean to chastise it.

King John Alack, thou dost usurp authority.

King Philip Excuse it is to beat usurping down.

Eleanor Who is it thou dost call usurper, France?

Constance Let me make answer: thy usurping son.

Eleanor Out, insolent! - thy bastard shall be king  
That thou mayst be a queen, and check the world.

Constance My bed was ever to thy son as true  
As thine was to thy husband; and this boy  
Liker in feature to his father Geoffrey  
Than thou and John in manners - being as like  
As rain to water, or devil to his dam.  
My boy a bastard? By my soul, I think  
His father never was so true begot;  
It cannot be and if thou wert his mother.

Eleanor There's a good mother, boy, that blots thy father.

Constance There's a good grandam, boy, that would blot thee.

Austria Peace!

Bastard Hear the crier.

Austria What the devil art thou?

Bastard One that will play the devil, sir, with you,  
And a' may catch your hide and you alone.  
You are the hare of whom the proverb goes,  
Whose valour plucks dead lions by the beard.  
I'll smoke your skin-coat and I catch you right,  
Sirrah, look to't; i'faith I will, i'faith.

Blanche O well did he become that lion's robe  
That did disrobe the lion of that robe!

Bastard It lies as sightly on the back of him  
As great Alcides' shows upon an ass.  
But, ass, I'll take that burden from your back,  
Or lay on that shall make your shoulders crack.

Austria What cracker is this same that deafs our ears  
With this abundance of superfluous breath?  
King Philip, determine what we shall do straight.

Ling Philip Women and fools, break off your conference.  
King John, this is the very sum of all:  
England and Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,  
In right of Arthur do I claim of thee.  
Wilt thou resign them and lay down thy arms?

King John My life as soon! I do defy thee, France.  
Arthur of Britaine, yield thee to my hand,  
And out of my dear love I'll give thee more  
Than e'er the coward hand of France can win.  
Submit thee, boy.

Eleanor Come to thy grandam, child.

Constance Do, child, go to it grandam, child.



KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Their iron indignation 'gainst your walls.  
All preparation for a bloody siege  
And merciless proceeding by these French  
Comforts your city's eyes, your winking gates,  
And, but for our approach, those sleeping stones  
That as a waist doth girdle you about,  
By the compulsion of their ordinance  
By this time from their fixed beds of lime  
Had been dishabited, and wide havoc made  
For bloody power to rush upon your peace.  
But on the sight of us your lawful king,  
Who painfully with much expedient march  
Have brought a countercheck before your gates,  
To save unscratched your city's threatened cheeks,  
Behold, the French amazed vouchsafe a parole;  
And now, instead of bullets wrapped in fire,  
To make a shaking fever in your walls,  
They shoot but calm words folded up in smoke,  
To make a faithless error in your ears;  
Which trust accordingly, kind citizens,  
And let us in - your king, whose laboured spirits,  
Forwearied in this action of swift speed,  
Craves harbourage within your city walls.

- King Philip      When I have said, make answer to us both.  
Lo, in this right hand, whose protection  
Is most divinely vowed upon the right  
Of him it holds, stands young Plantagenet,  
Son to the elder brother of this man,  
And king o'er him and all that he enjoys.  
For this down-trodden equity we tread  
In warlike march these greens before your town,  
Being no further enemy to you  
Than the constraint of hospitable zeal  
In the relief of this oppressed child  
Religiously provokes. Be pleased then  
To pay that duty which you truly owe  
To him that owes it, namely this young prince;  
And then our arms, like to a muzzled bear,  
Save in aspect, hath all offence sealed up;  
Our cannons' malice vainly shall be spent  
Against th' invulnerable clouds of heaven;  
And with a blessed and unvexed retire,  
With unhacked swords and helmets all unbruised,  
We will bear home that lusty blood again  
Which here we came to spout against your town,  
And leave your children, wives, and you in peace.  
But if you fondly pass our proffered offer,  
'Tis not the roundure of your old-faced walls  
Can hide you from our messengers of war,  
Though all these English and their discipline  
Were harboured in their rude circumference.  
Then tell us, shall your city call us lord  
In that behalf which we have challenged it?  
Or shall we give the signal to our rage,  
And stalk in blood to our possession?
- Citizen            In brief, we are the king of England's subjects.  
For him, and in his right, we hold this town.
- King John        Acknowledge then the king, and let me in.
- Citizen            That can we not. But he that proves the king,  
To him will we prove loyal. Till that time  
Have we rammed up our gates against the world.
- King John        Doth not the crown of England prove the king?  
And if not that, I bring you witnesses,  
Twice fifteen thousand hearts of England's breed -

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Bastard Bastards and else.

King John To verify our title with their lives.

King Philip As many and as well-born bloods as those -

Bastard Some bastards too.

King Philip Stand in his face to contradict his claim.

Citizen Till you compound whose right is worthiest,  
We for the worthiest hold the right from both.

King John Then God forgive the sin of all those souls  
That to their everlasting residence,  
Before the dew of evening fall, shall fleet  
In dreadful trial of our kingdom's king.

King Philip Amen, Amen! Mount, chevaliers! To arms!

Bastard Saint George, that swung the dragon, and e'er since  
Sits on's horseback at mine hostess' door,  
Teach us some fence! [To AUSTRIA] Sirrah, were I at home  
At your den, sirrah, with your lioness,  
I would set an oxhead to your lion's hide,  
And make a monster of you.

Austria Peace; no more.

Bastard O tremble, for you hear the lion roar.

King John Up higher to the plain, where we'll set forth  
In best appointment all our regiments.

Bastard Speed then, to take advantage of the field.

King Philip It shall be so; [To DAUPHIN] and at the other hill  
Command the rest to stand. God and our right!

**Exeunt** severally all but the CITIZENS.

Here, after excursions,

Enter the HERALD OF FRANCE with TRUMPETS to the gates.

French Herald You men of Angiers, open wide your gates  
And let young Arthur Duke of Britaine in,  
Who by the hand of France this day hath made  
Much work for tears in many an English mother,  
Whose sons lie scattered on the bleeding ground;  
Many a widow's husband grovelling lies,  
Coldly embracing the discoloured earth;  
And victory with little loss doth play  
Upon the dancing banners of the French,  
Who are at hand, triumphantly displayed,  
To enter conquerors, and to proclaim  
Arthur of Britaine England's king and yours.

**Enter** ENGLISH HERALD with TRUMPET.

English

Herald Rejoice, you men of Angiers, ring your bells:  
King John, your king and England's, doth approach,  
Commander of this hot malicious day.  
Their armours that marched hence so silver-bright  
Hither return all gilt with Frenchmen's blood.  
There stuck no plume in any English crest  
That is removed by a staff of France;  
Our colours do return in those same hands  
That did display them when we first marched forth;  
And like a jolly troop of huntsmen come  
Our lusty English, all with purpled hands,  
Dyed in the dying slaughter of their foes.  
Open your gates and give the victors way.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

- Citizen                   Heralds, from off our towers we might behold  
From first to last the onset and retire  
Of both your armies, whose equality  
By our best eyes cannot be censured.  
Blood hath bought blood and blows have answered blows,  
Strength matched with strength and power confronted power;  
Both are alike, and both alike we like.  
One must prove greatest: while they weigh so even  
We hold our town for neither, yet for both.
- Re-enter** at several doors KING JOHN, BASTARD, ELEANOR, BLANCHE and ENGLISH FORCES;  
KING PHILIP, DAUPHIN, AUSTRIA and FRENCH FORCES.
- King John                France, hast thou yet more blood to cast away?  
Say, shall the current of our right run on,  
Whose passage, vexed with thy impediment,  
Shall leave his native channel and o'erswell  
With course disturbed even thy confining shores,  
Unless thou let his silver water keep  
A peaceful progress to the ocean?
- King Philip             England, thou hast not saved one drop of blood  
In this hot trial more than we of France;  
Rather, lost more. And by this hand I swear,  
That sways the earth this climate overlooks,  
Before we will lay down our just-borne arms,  
We'll put thee down, 'gainst whom these arms we bear,  
Or add a royal number to the dead,  
Gracing the scroll that tells of this war's loss  
With slaughter coupled to the name of kings.
- Bastard                 Ha, majesty! - how high thy glory towers  
When the rich blood of kings is set on fire!  
O now doth death line his dead chaps with steel,  
- The swords of soldiers are his teeth, his fangs -  
And now he feasts, mousing the flesh of men,  
In undetermined differences of kings.  
Why stand these royal fronts amazed thus?  
Cry "havoc!" kings. Back to the stained field,  
You equal potents, fiery kindled spirits;  
Then let confusion of one part confirm  
The other's peace; till then, blows, blood, and death!
- King John               Whose party do the townsmen yet admit?
- King Philip             Speak, citizens for England; who's your king?
- Citizen                 The king of England, when we know the king.
- King Philip             Know him in us, that here hold up his right.
- King John               In us, that are our own great deputy,  
And bear possession of our person here,  
Lord of our presence, Angiers, and of you.
- Citizen                 A greater power than we denies all this;  
And till it be undoubted we do lock  
Our former scruple in our strong-barred gates  
- Kings of our fear - until our fears resolved  
Be by some certain king purged and deposed.
- Bastard                 By heaven, these scroyles of Angiers flout you, kings,  
And stand securely on their battlements  
As in a theatre, whence they gape and point  
At your industrious scenes and acts of death.  
Your royal presences, be ruled by me.  
Do like the mutines of Jerusalem:  
Be friends awhile, and both conjointly bend  
Your sharpest deeds of malice on this town.  
By east and west let France and England mount  
Their battering cannon, charged to the mouths,

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Till their soul-fearing clamours have brawled down  
The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city.  
I'd play incessantly upon these jades,  
Even till unfenced desolation  
Leave them as naked as the vulgar air.  
That done, dissever your united strengths  
And part your mingled colours once again;  
Turn face to face and bloody point to point;  
Then, in a moment, fortune shall cull forth  
Out of one side her happy minion,  
To whom in favour she shall give the day,  
And kiss him with a glorious victory.  
How like you this wild counsel, mighty states?  
Smacks it not something of the policy?

King John

Now, by the sky that hangs above our heads,  
I like it well. France, shall we knit our powers,  
And lay this Angiers even with the ground;  
Then after fight who shall be king of it?

Bastard

And if thou hast the mettle of a king,  
Being wronged as we are by this peevish town,  
Turn thou the mouth of thy artillery,  
As we will ours, against these saucy walls;  
And when that we have dashed them to the ground,  
Why, then defy each other, and pell-mell  
Make work upon ourselves, for heaven or hell.

King Philip

Let it be so. Say, where will you assault?

King John

We from the west will send destruction  
Into this city's bosom.

Austria

I from the north.

King Philip

Our thunder from the south  
Shall rain their drift of bullets on this town.

Bastard

[Aside] O prudent discipline! From north to south  
Austria and France shoot in each other's mouth.  
I'll stir them to it. Come, away, away!

Citizen

Hear us, great kings: vouchsafe a while to stay,  
And I shall show you peace and fair-faced league,  
Win you this city without stroke or wound,  
Rescue those breathing lives to die in beds  
That here come sacrifices for the field.  
Persever not, but hear me, mighty kings.

King John

Speak on with favour; we are bent to hear.

Citizen

That daughter there of Spain, the Lady Blanche,  
Is near to England. Look upon the years  
Of Lewis the Dauphin and that lovely maid.  
If lusty love should go in quest of beauty,  
Where should he find it fairer than in Blanche?  
If zealous love should go in search of virtue,  
Where should he find it purer than in Blanche?  
If love ambitious sought a match of birth,  
Whose veins bound richer blood than Lady Blanche?  
Such as she is, in beauty, virtue, birth,  
Is the young Dauphin every way complete;  
If not complete of, say he is not she;  
And she again wants nothing, to name want,  
If want it be not that she is not he.  
He is the half part of a blessed man,  
Left to be finished by such as she;  
And she a fair divided excellence,  
Whose fullness of perfection lies in him.  
O, two such silver currents, when they join,  
Do glorify the banks that bound them in;

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

And two such shores to two such streams made one,  
 Two such controlling bounds, shall you be, kings,  
 To these two princes, if you marry them.  
 This union shall do more than battery can  
 To our fast-closed gates; for at this match,  
 With swifter spleen than powder can enforce,  
 The mouth of passage shall we fling wide ope,  
 And give you entrance. But without this match,  
 The sea enraged is not half so deaf,  
 Lions more confident, mountains and rocks  
 More free from motion, no, not death himself  
 In mortal fury half so peremptory,  
 As we to keep this city.

- Bastard [Aside] Here's a stay  
 That shakes the rotten carcass of old death  
 Out of his rags. Here's a large mouth, indeed,  
 That spits forth death and mountains, rocks and seas,  
 Talks as familiarly of roaring lions  
 As maids of thirteen do of puppy-dogs.  
 What cannoneer begot this lusty blood?  
 He speaks plain cannon - fire and smoke and bounce;  
 He gives the bastinado with his tongue;  
 Our ears are cudgelled; not a word of his  
 But buffets better than a fist of France.  
 Zounds! I was never so bethumped with words  
 Since I first called my brother's father dad.
- Eleanor [Aside to KING JOHN]  
 Son, list to this conjunction, make this match;  
 Give with our niece a dowry large enough;  
 For by this knot thou shalt so surely tie  
 Thy now unsure assurance to the crown  
 That yon green boy shall have no sun to ripe  
 The bloom that promiseth a mighty fruit.  
 I see a yielding in the looks of France;  
 Mark how they whisper. Urge them while their souls  
 Are capable of this ambition,  
 Lest zeal, now melted by the windy breath  
 Of soft petitions, pity, and remorse,  
 Cool and congeal again to what it was.
- Citizen Why answer not the double majesties  
 This friendly treaty of our threatened town?
- King Philip Speak England first, that hath been forward first  
 To speak unto this city. What say you?
- King John If that the Dauphin there, thy princely son,  
 Can in this book of beauty read "I love",  
 Her dowry shall weigh equal with a queen;  
 For Anjou, and fair Touraine, Maine, Poitiers,  
 And all that we upon this side the sea  
 - Except this city now by us besieged -  
 Find liable to our crown and dignity,  
 Shall gild her bridal bed and make her rich  
 In titles, honours, and promotions,  
 As she in beauty, education, blood,  
 Holds hand with any princess of the world.
- King Philip What sayst thou, boy? Look in the lady's face.
- Dauphin I do, my lord; and in her eye I find  
 A wonder, or a wondrous miracle,  
 The shadow of myself formed in her eye;  
 Which, being but the shadow of your son,  
 Becomes a sun and makes your son a shadow.  
 I do protest I never loved myself  
 Till now infixed I beheld myself  
 Drawn in the flattering table of her eye.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

[Whispers with BLANCHE.

- Bastard [Aside] "Drawn in the flattering table of her eye",  
Hanged in the frowning wrinkle of her brow,  
And quartered in her heart. He doth espy  
Himself love's traitor. This is pity now,  
That, hanged and drawn and quartered, there should be  
In such a love so vile a lout as he.
- Blanche [Aside to DAUPHIN]  
My uncle's will in this respect is mine.  
If he see aught in you that makes him like,  
That any thing he sees which moves his liking  
I can with ease translate it to my will;  
Or, if you will, to speak more properly,  
I will enforce it eas'ly to my love.  
Further I will not flatter you, my lord,  
That all I see in you is worthy love,  
Than this: that nothing do I see in you,  
Though churlish thoughts themselves should be your judge,  
That I can find should merit any hate.
- King John What say these young ones? What say you, my niece?
- Blanche That she is bound in honour still to do  
What you in wisdom still vouchsafe to say.
- King John Speak then, prince Dauphin: can you love this lady?
- Dauphin Nay, ask me if I can refrain from love,  
For I do love her most unfeignedly.
- King John Then do I give Volquessen, Touraine, Maine,  
Poitiers, and Anjou, these five provinces,  
With her to thee; and this addition more:  
Full thirty thousand marks of English coin.  
Philip of France, if thou be pleased withal,  
Command thy son and daughter to join hands.
- King Philip It likes us well. Young princes, close your hands.
- Austria And your lips too; for I am well assured  
That I did so when I was first assured.
- King Philip Now, citizens of Angiers, ope your gates,  
Let in that amity which you have made;  
For at Saint Mary's chapel presently  
The rites of marriage shall be solemnized.  
Is not the Lady Constance in this troop?  
I know she is not, for this match made up  
Her presence would have interrupted much.  
Where is she and her son? Tell me, who knows.
- Dauphin She is sad and passionate at your highness' tent.
- King Philip And, by my faith, this league that we have made  
Will give her sadness very little cure.  
Brother of England, how may we content  
This widow lady? In her right we came,  
Which we, God knows, have turned another way  
To our own vantage.
- King John We will heal up all,  
For we'll create young Arthur Duke of Britaine  
And Earl of Richmond; and this rich fair town  
We make him lord of. Call the Lady Constance.  
Some speedy messenger bid her repair  
To our solemnity. I trust we shall,  
If not fill up the measure of her will,  
Yet in some measure satisfy her so  
That we shall stop her exclamation.  
Go we as well as haste will suffer us

To this unlooked-for unprepared pomp.

**Exeunt** all but BASTARD.

Bastard            Mad world! Mad kings! Mad composition!  
 John, to stop Arthur's title in the whole,  
 Hath willingly departed with a part;  
 And France, whose armour conscience buckled on,  
 Whom zeal and charity brought to the field  
 As God's own soldier, rounded in the ear  
 With that same purpose-changer, that sly devil,  
 That broker that still breaks the pate of faith,  
 That daily break-vow, he that wins of all,  
 Of kings, of beggars, old men, young men, maids -  
 Who having no external thing to lose  
 But the word `maid', cheats the poor maid of that -  
 That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling commodity;  
 Commodity, the bias of the world;  
 The world, who of itself is peised well,  
 Made to run even upon even ground,  
 Till this advantage, this vile-drawing bias,  
 This sway of motion, this commodity,  
 Makes it take head from all indifferency,  
 From all direction, purpose, course, intent;  
 And this same bias, this commodity,  
 This bawd, this broker, this all-changing word,  
 Clapped on the outward eye of fickle France,  
 Hath drawn him from his own determined aid,  
 From a resolved and honourable war,  
 To a most base and vile-concluded peace.  
 And why rail I on this commodity?  
 But for because he hath not wooed me yet;  
 Not that I have the power to clutch my hand  
 When his fair angels would salute my palm,  
 But for my hand, as unattempted yet,  
 Like a poor beggar railleth on the rich.  
 Well, whiles I am a beggar I will rail,  
 And say there is no sin but to be rich,  
 And being rich, my virtue then shall be  
 To say there is no vice but beggary.  
 Since kings break faith upon commodity,  
 Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee.

**Exit**

**ACT 3.****Scene 1. King Philip's Camp.**

**Enter** CONSTANCE, ARTHUR, and SALISBURY.

Constance           Gone to be married? Gone to swear a peace?  
 False blood to false blood joined! Gone to be friends?  
 Shall Lewis have Blanche, and Blanche those provinces?  
 It is not so; thou hast misspoke, misheard.  
 Be well advised, tell o'er thy tale again.  
 It cannot be - thou dost but say 'tis so.  
 I trust I may not trust thee, for thy word  
 Is but the vain breath of a common man.  
 Believe me, I do not believe thee, man;  
 I have a king's oath to the contrary.  
 Thou shalt be punished for thus frightening me,  
 For I am sick and capable of fears;  
 Oppressed with wrongs, and therefore full of fears;  
 A widow, husbandless, subject to fears;  
 A woman, naturally born to fears;  
 And though thou now confess thou didst but jest  
 With my vexed spirits I cannot take a truce,  
 But they will quake and tremble all this day.  
 What dost thou mean by shaking of thy head?  
 Why dost thou look so sadly on my son?  
 What means that hand upon that breast of thine?  
 Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum,  
 Like a proud river peering o'er his bounds?  
 Be these sad signs confirmers of thy words?  
 Then speak again; not all thy former tale,  
 But this one word - whether thy tale be true.

Salisbury           As true as I believe you think them false  
 That give you cause to prove my saying true.

Constance           O, if thou teach me to believe this sorrow,  
 Teach thou this sorrow how to make me die;  
 And let belief and life encounter so  
 As doth the fury of two desperate men  
 Which in the very meeting fall and die.  
 Lewis marry Blanche!  
 [To ARTHUR] O boy, then where art thou?  
 France friend with England - what becomes of me?  
 Fellow, be gone; I cannot brook thy sight:  
 This news hath made thee a most ugly man.

Salisbury           What other harm have I, good lady, done,  
 But spoke the harm that is by others done?

Constance           Which harm within itself so heinous is  
 As it makes harmful all that speak of it.

Arthur               I do beseech you, madam, be content.

Constance           If thou that bidd'st me be content wert grim,  
 Ugly, and sland'rous to thy mother's womb,  
 Full of unpleasing blots and sightless stains,  
 Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious,  
 Patched with foul moles and eye-offending marks,  
 I would not care, I then would be content,  
 For then I should not love thee, no, nor thou  
 Become thy great birth, nor deserve a crown.  
 But thou art fair, and at thy birth, dear boy,  
 Nature and fortune joined to make thee great.  
 Of nature's gifts thou mayst with lilies boast,

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

And with the half-blown rose; but fortune, O,  
She is corrupted, changed, and won from thee;  
Sh' adulterates hourly with thine uncle John,

And with her golden hand hath plucked on France  
To tread down fair respect of sovereignty,  
And made his majesty the bawd to theirs.  
France is a bawd to fortune and King John -  
That strumpet fortune, that usurping John!  
Tell me, thou fellow, is not France forsworn?  
Envenom him with words, or get thee gone  
And leave those woes alone which I alone  
Am bound to underbear.

Salisbury            Pardon me, madam,  
I may not go without you to the kings.

Constance            Thou mayst, thou shalt; I will not go with thee.  
I will instruct my sorrows to be proud,  
For grief is proud and makes his owner stoop.  
[Seats herself on the ground.  
To me and to the state of my great grief  
Let kings assemble; for my grief's so great  
That no supporter but the huge firm earth  
Can hold it up. Here I and sorrows sit,  
Here is my throne; bid kings come bow to it.

**Exit** SALISBURY and ARTHUR.

## Scene 2.

**Enter** KING JOHN, KING PHILIP of France, DAUPHIN, BLANCHE, ELEANOR, Philip the BASTARD,  
and AUSTRIA.

King Philip            'Tis true, fair daughter, and this blessed day  
Ever in France shall be kept festival.  
To solemnize this day the glorious sun  
Stays in his course and plays the alchemist,  
Turning with splendour of his precious eye  
The meagre cloddy earth to glittering gold.  
The yearly course that brings this day about  
Shall never see it but a holy-day.

Constance            [Rising] A wicked day, and not a holy-day.  
What hath this day deserved? What hath it done  
That it in golden letters should be set  
Among the high tides in the calendar?  
Nay, rather turn this day out of the week,  
This day of shame, oppression, perjury;  
Or, if it must stand still, let wives with child  
Pray that their burdens may not fall this day,  
Lest that their hopes prodigiously be crossed;  
But on this day let seamen fear no wrack;  
No bargains break that are not this day made;  
This day all things begun come to ill end,  
Yea, faith itself to hollow falsehood change.

King Philip            By heaven, lady, you shall have no cause  
To curse the fair proceedings of this day.  
Have I not pawned to you my majesty?

Constance            You have beguiled me with a counterfeit  
Resembling majesty, which, being touched and tried,  
Proves valueless. You are forsworn, forsworn.  
You came in arms to spill mine enemies' blood,  
But now in arms you strengthen it with yours.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The grappling vigour and rough frown of war  
 Is cold in amity and painted peace,  
 And our oppression hath made up this league.  
 Arm, arm, you heavens, against these perjured kings.  
 A widow cries - be husband to me, heavens!  
 Let not the hours of this ungodly day  
 Wear out the day in peace, but, ere sunset,  
 Set armed discord 'twixt these perjured kings.  
 Hear me, O hear me!

Austria Lady Constance, peace.

Constance War, war! No peace! Peace is to me a war.  
 O Limoges, O Austria, thou dost shame  
 That bloody spoil. Thou slave, thou wretch, thou coward!  
 Thou little valiant, great in villainy;  
 Thou ever strong upon the stronger side;  
 Thou fortune's champion, that dost never fight  
 But when her humorous ladyship is by  
 To teach thee safety! Thou art perjured too,  
 And sooth'st up greatness. What a fool art thou,  
 A ramping fool, to brag, and stamp, and swear,  
 Upon my party! Thou cold-blooded slave,  
 Hast thou not spoke like thunder on my side,  
 Been sworn my soldier, bidding me depend  
 Upon thy stars, thy fortune, and thy strength?  
 And dost thou now fall over to my foes?  
 Thou wear a lion's hide! Doff it for shame,  
 And hang a calfskin on those recreant limbs.

Austria O that a man should speak those words to me!

Bastard And hang a calfskin on those recreant limbs.

Austria Thou dar'st not say so, villain, for thy life.

Bastard And hang a calfskin on those recreant limbs.

King John We like not this; thou dost forget thyself.

**Enter PANDULPH.**

King Philip Here comes the holy legate of the Pope.

Pandulph Hail, you anointed deputies of heaven.  
 To thee, King John, my holy errand is.  
 I Pandulph, of fair Milan cardinal,  
 And from Pope Innocent the legate here,  
 Do in his name religiously demand  
 Why thou against the church, our holy mother,  
 So wilfully dost spurn, and force perforce  
 Keep Stephen Langton, chosen Archbishop  
 Of Canterbury, from that holy see.  
 This, in our foresaid holy father's name,  
 Pope Innocent, I do demand of thee.

King John What earthy name to interrogatories  
 Can taste the free breath of a sacred king?  
 Thou canst not, cardinal, devise a name  
 So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous,  
 To charge me to an answer, as the Pope.  
 Tell him this tale; and from the mouth of England  
 Add thus much more: that no Italian priest  
 Shall tithe or toll in our dominions;  
 But as we, under God, are supreme head,  
 So, under Him, that great supremacy  
 Where we do reign we will alone uphold,  
 Without th' assistance of a mortal hand.  
 So tell the Pope, all reverence set apart  
 To him and his usurped authority.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

King Philip            Brother of England, you blaspheme in this.

King John             Though you and all the kings of Christendom  
Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,  
Dreading the curse that money may buy out,  
And by the merit of vile gold, dross, dust,  
Purchase corrupted pardon of a man,  
Who in that sale sells pardon from himself;  
Though you and all the rest so grossly led  
This juggling witchcraft with revenue cherish,  
Yet I alone, alone do me oppose  
Against the Pope, and count his friends my foes.

Pandulph              Then, by the lawful power that I have,  
Thou shalt stand cursed and excommunicate;  
And blessed shall he be that doth revolt  
From his allegiance to an heretic;  
And meritorious shall that hand be called,  
Canonized and worshipped as a saint,  
That takes away by any secret course  
Thy hateful life.

Constance             O, lawful let it be  
That I have room with Rome to curse awhile!  
Good father cardinal, cry thou amen  
To my keen curses; for without my wrong  
There is no tongue hath power to curse him right.

Pandulph              There's law and warrant, lady, for my curse.

Constance             And for mine too. When law can do no right,  
Let it be lawful that law bar no wrong.  
Law cannot give my child his kingdom here,  
For he that holds his kingdom holds the law;  
Therefore, since law itself is perfect wrong,  
How can the law forbid my tongue to curse?

Pandulph              Philip of France, on peril of a curse,  
Let go the hand of that arch-heretic,  
And raise the power of France upon his head,  
Unless he do submit himself to Rome.

Eleanor                Look'st thou pale, France? Do not let go thy hand.

Constance             Look to that, devil, lest that France repent,  
And by disjoining hands, hell lose a soul.

Austria                King Philip, listen to the cardinal.

Bastard                And hang a calfskin on his recreant limbs.

Austria                Well, ruffian, I must pocket up these wrongs,  
Because -

Bastard                Your breeches best may carry them.

King John             Philip, what sayst thou to the cardinal?

Constance             What should he say, but as the cardinal?

Dauphin                Bethink you, father, for the difference  
Is purchase of a heavy curse from Rome,  
Or the light loss of England for a friend.  
Forego the easier.

Blanche                That's the curse of Rome.

Constance             O Lewis, stand fast! The devil tempts thee here  
In likeness of a new untrimmed bride.

Blanche                The Lady Constance speaks not from her faith,  
But from her need.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Constance O, if thou grant my need,  
Which only lives but by the death of faith,  
That need must needs infer this principle:  
  
That faith would live again by death of need.  
O then, tread down my need, and faith mounts up;  
Keep my need up, and faith is trodden down.

King John The king is moved, and answers not to this.

Constance O, be removed from him, and answer well!

Austria Do so, King Philip; hang no more in doubt.

Bastard Hang nothing but a calfskin, most sweet lout.

King Philip I am perplexed, and know not what to say.

Pandulph What canst thou say but will perplex thee more,  
If thou stand excommunicate and cursed?

King Philip Good reverend father, make my person yours,  
And tell me how you would bestow yourself.  
This royal hand and mine are newly knit,  
And the conjunction of our inward souls  
Married in league, coupled and linked together  
With all religious strength of sacred vows;  
The latest breath that gave the sound of words  
Was deep-sworn faith, peace, amity, true love,  
Between our kingdoms and our royal selves;  
And even before this truce, but new before,  
No longer than we well could wash our hands  
To clap this royal bargain up of peace,  
Heaven knows, they were besmeared and overstained  
With slaughter's pencil, where revenge did paint  
The fearful difference of incensed kings.  
And shall these hands, so lately purged of blood,  
So newly joined in love, so strong in both,  
Unyoke this seizure and this kind regreet,  
Play fast and loose with faith, so jest with heaven,  
Make such unconstant children of ourselves,  
As now again to snatch our palm from palm,  
Unswear faith sworn, and on the marriage-bed  
Of smiling peace to march a bloody host,  
And make a riot on the gentle brow  
Of true sincerity? O, holy sir,  
My reverend father, let it not be so.  
Out of your grace, devise, ordain, impose  
Some gentle order; and then we shall be blest  
To do your pleasure and continue friends.

Pandulph All form is formless, order orderless,  
Save what is opposite to England's love.  
Therefore to arms! Be champion of our church,  
Or let the church, our mother, breathe her curse,  
A mother's curse, on her revolting son.  
France, thou mayst hold a serpent by the tongue,  
A chafed lion by the mortal paw,  
A fasting tiger safer by the tooth,  
Than keep in peace that hand which thou dost hold.

King Philip I may disjoin my hand, but not my faith.

Pandulph So mak'st thou faith an enemy to faith,  
And, like a civil war, sett'st oath to oath,  
Thy tongue against thy tongue. O, let thy vow  
First made to heaven, first be to heaven performed,  
That is, to be the champion of our church.  
What since thou swor'st is sworn against thyself,  
And may not be performed by thyself;  
For that which thou hast sworn to do amiss

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Is not amiss when it is truly done;  
 And being not done, where doing tends to ill,  
 The truth is then most done not doing it.  
 The better act of purposes mistook  
 Is to mistake again; though indirect,  
 Yet indirection thereby grows direct,  
 And falsehood falsehood cures, as fire cools fire  
 Within the scorched veins of one new-burned.  
 It is religion that doth make vows kept;  
 But thou hast sworn against religion  
 By what thou swear'st against the thing thou swear'st,  
 And mak'st an oath the surety for thy truth  
 Against an oath. The truth thou art unsure  
 To swear swears only not to be forsworn;  
 Else what a mockery should it be to swear!  
 But thou dost swear only to be forsworn,  
 And most forsworn to keep what thou dost swear;  
 Therefore thy later vows against thy first  
 Is in thyself rebellion to thyself;  
 And better conquest never canst thou make  
 Than arm thy constant and thy nobler parts  
 Against these giddy loose suggestions;  
 Upon which better part our prayers come in,  
 If thou vouchsafe them. But if not, then know  
 The peril of our curses light on thee  
 So heavy as thou shalt not shake them off,  
 But in despair die under their black weight.

Austria	Rebellion, flat rebellion!
Bastard	Will't not be? Will not a calfskin stop that mouth of thine?
Dauphin	Father, to arms!
Blanche	Upon thy wedding-day? Against the blood that thou hast married? What, shall our feast be kept with slaughtered men? Shall braying trumpets and loud churlish drums, Clamours of hell, be measures to our pomp? O husband, hear me! Ay, alack, how new Is 'husband' in my mouth! Even for that name, Which till this time my tongue did ne'er pronounce, Upon my knee I beg, go not to arms Against mine uncle.
Constance	O, upon my knee, Made hard with kneeling, I do pray to thee, Thou virtuous Dauphin, alter not the doom Forethought by heaven.
Blanche	Now shall I see thy love: what motive may Be stronger with thee than the name of wife?
Constance	That which upholdeth him that thee upholds, His honour. O thine honour, Lewis, thine honour!
Dauphin	I muse your majesty doth seem so cold, When such profound respects do pull you on.
Pandulph	I will denounce a curse upon his head.
King Philip	Thou shalt not need. England, I will fall from thee.
Constance	O fair return of banished majesty!
Eleanor	O foul revolt of French inconstancy!
King John	France, thou shalt rue this hour within this hour.
Bastard	Old Time the clock-setter, that bald sexton Time, Is it as he will? Well then, France shall rue.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Blanche           The sun's o'ercast with blood. Fair day, adieu!  
Which is the side that I must go withal?  
I am with both: each army hath a hand,  
And in their rage, I having hold of both,  
They whirl asunder and dismember me.  
Husband, I cannot pray that thou mayst win;  
Uncle, I needs must pray that thou mayst lose;  
Father, I may not wish the fortune thine;  
Grandam, I will not wish thy wishes thrive.  
Whoever wins, on that side shall I lose -  
Assured loss before the match be played.

Dauphin           Lady, with me, with me thy fortune lies.

Blanche           There where my fortune lives, there my life dies.

King John         Cousin, go draw our puissance together.

**Exit BASTARD.**

France, I am burned up with inflaming wrath;  
A rage whose heat hath this condition:  
That nothing can allay, nothing but blood,  
The blood, and dearest-valued blood of France.

King Philip       Thy rage shall burn thee up and thou shalt turn  
To ashes ere our blood shall quench that fire.  
Look to thyself, thou art in jeopardy.

King John         No more than he that threats. To arms let's hie!

**Exeunt**

**Scene 2. Plains near Angiers.**

Alarums. Excursions.  
Enter BASTARD with AUSTRIA'S head.

Bastard           Now, by my life, this day grows wondrous hot;  
Some airy devil hovers in the sky  
And pours down mischief. Austria's head lie there,  
While Philip breathes.

**Enter KING JOHN, ARTHUR, and HUBERT.**

King John         Hubert, keep this boy. Philip, make up;  
My mother is assailed in our tent,  
And ta'en, I fear.

Bastard           My lord, I rescued her;  
Her highness is in safety, fear you not.  
But on, my liege, for very little pains  
Will bring this labour to an happy end.

**Exeunt**

**Scene 3. The Same.**

Alarums. Excursions. Retreat.  
Enter KING JOHN, ELEANOR, ARTHUR, BASTARD, HUBERT, and LORDS.

King John         [To ELEANOR] So shall it be: your grace shall stay behind  
So strongly guarded. [To ARTHUR] Cousin, look not sad;  
Thy grandam loves thee, and thy uncle will

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

As dear be to thee as thy father was.

- Arthur O, this will make my mother die with grief.
- King John [To BASTARD] Cousin, away for England! Haste before,  
And ere our coming see thou shake the bags  
Of hoarding abbots - imprisoned angels  
Set at liberty. The fat ribs of peace  
Must by the hungry now be fed upon.  
Use our commission in his utmost force.
- Bastard Bell, book, and candle shall not drive me back  
When gold and silver beck me to come on.  
I leave your highness. Grandam, I will pray,  
If ever I remember to be holy,  
For your fair safety; so I kiss your hand.
- Eleanor Farewell, gentle cousin.
- King John Coz, farewell.
- Exit BASTARD.**
- Eleanor [Taking ARTHUR aside]  
Come hither, little kinsman; hark, a word.
- King John Come hither, Hubert. O my gentle Hubert,  
We owe thee much. Within this wall of flesh  
There is a soul counts thee her creditor,  
And with advantage means to pay thy love;  
And, my good friend, thy voluntary oath  
Lives in this bosom, dearly cherished.  
Give me thy hand. I had a thing to say,  
But I will fit it with some better tune.  
By heaven, Hubert, I am almost ashamed  
To say what good respect I have of thee.
- Hubert I am much bounden to your majesty.
- King John Good friend, thou hast no cause to say so yet,  
But thou shalt have; and creep time ne'er so slow,  
Yet it shall come for me to do thee good.  
I had a thing to say, but let it go;  
The sun is in the heaven, and the proud day,  
Attended with the pleasures of the world,  
Is all too wanton and too full of gauds  
To give me audience. If the midnight bell  
Did with his iron tongue and brazen mouth  
Sound on into the drowsy race of night;  
If this same were a churchyard where we stand,  
And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs;  
Or if that surly spirit, melancholy,  
Had baked thy blood and made it heavy-thick,  
Which else runs tickling up and down the veins,  
Making that idiot, laughter, keep men's eyes  
And strain their cheeks to idle merriment,  
A passion hateful to my purposes;  
Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes,  
Hear me without thine ears, and make reply  
Without a tongue, using conceit alone,  
Without eyes, ears, and harmful sound of words;  
Then in despite of brooded watchful day  
I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts.  
But, ah, I will not. Yet I love thee well;  
And, by my troth, I think thou lov'st me well.
- Hubert So well, that what you bid me undertake,  
Though that my death were adjunct to my act,  
By heaven, I would do it.
- King John Do not I know thou wouldst?  
Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye

On yon young boy. I'll tell thee what, my friend,  
He is a very serpent in my way,  
And wheresoe'er this foot of mine doth tread,  
He lies before me. Dost thou understand me?  
Thou art his keeper.

Hubert                   And I'll keep him so  
That he shall not offend your majesty.

King John               Death.

Hubert                   My lord?

King John               A grave.

Hubert                   He shall not live.

King John               Enough.  
I could be merry now. Hubert, I love thee.  
Well, I'll not say what I intend for thee.  
Remember. [To ELEANOR] Madam, fare you well;  
I'll send those powers o'er to your majesty.

Eleanor                 My blessing go with thee!

King John               [To ARTHUR] For England, cousin, go.  
Hubert shall be your man, attend on you  
With all true duty. On toward Calais, ho!

**Exeunt**

#### Scene 4. King Philip's Tent.

**Enter** KING PHILIP, DAUPHIN, PANDULPH, ATTENDANTS.

King Philip             So, by a roaring tempest on the flood  
A whole armado of convicted sail  
Is scattered and disjoined from fellowship.

Pandulph               Courage and comfort; all shall yet go well.

King Philip             What can go well when we have run so ill?  
Are we not beaten? Is not Angiers lost?  
Arthur ta'en prisoner? Divers dear friends slain?  
And bloody England into England gone,  
O'erbearing interruption spite of France?

Dauphin                 What he hath won, that hath he fortified.  
So hot a speed with such advice disposed,  
Such temperate order in so fierce a cause,  
Doth want example: who hath read or heard  
Of any kindred action like to this?

King Philip             Well could I bear that England had this praise,  
So we could find some pattern of our shame.

**Enter** CONSTANCE.

Look, who comes here! - a grave unto a soul,  
Holding th' eternal spirit, against her will,  
In the vile prison of afflicted breath.  
I prithee, lady, go away with me.

Constance              Lo, now - now see the issue of your peace!

King Philip             Patience, good lady. Comfort, gentle Constance.

Constance              No, I defy all counsel, all redress,

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

But that which ends all counsel, true redress:  
 Death, death, O amiable lovely death!  
 Thou odoriferous stench! Sound rottenness!  
 Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,  
 Thou hate and terror to prosperity,  
 And I will kiss thy detestable bones,  
 And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows,  
 And ring these fingers with thy household worms,  
 And stop this gap of breath with fulsome dust,  
 And be a carrion monster like thyself.  
 Come, grin on me, and I will think thou smil'st,  
 And buss thee as thy wife. Misery's love,  
 O come to me!

King Philip

O fair affliction, peace.

Constance

No, no, I will not, having breath to cry.  
 O that my tongue were in the thunder's mouth!  
 Then with a passion would I shake the world,  
 And rouse from sleep that fell anatomy  
 Which cannot hear a lady's feeble voice,  
 Which scorns a modern invocation.

Pandulph

Lady, you utter madness, and not sorrow.

Constance

Thou art not holy to belie me so.  
 I am not mad. This hair I tear is mine;  
 My name is Constance; I was Geoffrey's wife;  
 Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost.  
 I am not mad - I would to heaven I were!  
 For then 'tis like I should forget myself -  
 O, if I could, what grief should I forget!  
 Preach some philosophy to make me mad  
 And thou shalt be canonized, cardinal;  
 For, being not mad, but sensible of grief,  
 My reasonable part produces reason  
 How I may be delivered of these woes,  
 And teaches me to kill or hang myself.  
 If I were mad I should forget my son,  
 Or madly think a babe of clouts were he.  
 I am not mad - too well, too well I feel  
 The different plague of each calamity.

King Philip

Bind up those tresses. O, what love I note  
 In the fair multitude of those her hairs!  
 Where but by chance a silver drop hath fall'n,  
 Even to that drop ten thousand wiry friends  
 Do glue themselves in sociable grief,  
 Like true, inseparable, faithful loves,  
 Sticking together in calamity.

Constance

To England, if you will.

King Philip

Bind up your hairs.

Constance

Yes, that I will - and wherefore will I do it?  
 I tore them from their bonds, and cried aloud  
 "O that these hands could so redeem my son  
 As they have given these hairs their liberty!"  
 But now I envy at their liberty,  
 And will again commit them to their bonds,  
 Because my poor child is a prisoner.  
 And, father cardinal, I have heard you say  
 That we shall see and know our friends in heaven:  
 If that be true, I shall see my boy again;  
 For since the birth of Cain, the first male child,  
 To him that did but yesterday suspire,  
 There was not such a gracious creature born.  
 But now will canker-sorrow eat my bud  
 And chase the native beauty from his cheek,  
 And he will look as hollow as a ghost,

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

As dim and meagre as an ague's fit,  
And so he'll die; and, rising so again,  
When I shall meet him in the court of heaven

I shall not know him. Therefore never, never  
Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.

Pandulph You hold too heinous a respect of grief.

Constance He talks to me that never had a son.

King Philip You are as fond of grief as of your child.

Constance Grief fills the room up of my absent child,  
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,  
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,  
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,  
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form;  
Then have I reason to be fond of grief?  
Fare you well. Had you such a loss as I,  
I could give better comfort than you do.  
I will not keep this form upon my head  
When there is such disorder in my wit.  
O Lord! My boy, my Arthur, my fair son!  
My life, my joy, my food, my all the world!  
My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure!

**Exit**

King Philip I fear some outrage, and I'll follow her.

**Exit**

Dauphin There's nothing in this world can make me joy.  
Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale  
Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man;  
And bitter shame hath spoiled the sweet word's taste,  
That it yields nought but shame and bitterness.

Pandulph Before the curing of a strong disease,  
Even in the instant of repair and health,  
The fit is strongest. Evils that take leave,  
On their departure most of all show evil.  
What have you lost by losing of this day?

Dauphin All days of glory, joy, and happiness.

Pandulph If you had won it, certainly you had.  
No, no; when fortune means to men most good  
She looks upon them with a threat'ning eye.  
'Tis strange to think how much King John hath lost  
In this which he accounts so clearly won.  
Are not you grieved that Arthur is his prisoner?

Dauphin As heartily as he is glad he hath him.

Pandulph Your mind is all as youthful as your blood.  
Now hear me speak with a prophetic spirit,  
For even the breath of what I mean to speak  
Shall blow each dust, each straw, each little rub,  
Out of the path which shall directly lead  
Thy foot to England's throne; and therefore mark.  
John hath seized Arthur, and it cannot be  
That whiles warm life plays in that infant's veins  
The misplaced John should entertain an hour,  
One minute, nay, one quiet breath, of rest.  
A sceptre snatched with an unruly hand  
Must be as boisterously maintained as gained;  
And he that stands upon a slipp'ry place  
Makes nice of no vile hold to stay him up.  
That John may stand, then Arthur needs must fall;  
So be it, for it cannot but be so.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Dauphin But what shall I gain by young Arthur's fall?

Pandulph You, in the right of Lady Blanche your wife,  
May then make all the claim that Arthur did.

Dauphin And lose it, life and all, as Arthur did.

Pandulph How green you are and fresh in this old world!  
John lays you plots; the times conspire with you;  
For he that steeps his safety in true blood  
Shall find but bloody safety and untrue.  
This act so evilly borne shall cool the hearts  
Of all his people, and freeze up their zeal,  
That none so small advantage shall step forth  
To check his reign but they will cherish it;  
No natural exhalation in the sky,  
No scope of nature, no distempered day,  
No common wind, no custom'd event,  
But they will pluck away his natural cause  
And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,  
Abortives, presages, and tongues of heaven,  
Plainly denouncing vengeance upon John.

Dauphin Maybe he will not touch young Arthur's life,  
But hold himself safe in his prisonment.

Pandulph O, sir, when he shall hear of your approach,  
If that young Arthur be not gone already,  
Even at that news he dies; and then the hearts  
Of all his people shall revolt from him,  
And kiss the lips of unacquainted change,  
And pick strong matter of revolt and wrath  
Out of the bloody fingers' ends of John.  
Methinks I see this hurly all on foot;  
And, O, what better matter breeds for you  
Than I have named! The bastard Falconbridge  
Is now in England ransacking the Church,  
Offending charity - if but a dozen French  
Were there in arms, they would be as a call  
To train ten thousand English to their side,  
Or as a little snow, tumbled about,  
Anon becomes a mountain. O noble Dauphin,  
Go with me to the king. 'Tis wonderful  
What may be wrought out of their discontent  
Now that their souls are topful of offence.  
For England go; I will whet on the king.

Dauphin Strong reasons makes strange actions. Let us go;  
If you say ay, the king will not say no.

**Exeunt**

## ACT 4.

### Scene 1. England. A Room in a Castle.

**Enter** HUBERT and EXECUTIONERS.

Hubert                    Heat me these irons hot; and look thou stand  
                                 Within the arras. When I strike my foot  
                                 Upon the bosom of the ground, rush forth  
                                 And bind the boy which you shall find with me  
                                 Fast to the chair. Be heedful. Hence, and watch.

Executioner            I hope your warrant will bear out the deed.

Hubert                    Uncleanly scruples! Fear not you. Look to't.  
                                 [EXECUTIONERS hide behind the arras.

                                 Young lad, come forth; I have to say with you.

**Enter** ARTHUR.

Arthur                    Good morrow, Hubert.

Hubert                    Good morrow, little prince.

Arthur                    As little prince, having so great a title  
                                 To be more prince, as may be. You are sad.

Hubert                    Indeed I have been merrier.

Arthur                    Mercy on me!  
                                 Methinks nobody should be sad but I.  
                                 Yet I remember, when I was in France,  
                                 Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,  
                                 Only for wantonness. By my christendom,  
                                 So I were out of prison and kept sheep  
                                 I should be as merry as the day is long;  
                                 And so I would be here but that I doubt  
                                 My uncle practises more harm to me.  
                                 He is afraid of me, and I of him.  
                                 Is it my fault that I was Geoffrey's son?  
                                 No indeed is't not; and I would to heaven  
                                 I were your son, so you would love me, Hubert!

Hubert                    [Aside] If I talk to him, with his innocent prate  
                                 He will awake my mercy, which lies dead;  
                                 Therefore I will be sudden, and dispatch.

Arthur                    Are you sick, Hubert? You look pale today.  
                                 In sooth, I would you were a little sick,  
                                 That I might sit all night and watch with you.  
                                 I warrant I love you more than you do me.

Hubert                    [Aside] His words do take possession of my bosom.  
                                 Read here, young Arthur.  
                                 [Showing the warrant.

                                 [Aside] How now, foolish rheum  
                                 Turning despiteous torture out of door?  
                                 I must be brief, lest resolution drop  
                                 Out at mine eyes in tender womanish tears.  
                                 Can you not read it? Is it not fair writ?

Arthur                    Too fairly, Hubert, for so foul effect.  
                                 Must you with hot irons burn out both mine eyes?

Hubert                    Young boy, I must.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Arthur                   And will you?

Hubert                   And I will.

Arthur                   Have you the heart? When your head did but ache  
I knit my handkercher about your brows,  
- The best I had, a princess wrought it me -  
And I did never ask it you again;  
And with my hand at midnight held your head,  
And like the watchful minutes to the hour  
Still and anon cheered up the heavy time,  
Saying "What lack you?" and "Where lies your grief?"  
Or "What good love may I perform for you?"  
Many a poor man's son would have lain still  
And ne'er have spoke a loving word to you;  
But you at your sick service had a prince.  
Nay, you may think my love was crafty love,  
And call it cunning - do, and if you will.  
If heaven be pleased that you must use me ill,  
Why then you must. Will you put out mine eyes,  
These eyes that never did nor never shall  
So much as frown on you.

Hubert                   I have sworn to do it,  
And with hot irons must I burn them out.

Arthur                   Ah, none but in this iron age would do it.  
The iron of itself, though heat red-hot,  
Approaching near these eyes would drink my tears  
And quench this fiery indignation  
Even in the matter of mine innocence;  
Nay, after that, consume away in rust  
But for containing fire to harm mine eye.  
Are you more stubborn-hard than hammered iron?  
And if an angel should have come to me  
And told me Hubert should put out mine eyes,  
I would not have believed him - no tongue but Hubert's.

Hubert                   [Stamping] Come forth. Do as I bid you do.

The EXECUTIONERS advance.

Arthur                   O save me, Hubert, save me! My eyes are out  
Even with the fierce looks of these bloody men.

Hubert                   Give me the iron, I say, and bind him here.

Arthur                   Alas, what need you be so boist'rous rough?  
I will not struggle, I will stand stone-still.  
For heaven sake, Hubert, let me not be bound!  
Nay, hear me, Hubert, drive these men away,  
And I will sit as quiet as a lamb;  
I will not stir, nor winch, nor speak a word,  
Nor look upon the iron angerly.  
Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you  
Whatever torment you do put me to.

Hubert                   Go stand within; let me alone with him.

Executioner            I am best pleased to be from such a deed.

**Exeunt EXECUTIONERS.**

Arthur                   Alas, I then have chid away my friend!  
He hath a stern look, but a gentle heart.  
Let him come back, that his compassion may  
Give life to yours.

Hubert                   Come, boy, prepare yourself.

Arthur                   Is there no remedy?

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Hubert None, but to lose your eyes.

Arthur O heaven, that there were but a mote in yours,  
A grain, a dust, a gnat, a wandering hair,  
Any annoyance in that precious sense!  
Then, feeling what small things are boisterous there,  
Your vile intent must needs seem horrible.

Hubert Is this your promise? Go to, hold your tongue.

Arthur Hubert, the utterance of a brace of tongues  
Must needs want pleading for a pair of eyes.  
Let me not hold my tongue, let me not, Hubert;  
Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue  
So I may keep mine eyes. O spare mine eyes,  
Though to no use but still to look on you.  
Lo, by my troth, the instrument is cold  
And would not harm me.

Hubert I can heat it, boy.

Arthur No, in good sooth, the fire is dead with grief,  
Being create for comfort, to be used  
In undeserved extremes. See else yourself.  
There is no malice in this burning coal;  
The breath of heaven hath blown his spirit out,  
And strewed repentant ashes on his head.

Hubert But with my breath I can revive it, boy.

Arthur And if you do, you will but make it blush  
And glow with shame of your proceedings, Hubert.  
Nay, it perchance will sparkle in your eyes,  
And, like a dog that is compelled to fight,  
Snatch at his master that doth tarre him on.  
All things that you should use to do me wrong  
Deny their office; only you do lack  
That mercy which fierce fire and iron extends,  
Creatures of note for mercy-lacking uses.

Hubert Well, see to live; I will not touch thine eye  
For all the treasure that thine uncle owes.  
Yet am I sworn, and I did purpose, boy,  
With this same very iron to burn them out.

Arthur O now you look like Hubert. All this while  
You were disguised.

Hubert Peace; no more. Adieu.  
Your uncle must not know but you are dead.  
I'll fill these dogged spies with false reports,  
And, pretty child, sleep doubtless and secure  
That Hubert, for the wealth of all the world,  
Will not offend thee.

Arthur O heaven! I thank you, Hubert.

Hubert Silence; no more. Go closely in with me.  
Much danger do I undergo for thee.

**Exeunt**

**Scene 2. King John's Palace.**

**Enter** KING JOHN, PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and other LORDS.  
KING JOHN sits on the throne.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

- King John Here once again we sit, once again crowned,  
And looked upon, I hope, with cheerful eyes.
- Pembroke This "once again", but that your highness pleased,  
Was once superfluous: you were crowned before,  
And that high royalty was ne'er plucked off,  
The faiths of men ne'er stained with revolt;  
Fresh expectation troubled not the land  
With any longed-for change or better state.
- Salisbury Therefore, to be possessed with double pomp,  
To guard a title that was rich before,  
To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,  
To throw a perfume on the violet,  
To smooth the ice, or add another hue  
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light  
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,  
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.
- Pembroke But that your royal pleasure must be done,  
This act is as an ancient tale new-told,  
And in the last repeating troublesome,  
Being urged at a time unseasonable.
- Salisbury In this the antique and well-noted face  
Of plain old form is much disfigured,  
And like a shifted wind unto a sail  
It makes the course of thoughts to fetch about,  
Startles and frights consideration,  
Makes sound opinion sick and truth suspected,  
For putting on so new a fashioned robe.
- Pembroke When workmen strive to do better than well,  
They do confound their skill in covetousness;  
And oftentimes excusing of a fault  
Doth make the fault the worse by th' excuse;  
As patches set upon a little breach  
Discredit more in hiding of the fault  
Than did the fault before it was so patched.
- Salisbury To this effect before you were new-crowned  
We breathed our counsel; but it pleased your highness  
To overbear it, and we are all well pleased,  
Since all and every part of what we would  
Doth make a stand at what your highness will.
- King John Some reasons of this double coronation  
I have possessed you with, and think them strong;  
And more, more strong, when lesser is my fear,  
I shall indue you with. Meantime but ask  
What you would have reformed that is not well,  
And well shall you perceive how willingly  
I will both hear and grant you your requests.
- Pembroke Then I - as one that am the tongue of these,  
To sound the purposes of all their hearts,  
Both for myself and them, but chief of all  
Your safety, for the which myself and them  
Bend their best studies - heartily request  
Th' enfranchisement of Arthur, whose restraint  
Doth move the murmuring lips of discontent  
To break into this dangerous argument:  
If what in rest you have in right you hold,  
Why then your fears, which, as they say, attend  
The steps of wrong, should move you to mew up  
Your tender kinsman, and to choke his days  
With barbarous ignorance, and deny his youth  
The rich advantage of good exercise?  
That the time's enemies may not have this  
To grace occasions, let it be our suit  
That you have bid us ask his liberty;

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Which for our goods we do no further ask  
Than whereupon our weal, on you depending,  
Counts it your weal he have his liberty.

**Enter HUBERT.**

King John           Let it be so. I do commit his youth  
                          To your direction.  
                          [Taking HUBERT aside.  
                          Hubert, what news with you?

Pembroke           This is the man should do the bloody deed:  
                          He showed his warrant to a friend of mine.  
                          The image of a wicked heinous fault  
                          Lives in his eye; that close aspect of his  
                          Do show the mood of a much troubled breast,  
                          And I do fearfully believe 'tis done  
                          What we so feared he had a charge to do.

Salisbury           The colour of the king doth come and go  
                          Between his purpose and his conscience,  
                          Like heralds 'twixt two dreadful battles set.  
                          His passion is so ripe it needs must break.

Pembroke           And when it breaks, I fear will issue thence  
                          The foul corruption of a sweet child's death.

King John           We cannot hold mortality's strong hand.  
                          Good lords, although my will to give is living,  
                          The suit which you demand is gone and dead.  
                          He tells us Arthur is deceased tonight.

Salisbury           Indeed we feared his sickness was past cure.

Pembroke           Indeed we heard how near his death he was,  
                          Before the child himself felt he was sick.  
                          This must be answered, either here or hence.

King John           Why do you bend such solemn brows on me?  
                          Think you I bear the shears of destiny?  
                          Have I commandment on the pulse of life?

Salisbury           It is apparent foul play; and 'tis shame  
                          That greatness should so grossly offer it.  
                          So thrive it in your game! And so farewell.  
                          [Going.

Pembroke           Stay yet, Lord Salisbury; I'll go with thee,  
                          And find th' inheritance of this poor child,  
                          His little kingdom of a forced grave.  
                          That blood which owed the breadth of all this isle  
                          Three foot of it doth hold - bad world the while!  
                          This must not be thus borne; this will break out  
                          To all our sorrows, and ere long I doubt.

**Exeunt SALISBURY, PEMBROKE and LORDS.**

King John           They burn in indignation. I repent.  
                          There is no sure foundation set on blood,  
                          No certain life achieved by others' death.

**Enter MESSENGER.**

A fearful eye thou hast. Where is that blood  
That I have seen inhabit in those cheeks?  
So foul a sky clears not without a storm:  
Pour down thy weather - how goes all in France?

Messenger         From France to England. Never such a power  
                          For any foreign preparation  
                          Was levied in the body of a land.  
                          The copy of your speed is learned by them,

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

For when you should be told they do prepare,  
The tidings comes that they are all arrived.

King John           O, where hath our intelligence been drunk?  
Where hath it slept? Where is my mother's care,  
That such an army could be drawn in France  
And she not hear of it?

Messenger         My liege, her ear  
Is stopped with dust: the first of April died  
Your noble mother; and, as I hear, my lord,  
The Lady Constance in a frenzy died  
Three days before. But this from rumour's tongue  
I idly heard; if true or false I know not.

King John           Withhold thy speed, dreadful occasion!  
O, make a league with me till I have pleased  
My discontented peers. What, mother dead!  
How wildly then walks my estate in France!  
Under whose conduct came those powers of France  
That thou for truth giv'st out are landed here?

Messenger         Under the Dauphin.

**Enter** BASTARD and PETER OF POMFRET.

King John           Thou hast made me giddy  
With these ill tidings.  
[To BASTARD] Now, what says the world  
To your proceedings? Do not seek to stuff  
My head with more ill news, for it is full.

Bastard             But if you be afeard to hear the worst,  
Then let the worst unheard fall on your head.

King John           Bear with me, cousin, for I was amazed  
Under the tide; but now I breathe again  
Aloft the flood, and can give audience  
To any tongue, speak it of what it will.

Bastard             How I have sped among the clergymen  
The sums I have collected shall express.  
But as I travelled hither through the land,  
I find the people strangely fantasied,  
Possessed with rumours, full of idle dreams,  
Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear.  
And here's a prophet that I brought with me  
From forth the streets of Pomfret, whom I found  
With many hundreds treading on his heels;  
To whom he sung, in rude harsh-sounding rhymes,  
That, ere the next Ascension-day at noon,  
Your highness should deliver up your crown.

King John           Thou idle dreamer, wherefore didst thou so?

Peter                Foreknowing that the truth will fall out so.

King John           Hubert, away with him, imprison him;  
And on that day at noon whereon he says  
I shall yield up my crown, let him be hanged.  
Deliver him to safety, and return,  
For I must use thee.

**Exit** HUBERT with PETER.

O my gentle cousin,  
Hear'st thou the news abroad, who are arrived?

Bastard             The French, my lord: men's mouths are full of it.  
Besides, I met Lord Bigot and Lord Salisbury  
With eyes as red as new-enkindled fire,  
And others more, going to seek the grave

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Of Arthur, whom they say is killed tonight  
On your suggestion.

King John           Gentle kinsman, go  
                          And thrust thyself into their companies.  
                          I have a way to win their loves again;  
                          Bring them before me.

Bastard             I will seek them out.

King John           Nay, but make haste - the better foot before.  
                          O, let me have no subject enemies  
                          When adverse foreigners affright my towns  
                          With dreadful pomp of stout invasion.  
                          Be Mercury, set feathers to thy heels,  
                          And fly like thought from them to me again.

Bastard             The spirit of the time shall teach me speed.

**Exit**

King John           Spoke like a sprightly noble gentleman.  
                          [To MESSENGER] Go after him; for he perhaps shall need  
                          Some messenger betwixt me and the peers;  
                          And be thou he.

Messenger         With all my heart, my liege.

**Exit**

King John           My mother dead!

**Re-enter HUBERT.**

Hubert             My lord, they say five moons were seen tonight:  
                          Four fixed, and the fifth did whirl about  
                          The other four in wondrous motion.

King John           Five moons?

Hubert             Old men and beldams in the streets  
                          Do prophesy upon it dangerously.  
                          Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths,  
                          And when they talk of him they shake their heads,  
                          And whisper one another in the ear;  
                          And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,  
                          Whilst he that hears makes fearful action,  
                          With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.  
                          I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus,  
                          The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,  
                          With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news,  
                          Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,  
                          Standing on slippers which his nimble haste  
                          Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,  
                          Told of a many thousand warlike French  
                          That were embattailed and ranked in Kent.  
                          Another lean unwashed artificer  
                          Cuts off his tale, and talks of Arthur's death.

King John           Why seek'st thou to possess me with these fears?  
                          Why urgest thou so oft young Arthur's death?  
                          Thy hand hath murdered him. I had a mighty cause  
                          To wish him dead, but thou hadst none to kill him.

Hubert             No had, my lord? Why, did you not provoke me?

King John           It is the curse of kings to be attended  
                          By slaves that take their humours for a warrant  
                          To break within the bloody house of life,  
                          And on the winking of authority  
                          To understand a law, to know the meaning  
                          Of dangerous majesty, when perchance it frowns

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

More upon humour than advised respect.

Hubert

Here is your hand and seal for what I did.

King John

O, when the last account 'twixt heaven and earth  
Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal  
Witness against us to damnation!  
How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds  
Make deeds ill done! Hadst not thou been by,  
A fellow by the hand of nature marked,  
Quoted and signed to do a deed of shame,  
This murder had not come into my mind;  
But taking note of thy abhorred aspect,  
Finding thee fit for bloody villainy,  
Apt, liable to be employed in danger,  
I faintly broke with thee of Arthur's death;  
And thou, to be endeared to a king,  
Made it no conscience to destroy a prince.

Hubert

My lord -

King John

Hadst thou but shook thy head or made a pause  
When I spake darkly what I purposed,  
Or turned an eye of doubt upon my face,  
As bid me tell my tale in express words,  
Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,  
And those thy fears might have wrought fears in me.  
But thou didst understand me by my signs,  
And didst in signs again parley with sin;  
Yea, without stop, didst let thy heart consent,  
And consequently thy rude hand to act  
The deed which both our tongues held vile to name.  
Out of my sight, and never see me more!  
My nobles leave me, and my state is braved,  
Even at my gates, with ranks of foreign powers;  
Nay, in the body of this fleshly land,  
This kingdom, this confine of blood and breath,  
Hostility and civil tumult reigns  
Between my conscience and my cousin's death.

Hubert

Arm you against your other enemies;  
I'll make a peace between your soul and you.  
Young Arthur is alive: this hand of mine  
Is yet a maiden and an innocent hand,  
Not painted with the crimson spots of blood.  
Within this bosom never entered yet  
The dreadful motion of a murderous thought;  
And you have slandered nature in my form,  
Which, howsoever rude exteriorly,  
Is yet the cover of a fairer mind  
Than to be butcher of an innocent child.

King John

Doth Arthur live? O, haste thee to the peers;  
Throw this report on their incensed rage  
And make them tame to their obedience.  
Forgive the comment that my passion made  
Upon thy feature, for my rage was blind,  
And foul imaginary eyes of blood  
Presented thee more hideous than thou art.  
O answer not, but to my closet bring  
The angry lords with all expedient haste.  
I conjure thee but slowly; run more fast.

**Exeunt**

**Scene 3. Before the Castle.**

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**Enter** ARTHUR on the walls.

Arthur                   The wall is high, and yet will I leap down.  
Good ground, be pitiful and hurt me not!  
There's few or none do know me; if they did,  
This ship-boy's semblance hath disguised me quite.  
I am afraid; and yet I'll venture it.  
If I get down, and do not break my limbs,  
I'll find a thousand shifts to get away.  
As good to die and go, as die and stay.  
[Leaps down.  
O me! my uncle's spirit is in these stones.  
Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones!  
]Dies.  
Enter PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and BIGOT.

Salisbury               Lords, I will meet him at Saint Edmundsbury.  
It is our safety, and we must embrace  
This gentle offer of the perilous time.

Pembroke               Who brought that letter from the cardinal?

Salisbury               The Count Melun, a noble lord of France,  
Whose private with me of the Dauphin's love  
Is much more general than these lines import.

Bigot                    Tomorrow morning let us meet him then.

Salisbury               Or rather then set forward, for 'twill be  
Two long days' journey, lords, or ere we meet.

**Enter** BASTARD.

Bastard                 Once more today well met, distempered lords.  
The king by me requests your presence straight.

Salisbury               The king hath dispossessed himself of us;  
We will not line his thin bestained cloak  
With our pure honours, nor attend the foot  
That leaves the print of blood where'er it walks.  
Return and tell him so. We know the worst.

Bastard                 Whate'er you think, good words I think were best.

Salisbury               Our griefs, and not our manners, reason now.

Bastard                 But there is little reason in your grief;  
Therefore 'twere reason you had manners now.

Pembroke               Sir, sir, impatience hath his privilege.

Bastard                 'Tis true - to hurt his master, no man else.

Salisbury               This is the prison.  
[Seeing ARTHUR.  
What is he lies here?

Pembroke               O death, made proud with pure and princely beauty!  
The earth had not a hole to hide this deed.

Salisbury               Murder, as hating what himself hath done,  
Doth lay it open to urge on revenge.

Bigot                    Or when he doomed this beauty to a grave  
Found it too precious-princely for a grave.

Salisbury               [To BASTARD] Sir Richard, what think you? You have beheld.  
Or have you read, or heard, or could you think,  
Or do you almost think, although you see,  
That you do see? Could thought, without this object,  
Form such another? This is the very top,  
The height, the crest, or crest unto the crest,  
Of murder's arms. This is the bloodiest shame,

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The wildest savagery, the vilest stroke,  
That ever wall-eyed wrath or staring rage  
Presented to the tears of soft remorse.

Pembroke All murders past do stand excused in this;  
And this, so sole and so unmatchable,  
Shall give a holiness, a purity,  
To the yet unbegotten sin of times,  
And prove a deadly bloodshed but a jest,  
Exemplified by this heinous spectacle.

Bastard It is a damned and a bloody work,  
The graceless action of a heavy hand,  
If that it be the work of any hand.

Salisbury If that it be the work of any hand?  
We had a kind of light what would ensue.  
It is the shameful work of Hubert's hand,  
The practice and the purpose of the king;  
From whose obedience I forbid my soul,  
Kneeling before this ruin of sweet life,  
And breathing to his breathless excellence  
The incense of a vow, a holy vow,  
Never to taste the pleasures of the world,  
Never to be infected with delight,  
Nor conversant with ease and idleness,  
Till I have set a glory to this hand  
By giving it the worship of revenge.

Pembroke & Bigot Our souls religiously confirm thy words.

**Enter HUBERT.**

Hubert Lords, I am hot with haste in seeking you.  
Arthur doth live; the king hath sent for you.

Salisbury O, he is bold, and blushes not at death!  
Avaunt, thou hateful villain, get thee gone!

Hubert I am no villain.

Salisbury [Drawing] Must I rob the law?

Bastard Your sword is bright, sir; put it up again.

Salisbury Not till I sheathe it in a murderer's skin.

Hubert Stand back, Lord Salisbury, stand back, I say.  
By heaven, I think my sword's as sharp as yours.  
I would not have you, lord, forget yourself,  
Nor tempt the danger of my true defence,  
Lest I, by marking of your rage, forget  
Your worth, your greatness, and nobility.

Bigot Out, dunghill! Dar'st thou brave a nobleman?

Hubert Not for my life; but yet I dare defend  
My innocent life against an emperor.

Salisbury Thou art a murderer.

Hubert Do not prove me so;  
Yet I am none. Whose tongue soe'er speaks false,  
Not truly speaks; who speaks not truly, lies.

Pembroke Cut him to pieces.

Bastard Keep the peace, I say.

Salisbury Stand by, or I shall gall you, Falconbridge.

Bastard Thou wert better gall the devil, Salisbury.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

If thou but frown on me, or stir thy foot,  
Or teach thy hasty spleen to do me shame,  
I'll strike thee dead. Put up thy sword betime,  
Or I'll so maul you and your toasting-iron  
That you shall think the devil is come from hell.

Bigot                   What wilt thou do, renowned Falconbridge?  
Second a villain and a murderer?

Hubert                 Lord Bigot, I am none.

Bigot                   Who killed this prince?

Hubert                 'Tis not an hour since I left him well.  
I honoured him, I loved him, and will weep  
My date of life out for his sweet live's loss.

Salisbury             Trust not those cunning waters of his eyes,  
For villainy is not without such rheum,  
And he, long traded in it, makes it seem  
Like rivers of remorse and innocency.  
Away with me, all you whose souls abhor  
Th' uncleanly savours of a slaughterhouse,  
For I am stifled with this smell of sin.

Bigot                   Away toward Bury, to the Dauphin there.

Pembroke             There tell the king he may inquire us out.

**Exeunt** PEMBROKE, SALISBURY and BIGOT.

Bastard                Here's a good world! Knew you of this fair work?  
Beyond the infinite and boundless reach  
Of mercy, if thou didst this deed of death,  
Art thou damned, Hubert.

Hubert                 Do but hear me, sir.

Bastard                Ha! I'll tell thee what:  
Thou'rt damned as black - nay, nothing is so black;  
Thou art more deep damned than Prince Lucifer.  
There is not yet so ugly a fiend of hell  
As thou shalt be, if thou didst kill this child.

Hubert                 Upon my soul -

Bastard                If thou didst but consent  
To this most cruel act, do but despair;  
And if thou want'st a cord, the smallest thread  
That ever spider twisted from her womb  
Will serve to strangle thee; a rush will be a beam  
To hang thee on; or wouldst thou drown thyself,  
Put but a little water in a spoon  
And it shall be as all the ocean,  
Enough to stifle such a villain up.  
I do suspect thee very grievously.

Hubert                 If I in act, consent, or sin of thought,  
Be guilty of the stealing that sweet breath  
Which was embounded in this beauteous clay,  
Let hell want pains enough to torture me.  
I left him well.

Bastard                Go, bear him in thine arms.  
I am amazed, methinks, and lose my way  
Among the thorns and dangers of this world.  
How easy dost thou take all England up!  
From forth this morsel of dead royalty  
The life, the right, and truth of all this realm  
Is fled to heaven; and England now is left  
To tug and scramble, and to part by th' teeth  
The unowed interest of proud-swelling state.

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Now for the bare-picked bone of majesty  
Doth dogged war bristle his angry crest,  
And snarleth in the gentle eyes of peace.  
Now powers from home and discontents at home  
Meet in one line; and vast confusion waits,  
As doth a raven on a sick-fall'n beast,  
The imminent decay of wrested pomp.  
Now happy he whose cloak and ceinture can  
Hold out this tempest. Bear away that child,  
And follow me with speed. I'll to the king.  
A thousand businesses are brief in hand,  
And heaven itself doth frown upon the land.

**Exeunt**

## ACT 5.

### Scene 1. King John's Palace.

**Enter** KING JOHN, PANDULPH, and ATTENDANTS.

King John            [Giving the crown to PANDULPH]  
 Thus have I yielded up into your hand  
 The circle of my glory.

Pandulph            [Giving back the crown] Take again  
 From this my hand, as holding of the Pope,  
 Your sovereign greatness and authority.

King John            Now keep your holy word; go meet the French,  
 And from his holiness use all your power  
 To stop their marches 'fore we are inflamed.  
 Our discontented counties do revolt,  
 Our people quarrel with obedience,  
 Swearing allegiance and the love of soul  
 To stranger blood, to foreign royalty.  
 This inundation of mistempered humour  
 Rests by you only to be qualified.  
 Then pause not, for the present time's so sick  
 That present med'cine must be ministered,  
 Or overthrow incurable ensues.

Pandulph            It was my breath that blew this tempest up,  
 Upon your stubborn usage of the Pope;  
 But since you are a gentle convertite,  
 My tongue shall hush again this storm of war  
 And make fair weather in your blust'ring land.  
 On this Ascension-day, remember well,  
 Upon your oath of service to the Pope,  
 Go I to make the French lay down their arms.

**Exit**

King John            Is this Ascension-day? Did not the prophet  
 Say that before Ascension-day at noon  
 My crown I should give off? Even so I have.  
 I did suppose it should be on constraint,  
 But, heaven be thanked, it is but voluntary.

**Enter** BASTARD.

Bastard              All Kent hath yielded; nothing there holds out  
 But Dover Castle. London hath received,  
 Like a kind host, the Dauphin and his powers.  
 Your nobles will not hear you, but are gone  
 To offer service to your enemy;  
 And wild amazement hurries up and down  
 The little number of your doubtful friends.

King John            Would not my lords return to me again  
 After they heard young Arthur was alive?

Bastard              They found him dead and cast into the streets,  
 An empty casket, where the jewel of life  
 By some damned hand was robbed and ta'en away.

King John            That villain Hubert told me he did live.

Bastard              So, on my soul, he did, for aught he knew.  
 But wherefore do you droop? Why look you sad?  
 Be great in act, as you have been in thought;  
 Let not the world see fear and sad distrust

Govern the motion of a kingly eye.  
 Be stirring as the time, be fire with fire,  
 Threaten the threat'ner, and outface the brow  
 Of bragging horror. So shall inferior eyes,  
 That borrow their behaviours from the great,  
 Grow great by your example and put on  
 The dauntless spirit of resolution.  
 Away, and glister like the god of war  
 When he intendeth to become the field;  
 Show boldness and aspiring confidence.  
 What, shall they seek the lion in his den,  
 And fright him there; and make him tremble there?  
 O, let it not be said. Forage, and run  
 To meet displeasure further from the doors,  
 And grapple with him ere he come so nigh.

King John           The legate of the Pope hath been with me,  
 And I have made a happy peace with him;  
 And he hath promised to dismiss the powers  
 Led by the Dauphin.

Bastard             O inglorious league!  
 Shall we, upon the footing of our land,  
 Send fair play orders, and make compromise,  
 Insinuation, parley, and base truce,  
 To arms invasive? Shall a beardless boy,  
 A cockered silken wanton, brave our fields  
 And flesh his spirit in a warlike soil,  
 Mocking the air with colours idly spread,  
 And find no check? Let us, my liege, to arms!  
 Perchance the cardinal cannot make your peace,  
 Or if he do, let it at least be said  
 They saw we had a purpose of defence.

King John           Have thou the ordering of this present time.

Bastard             Away then, with good courage! Yet, I know,  
 Our party may well meet a prouder foe.

**Exeunt**

## **Scene 2. A Plain near St. Edmundsbury. The Dauphin's Camp.**

**Enter**, in arms, DAUPHIN, SALISBURY, MELUN, PEMBROKE, BIGOT, and FRENCH SOLDIERS.

Dauphin             My Lord Melun, let this be copied out,  
 And keep it safe for our remembrance.  
 Return the precedent to these lords again,  
 That, having our fair order written down,  
 Both they and we, perusing o'er these notes,  
 May know wherefore we took the sacrament  
 And keep our faiths firm and inviolable.

Salisbury           Upon our sides it never shall be broken.  
 And, noble Dauphin, albeit we swear  
 A voluntary zeal and an unurged faith  
 To your proceedings, yet, believe me, prince,  
 I am not glad that such a sore of time  
 Should seek a plaster by contemned revolt,  
 And heal the inveterate canker of one wound  
 By making many. O, it grieves my soul  
 That I must draw this metal from my side  
 To be a widow-maker! O, and there  
 Where honourable rescue and defence

Cries out upon the name of Salisbury!  
 But such is the infection of the time,  
 That, for the health and physic of our right,  
 We cannot deal but with the very hand  
 Of stern injustice and confused wrong.  
 And is't not pity, O my grieved friends,  
 That we, the sons and children of this isle,  
 Was born to see so sad an hour as this;  
 Wherein we step after a stranger, march  
 Upon her gentle bosom, and fill up  
 Her enemies' ranks - I must withdraw and weep  
 Upon the spot of this enforced cause -  
 To grace the gentry of a land remote,  
 And follow unacquainted colours here?  
 What, here? O nation, that thou couldst remove!  
 That Neptune's arms, who clippeth thee about,  
 Would bear thee from the knowledge of thyself,  
 And grapple thee unto a pagan shore,  
 Where these two Christian armies might combine  
 The blood of malice in a vein of league,  
 And not to spend it so unneighbourly!

Dauphin                    A noble temper dost thou show in this,  
 And great affections wrastling in thy bosom  
 Doth make an earthquake of nobility.  
 O, what a noble combat hast thou fought  
 Between compulsion and a brave respect!  
 Let me wipe off this honourable dew  
 That silverly doth progress on thy cheeks.  
 My heart hath melted at a lady's tears,  
 Being an ordinary inundation,  
 But this effusion of such manly drops,  
 This shower, blown up by tempest of the soul,  
 Startles mine eyes, and makes me more amazed  
 Than had I seen the vaulty top of heaven

Figured quite o'er with burning meteors.  
 Lift up thy brow, renowned Salisbury,  
 And with a great heart heave away this storm:  
 Commend these waters to those baby eyes  
 That never saw the giant world enraged,  
 Nor met with fortune other than at feasts,  
 Full warm of blood, of mirth, of gossiping.  
 Come, come; for thou shalt thrust thy hand as deep  
 Into the purse of rich prosperity  
 As Lewis himself. So, nobles, shall you all,  
 That knit your sinews to the strength of mine.  
 [Trumpet.  
 Enter PANDULPH.

And even there, methinks, an angel spake.  
 Look where the holy legate comes apace,  
 To give us warrant from the hand of heaven,  
 And on our actions set the name of right  
 With holy breath.

Pandulph                    Hail, noble prince of France!  
 The next is this: King John hath reconciled  
 Himself to Rome; his spirit is come in,  
 That so stood out against the holy church,  
 The great metropolis and see of Rome.  
 Therefore thy threat'ning colours now wind up,  
 And tame the savage spirit of wild war,  
 That, like a lion fostered up at hand,  
 It may lie gently at the foot of peace,  
 And be no further harmful than in show.

Dauphin                    Your grace shall pardon me; I will not back.  
 I am too high-born to be propertied,  
 To be a secondary at control,

Or useful serving-man and instrument  
 To any sovereign state throughout the world.  
 Your breath first kindled the dead coal of wars  
 Between this chastised kingdom and myself,  
 And brought in matter that should feed this fire;  
 And now 'tis far too huge to be blown out  
 With that same weak wind which enkindled it.  
 You taught me how to know the face of right,  
 Acquainted me with interest to this land,  
 Yea, thrust this enterprise into my heart;  
 And come ye now to tell me John hath made  
 His peace with Rome? What is that peace to me?  
 I, by the honour of my marriage-bed,  
 After young Arthur, claim this land for mine;  
 And now it is half-conquered must I back  
 Because that John hath made his peace with Rome?  
 Am I Rome's slave? What penny hath Rome borne,  
 What men provided, what munition sent,  
 To underprop this action? Is't not I  
 That undergo this charge? Who else but I,  
 And such as to my claim are liable,  
 Sweat in this business and maintain this war?  
 Have I not heard these islanders shout out  
 "Vive le roi!" as I have banked their towns?  
 Have I not here the best cards for the game  
 To win this easy match played for a crown?  
 And shall I now give o'er the yielded set?  
 No, no, on my soul, it never shall be said.

Pandulph You look but on the outside of this work.

Dauphin Outside or inside, I will not return  
 Till my attempt so much be glorified  
 As to my ample hope was promised  
 Before I drew this gallant head of war,  
 And culled these fiery spirits from the world  
 To outlook conquest and to win renown  
 Even in the jaws of danger and of death.  
 [Trumpet.  
 What lusty trumpet thus doth summon us?

**Enter BASTARD.**

Bastard According to the fair play of the world,  
 Let me have audience; I am sent to speak.  
 My holy lord of Milan, from the king  
 I come to learn how you have dealt for him;  
 And, as you answer, I do know the scope  
 And warrant limited unto my tongue.

Pandulph The Dauphin is too wilful-opposite,  
 And will not temporize with my entreaties.  
 He flatly says he'll not lay down his arms.

Bastard By all the blood that ever fury breathed,  
 The youth says well. Now hear our English king,  
 For thus his royalty doth speak in me.  
 He is prepared, and reason too he should.  
 This apish and unmannerly approach,  
 This harnessed masque and unadvised revel,  
 This unhaired sauciness and boyish troops,  
 The king doth smile at; and is well prepared  
 To whip this dwarfish war, this pigmy arms,  
 From out the circle of his territories.  
 That hand which had the strength, even at your door,  
 To cudgel you and make you take the hatch,  
 To dive like buckets in concealed wells,  
 To crouch in litter of your stable planks,  
 To lie like pawns locked up in chests and trunks,  
 To hug with swine, to seek sweet safety out

In vaults and prisons, and to thrill and shake  
 Even at the crying of your nation's crow,  
 Thinking this voice an armed Englishman -  
 Shall that victorious hand be feeble here,  
 That in your chambers gave you chastisement?  
 No. Know the gallant monarch is in arms,  
 And like an eagle o'er his aerie towers  
 To souse annoyance that comes near his nest.  
 And you degenerate, you ingrate revolts,  
 You bloody Neroes, ripping up the womb  
 Of your dear mother England, blush for shame;  
 For your own ladies and pale-visaged maids,  
 Like Amazons, come tripping after drums,  
 Their thimbles into armed gauntlets change,  
 Their needles to lances, and their gentle hearts  
 To fierce and bloody inclination.

Dauphin            There end thy brave, and turn thy face in peace;  
 We grant thou canst outscold us. Fare thee well;  
 We hold our time too precious to be spent  
 With such a brabblor.

Pandulph          Give me leave to speak.

Bastard            No, I will speak.

Dauphin            We will attend to neither.  
 Strike up the drums, and let the tongue of war  
 Plead for our interest and our being here.

Bastard            Indeed, your drums, being beaten, will cry out;  
 And so shall you, being beaten. Do but start  
 An echo with the clamour of thy drum,  
 And even at hand a drum is ready braced  
 That shall reverberate all as loud as thine;  
 Sound but another, and another shall  
 As loud as thine rattle the welkin's ear,  
 And mock the deep-mouthed thunder - for at hand  
 - Not trusting to this halting legate here,  
 Whom he hath used rather for sport than need -  
 Is warlike John; and in his forehead sits  
 A bare-ribbed death whose office is this day  
 To feast upon whole thousands of the French.

Dauphin            Strike up our drums to find this danger out.

Bastard            And thou shalt find it, Dauphin, do not doubt.

**Exeunt**

### **Scene 3. The Battlefield.**

Alarums. Enter KING JOHN and HUBERT.

King John          How goes the day with us? O, tell me, Hubert.

Hubert             Badly, I fear. How fares your majesty?

King John          This fever that hath troubled me so long  
 Lies heavy on me. O, my heart is sick!

**Enter** a MESSENGER.

Messenger        My lord, your valiant kinsman Falconbridge  
 Desires your majesty to leave the field,  
 And send him word by me which way you go.

King John            Tell him toward Swinstead, to the abbey there.

Messenger        Be of good comfort; for the great supply  
That was expected by the Dauphin here  
Are wracked three nights ago on Goodwin Sands.  
This news was brought to Richard but even now.  
The French fight coldly, and retire themselves.

King John            Ay me, this tyrant fever burns me up,  
And will not let me welcome this good news.  
Set on toward Swinstead. To my litter straight;  
Weakness possesseth me, and I am faint.

**Exeunt**

### Scene 4. Elsewhere on the Battlefield.

**Enter** SALISBURY, PEMBROKE, and BIGOT.

Salisbury            I did not think the king so stored with friends.

Pembroke            Up once again; put spirit in the French;  
If they miscarry, we miscarry too.

Salisbury            That misbegotten devil, Falconbridge,  
In spite of spite alone upholds the day.

Pembroke            They say King John, sore sick, hath left the field.

**Enter** MELUN wounded.

Melun                Lead me to the revolts of England here.

Salisbury            When we were happy we had other names.

Pembroke            It is the Count Melun.

Salisbury            Wounded to death.

Melun                Fly, noble English, you are bought and sold.  
Unthread the rude eye of rebellion,  
And welcome home again discarded faith.  
Seek out King John and fall before his feet;  
For if the French be lord of this loud day  
He means to recompense the pains you take  
By cutting off your heads. Thus hath he sworn,  
And I with him, and many more with me,  
Upon the altar at Saint Edmundsbury;  
Even on that altar where we swore to you  
Dear amity and everlasting love.

Salisbury            May this be possible? May this be true?

Melun                Have I not hideous death within my view,  
Retaining but a quantity of life,  
Which bleeds away even as a form of wax  
Resolveth from his figure 'gainst the fire?  
What in the world should make me now deceive,  
Since I must lose the use of all deceit?  
Why should I then be false, since it is true  
That I must die here and live hence by truth?  
I say again, if Lewis do win the day  
He is forsworn if e'er those eyes of yours  
Behold another day break in the east.  
But even this night, whose black contagious breath  
Already smokes about the burning crest  
Of the old, feeble, and day-wearied sun,  
Even this ill night, your breathing shall expire,

Paying the fine of rated treachery  
 Even with a treacherous fine of all your lives,  
 If Lewis by your assistance win the day.  
 Commend me to one Hubert, with your king;  
 The love of him, and this respect besides,  
 For that my grandsire was an Englishman,  
 Awakes my conscience to confess all this.  
 In lieu whereof, I pray you bear me hence  
 From forth the noise and rumour of the field,  
 Where I may think the remnant of my thoughts  
 In peace, and part this body and my soul  
 With contemplation and devout desires.

Salisbury                    We do believe thee; and beshrew my soul  
 But I do love the favour and the form  
 Of this most fair occasion, by the which  
 We will untread the steps of damned flight,  
 And like a bated and retired flood,  
 Leaving our rankness and irregular course,  
 Stoop low within those bounds we have o'erlooked,  
 And calmly run on in obedience  
 Even to our ocean, to our great King John.  
 My arm shall give thee help to bear thee hence,  
 For I do see the cruel pangs of death  
 Right in thine eye. Away, my friends! New flight;  
 And happy newness, that intends old right!

**Exeunt**, leading off MELUN.

## Scene 5. The French Camp.

**Enter** DAUPHIN and his TRAIN.

Dauphin                    The sun of heaven methought was loath to set,  
 But stayed and made the western welkin blush,  
 When English measure backward their own ground  
 In faint retire. O, bravely came we off,  
 When with a volley of our needless shot,  
 After such bloody toil, we bid good night,  
 And wound our tottering colours clearly up,  
 Last in the field, and almost lords of it.

**Enter** a MESSENGER.

Messenger                Where is my prince, the Dauphin?

Dauphin                    Here. What news?

Messenger                The Count Melun is slain; the English lords  
 By his persuasion are again fall'n off;  
 And your supply, which you have wished so long,  
 Are cast away and sunk on Goodwin Sands.

Dauphin                    Ah, foul shrewd news! Beshrew thy very heart!  
 I did not think to be so sad tonight  
 As this hath made me. Who was he that said  
 King John did fly an hour or two before  
 The stumbling night did part our weary powers?

Messenger                Whoever spoke it, it is true, my lord.

Dauphin                    Well, keep good quarter and good care tonight.  
 The day shall not be up so soon as I  
 To try the fair adventure of tomorrow.

**Exeunt**

**Scene 6. The Road to Swinstead Abbey.**

**Enter** BASTARD and HUBERT, severally.

Bastard               Who's there? Speak, ho! Speak quickly, or I shoot.

Hubert                A friend. What art thou?

Bastard               Of the part of England.

Hubert                Whither dost thou go?

Bastard               What's that to thee?

Hubert                Why may not I demand of thine affairs  
As well as thou of mine?

Bastard               Hubert, I think.

Hubert                Thou hast a perfect thought.  
I will upon all hazards well believe  
Thou art my friend, that know'st my tongue so well.  
Who art thou?

Bastard               Who thou wilt; and if thou please  
Thou mayst befriend me so much as to think  
I come one way of the Plantagenets.

Hubert                Unkind remembrance - thou and endless night  
Have done me shame. Brave soldier, pardon me  
That any accent breaking from thy tongue  
Should 'scape the true acquaintance of mine ear.

Bastard               Come, come. Sans compliment, what news abroad?

Hubert                Why, here walk I in the black brow of night  
To find you out.

Bastard               Brief then, and what's the news?

Hubert                O, my sweet sir, news fitting to the night:  
Black, fearful, comfortless, and horrible.

Bastard               Show me the very wound of this ill news;  
I am no woman, I'll not swoon at it.

Hubert                The king, I fear, is poisoned by a monk.  
I left him almost speechless, and broke out  
To acquaint you with this evil that you might  
The better arm you to the sudden time  
Than if you had at leisure known of this.

Bastard               How did he take it? Who did taste to him?

Hubert                A monk, I tell you, a resolved villain  
Whose bowels suddenly burst out. The king  
Yet speaks, and peradventure may recover.

Bastard               Who didst thou leave to tend his majesty?

Hubert                Why, know you not? The lords are all come back,  
And brought Prince Henry in their company;  
At whose request the king hath pardoned them,  
And they are all about his majesty.

Bastard               Withhold thine indignation, mighty heaven,  
And tempt us not to bear above our power!  
I'll tell thee, Hubert, half my power this night,  
Passing these flats, are taken by the tide -  
These Lincoln Washes have devoured them -  
Myself, well mounted, hardly have escaped.

Away before! Conduct me to the king;  
I doubt he will be dead or ere I come.

**Exeunt**

## Scene 7. The Orchard of Swinstead Abbey.

**Enter** PRINCE HENRY, SALISBURY, and BIGOT.

Prince Henry        It is too late; the life of all his blood  
Is touched corruptibly, and his pure brain,  
Which some suppose the soul's frail dwelling-house,  
Doth by the idle comments that it makes  
Foretell the ending of mortality.

**Enter** PEMBROKE.

Pembroke            His highness yet doth speak, and holds belief  
That being brought into the open air,  
It would allay the burning quality  
Of that fell poison which assaileth him.

Prince Henry        Let him be brought into the orchard here.

**Exit** BIGOT.

Doth he still rage?

Pembroke            He is more patient  
Than when you left him. Even now he sung.

Prince Henry        O vanity of sickness! Fierce extremes  
In their continuance will not feel themselves.  
Death, having preyed upon the outward parts,  
Leaves them invisible, and his siege is now  
Against the mind, the which he pricks and wounds  
With many legions of strange fantasies,  
Which, in their throng and press to that last hold,  
Confound themselves. 'Tis strange that death should sing.  
I am the cygnet to this pale faint swan  
Who chants a doleful hymn to his own death,  
And from the organ-pipe of frailty sings  
His soul and body to their lasting rest.

Salisbury            Be of good comfort, prince; for you are born  
To set a form upon that indigest  
Which he hath left so shapeless and so rude.

KING JOHN brought in by BIGOT and ATTENDANTS.

King John            Ay, marry, now my soul hath elbow-room;  
It would not out at windows nor at doors.  
There is so hot a summer in my bosom  
That all my bowels crumble up to dust.  
I am a scribbled form drawn with a pen  
Upon a parchment, and against this fire  
Do I shrink up.

Prince Henry        How fares your majesty?

King John            Poisoned - ill fare: dead, forsook, cast off;  
And none of you will bid the winter come  
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw,  
Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course  
Through my burned bosom, nor entreat the north  
To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips  
And comfort me with cold. I do not ask you much;  
I beg cold comfort; and you are so strait

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

And so ingrateful you deny me that.

Prince Henry O that there were some virtue in my tears  
That might relieve you.

King John The salt in them is hot.  
Within me is a hell; and there the poison  
Is as a fiend confined to tyrannize  
On unreprieveable condemned blood.

**Enter BASTARD.**

Bastard O, I am scalded with my violent motion  
And spleen of speed to see your majesty.

King John O cousin, thou art come to set mine eye.  
The tackle of my heart is cracked and burned,  
And all the shrouds wherewith my life should sail  
Are turned to one thread, one little hair;  
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by,  
Which holds but till thy news be uttered;  
And then all this thou seest is but a clod  
And module of confounded royalty.

Bastard The Dauphin is preparing hitherward,  
Where God He knows how we shall answer him;  
For in a night the best part of my power,  
As I upon advantage did remove,  
Were in the Washes all unwarily  
Devoured by the unexpected flood.  
[KING JOHN dies.]

Salisbury You breathe these dead news in as dead an ear.  
My liege, my lord: but now a king, now thus.

Prince Henry Even so must I run on, and even so stop.  
What surety of the world, what hope, what stay,  
When this was now a king, and now is clay?

Bastard Art thou gone so? I do but stay behind  
To do the office for thee of revenge,  
And then my soul shall wait on thee to heaven,  
As it on earth hath been thy servant still.  
[To PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and BIGOT]  
Now, now, you stars that move in your right spheres,  
Where be your powers? Show now your mended faiths,  
And instantly return with me again  
To push destruction and perpetual shame  
Out of the weak door of our fainting land.  
Straight let us seek, or straight we shall be sought;  
The Dauphin rages at our very heels.

Salisbury It seems you know not, then, so much as we.  
The Cardinal Pandulph is within at rest,  
Who half an hour since came from the Dauphin,  
And brings from him such offers of our peace  
As we with honour and respect may take,  
With purpose presently to leave this war.

Bastard He will the rather do it when he sees  
Ourselves well sinewed to our defence.

Salisbury Nay, 'tis in a manner done already;  
For many carriages he hath dispatched  
To the seaside, and put his cause and quarrel  
To the disposing of the cardinal,  
With whom yourself, myself, and other lords,  
If you think meet, this afternoon will post  
To consummate this business happily.

Bastard Let it be so. And you, my noble prince,  
With other princes that may best be spared,

KING JOHN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shall wait upon your father's funeral.

Prince Henry      At Worcester must his body be interred;  
For so he willed it.

Bastard            Thither shall it then;  
And happily may your sweet self put on  
The lineal state and glory of the land;  
To whom, with all submission, on my knee,  
I do bequeath my faithful services  
And true subjection everlastingly.

Salisbury         And the like tender of our love we make,  
To rest without a spot for evermore.

Prince Henry      I have a kind soul that would give thanks,  
And knows not how to do it but with tears.

Bastard            O let us pay the time but needful woe,  
Since it hath been beforehand with our griefs.  
This England never did, nor never shall,  
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror  
But when it first did help to wound itself.  
Now these her princes are come home again,  
Come the three corners of the world in arms  
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue  
If England to itself do rest but true.

**Exeunt**

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