King John

By William Shakespeare

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with Susan Ruddick - Sarah Blackstone - Charles Darlington

Version DL22.02.77a

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Characters in the Play

JOHN, King of England, with dominion over assorted Continental territories
QUEEN ELEANOR, King John's mother, widow of King Henry II
BLANCHE of Spain, niece to King John
PRINCE HENRY, son to King John

CONSTANCE, widow of Geoffrey, King John's elder brother
ARTHUR, Duke of Brittany, her son

KING PHILIP II of France
LOUIS THE DAUPHIN, his son
DUKE OF AUSTRIA (also called LIMOGES)
CHATILLION, ambassador from France to King John
COUNT MELUN
A FRENCH HERALD

CARDINAL PANDULPH, Papal Legate

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE
The BASTARD, PHILIP FAULCONBRIDGE, her son by King Richard I
ROBERT FAULCONBRIDGE, her son by Sir Robert Faulconbridge
JAMES GURNEY, her servant

HUBERT, supporter of King John

English nobles:
- EARL OF SALISBURY
- EARL OF PEMBROKE
- EARL OF ESSEX
- LORD BIGOT

A CITIZEN of Angiers
PETER of Pomfret, a Prophet
An ENGLISH HERALD
EXECUTIONERS

English MESSENGER, French MESSENGER, Sheriff, Lords, Soldiers, Attendants

ACT 1

Scene 1

Enter King John, Queen Eleanor, Pembroke, Essex, and Salisbury, with the Chatillion of France.

KING JOHN
Now say, Chatillion, what would France with us?
CHATILLION
Thus, after greeting, speaks the King of France
In my behavior to the majesty,
The borrowed majesty, of England here.
QUEEN ELEANOR
A strange beginning: “borrowed majesty”!
KING JOHN
Silence, good mother. Hear the embassy.
CHATILLION
Philip of France, in right and true behalf
Of thy deceasèd 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?
CHATILLION
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.
CHATILLION
Then take my king’s defiance from my mouth,
The farthest 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 honorable conduct let him have.
Pembroke, look to ’t.—Farewell, Chatillion.
Chatillion and Pembroke exit.
QUEEN ELEANOR*, aside to King John*
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*, aside to Queen Eleanor*
Our strong possession and our right for us.
QUEEN ELEANOR*, aside to King John*
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 God and you and I shall hear.

Enter a Sheriff, who speaks aside to Essex.

ESSEX
My liege, here is the strangest controversy
Come from the country to be judged by you
That e'er I heard. Shall I produce the men?
KING JOHN Let them approach. *Sheriff exits.*
Our abbeys and our priories shall pay
This expedition's charge.

Enter Robert Faulconbridge and Philip Faulconbridge.

What men are you?
PHILIP FAULCONBRIDGE
Your faithful subject I, a gentleman,
Born in Northamptonshire, and eldest son,
As I suppose, to Robert Faulconbridge,
A soldier, by the honor-giving hand
Of Coeur de Lion knighted in the field.
KING JOHN*, to Robert Faulconbridge* What art thou?
ROBERT FAULCONBRIDGE
The son and heir to that same Faulconbridge.
KING JOHN
Is that the elder, and art thou the heir?
You came not of one mother then, it seems.
PHILIP FAULCONBRIDGE
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.
QUEEN ELEANOR
Out on thee, rude man! Thou dost shame thy mother
And wound her honor with this diffidence.
PHILIP FAULCONBRIDGE
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, he pops me out
At least from fair five hundred pound a year.
Heaven guard my mother's honor and my land!
KING JOHN
A good blunt fellow.—Why, being younger born,
Doth he lay claim to thine inheritance?

PHILIP FAULCONBRIDGE
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!

QUEEN ELEANOR*, aside to King John*
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*, aside to Queen Eleanor*
Mine eye hath well examinèd his parts
And finds them perfect Richard. *To Robert Faulconbridge* Sirrah, speak.
What doth move you to claim your brother's land?

PHILIP FAULCONBRIDGE
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!

ROBERT FAULCONBRIDGE
My gracious liege, when that my father lived,
Your brother did employ my father much—

PHILIP FAULCONBRIDGE
Well, sir, by this you cannot get my land.
Your tale must be how he employed my mother.

ROBERT FAULCONBRIDGE
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 deathbed he by will bequeathed
His lands to me, and took it on his death
That this my mother's son was none of his;
An 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,
An 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.
ROBERT FAULCONBRIDGE
Shall then my father's will be of no force
To dispossess that child which is not his?
PHILIP FAULCONBRIDGE
Of no more force to dispossess me, sir,
Than was his will to get me, as I think.
QUEEN ELEANOR
Whether hadst thou rather: be a Faulconbridge
And, like thy brother, to enjoy thy land,
Or the reputed son of Coeur de Lion,
Lord of thy presence, and no land besides?
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.
I would not be Sir Nob in any case.
QUEEN 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 five pence and 'tis dear.—
Madam, I'll follow you unto the death.
QUEEN ELEANOR
Nay, I would have you go before me thither.
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.
Philip kneels. King John dubs him a knight, tapping him on the shoulder with his sword.
Arise Sir Richard and Plantagenet.
BASTARD*, rising, to Robert Faulconbridge*
Brother by th' mother's side, give me your hand.
My father gave me honor, yours gave land.
Now blessèd be the hour, by night or day,
When I was got, Sir Robert was away!
QUEEN 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*, to Robert Faulconbridge*

Go, Faulconbridge, 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.

All but Bastard exit.

A foot of honor 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!"
An if his name be George, I'll call him "Peter,"
For new-made honor doth forget men's names;
'Tis too respective and too sociable
For your conversion. Now your traveler,
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 pickèd 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 accouterment,
But from the inward motion to deliver
Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth,
Which though I will not practice to deceive,
Yet to avoid deceit I mean to learn,
For it shall strew the footsteps of my rising.

Enter Lady Faulconbridge and James Gurney.

But who comes in such haste in riding robes?
What woman post is this? Hath she no husband
That will take pains to blow a horn before her?
O me, 'tis my mother.—How now, good lady?
What brings you here to court so hastily?

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE
Where is that slave thy brother? Where is he
That holds in chase mine honor 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 FAULCONBRIDGE
"Sir Robert's son"? Ay, thou unreverent 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.
James Gurney exits.
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 holp to make this leg.
LADY FAULCONBRIDGE
Hast thou conspirèd with thy brother too,
That for thine own gain shouldst defend mine
honor?
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 FAULCONBRIDGE
Hast thou denied thyself a Faulconbridge?
BASTARD
As faithfully as I deny the devil.
LADY FAULCONBRIDGE
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 offense,
Which was so strongly urged past my defense.
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 unmatchèd force
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.

They exit.

ACT 2

Scene 1

Enter, before Angiers, at one side, with Forces, Philip King of France, Louis the Dauphin, Constance, Arthur, and Attendants; at the other side, with Forces, Austria, wearing a lion's skin.

DAUPHIN
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 colors, 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 unstainèd love.
Welcome before the gates of Angiers, duke.
DAUPHIN
A noble boy. Who would not do thee right?
AUSTRIA*, to Arthur*
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-wallèd 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 marketplace 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 Chatillion 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 Chatillion.

KING PHILIP

A wonder, lady! Lo, upon thy wish
Our messenger Chatillion is arrived.—
What England says say briefly, gentle lord.
We coldly pause for thee. Chatillion, speak.

CHATILLION

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 humors 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 offense 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 endeavor for defense,
For courage mounteth with occasion.
Let them be welcome, then. We are prepared.

Enter King John of England, Bastard, Queen Eleanor, Blanche, Salisbury, Pembroke, and others.

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 armor 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,
Outfacèd infant state, and done a rape
Upon the maiden virtue of the crown.
Look here upon thy brother Geoffrey's face.
He points to Arthur.
These eyes, these brows, were molded 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,
To draw my answer from thy articles?

KING PHILIP

From that supernal judge that stirs good thoughts
In any breast 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.

QUEEN ELEANOR

Who is it thou dost call usurper, France?

CONSTANCE

Let me make answer: thy usurping son.

QUEEN 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, an if thou wert his mother.

QUEEN ELEANOR*, to Arthur*

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,
An he may catch your hide and you alone.
You are the hare of whom the proverb goes,
Whose valor plucks dead lions by the beard.
I'll smoke your skin-coat an 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' shoes 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
Louis, determine what we shall do straight.
DAUPHIN
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 Brittany, 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.
QUEEN ELEANOR Come to thy grandam, child.
CONSTANCE
Do, child, go to it grandam, child.
Give grandam kingdom, and it grandam will
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig.
There's a good grandam.
ARTHUR, *weeping* Good my mother, peace.
I would that I were low laid in my grave.
I am not worth this coil that's made for me.
QUEEN ELEANOR
His mother shames him so, poor boy, he weeps.
CONSTANCE
Now shame upon you whe'er she does or no!
His grandam's wrongs, and not his mother's
shames,
Draws those heaven-moving pearls from his poor
eyes,
Which heaven shall take in nature of a fee.
Ay, with these crystal beads heaven shall be bribed
To do him justice and revenge on you.
QUEEN ELEANOR
Thou monstrous slanderer of heaven and Earth!

CONSTANCE
Thou monstrous injurer of heaven and Earth,
Call not me slanderer. Thou and thine usurp
The dominations, royalties, and rights
Of this oppressèd boy. This is thy eldest son's son,
Infortunate in nothing but in thee.
Thy sins are visited in this poor child.
The canon of the law is laid on him,
Being but the second generation
Removèd from thy sin-conceiving womb.
KING JOHN
Bedlam, have done.
CONSTANCE I have but this to say,
That he is not only plaguèd for her sin,
But God hath made her sin and her the plague
On this removèd issue, plagued for her,
And with her plague; her sin his injury,
Her injury the beadle to her sin,
All punished in the person of this child
And all for her. A plague upon her!
QUEEN ELEANOR
Thou unadvisèd scold, I can produce
A will that bars the title of thy son.
CONSTANCE
Ay, who doubts that? A will—a wicked will,
A woman's will, a cankered grandam's will.
KING PHILIP
Peace, lady. Pause, or be more temperate.
It ill beseems this presence to cry aim
To these ill-tunèd repetitions.—
Some trumpet summon hither to the walls
These men of Angiers. Let us hear them speak
Whose title they admit, Arthur's or John's.

Trumpet sounds.

Enter Citizens upon the walls.

CITIZEN
Who is it that hath warned us to the walls?
KING PHILIP
'Tis France, for England.
KING JOHN England, for itself.
You men of Angiers, and my loving subjects—
KING PHILIP
You loving men of Angiers, Arthur's subjects,
Our trumpet called you to this gentle parle—
KING JOHN
For our advantage. Therefore hear us first.
These flags of France that are advancèd here
Before the eye and prospect of your town,
Have hither marched to your endamagement.
The cannons have their bowels full of wrath,
And ready mounted are they to spit forth
Their iron indignation 'gainst your walls.
All preparation for a bloody siege
And merciless proceeding by these French
Confronts 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 fixèd 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 parle.
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 labored spirits
Forwearied in this action of swift speed,
Craves harborage within your city walls.

KING PHILIP

When I have said, make answer to us both.
He takes Arthur by the hand.
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 downtrodden 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 oppressèd child
Religiously provokes. Be pleasèd 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 offense sealed up.
Our cannons' malice vainly shall be spent
Against th' invulnerable clouds of heaven,
And with a blessèd and unvexed retire,
With unbacked 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 harbored 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—
BASTARD Bastards and else.
KING JOHN
To verify our title with their lives.
KING PHILIP
As many and as wellborn 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 swinged 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 ox head 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*, to his officers*
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*, to his officers*
It shall be so, and at the other hill
Command the rest to stand. God and our right!
They exit. Citizens remain, above.

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 Brittany, 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 groveling lies
Coldly embracing the discolored 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 Brittany 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 armors, that marched hence so silver bright,
Hither return all gilt with Frenchmen's blood.
There stuck no plume in any English crest
That is removèd by a staff of France.
Our colors 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.
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 censurèd.
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.

Enter the two Kings with their Powers (including the Bastard, Queen Eleanor, Blanche, and Salisbury; Austria, and Louis the Dauphin), at several doors.

KING JOHN
France, hast thou yet more blood to cast away?
Say, shall the current of our right roam 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, *aside*
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 amazèd thus?
Cry havoc, kings! Back to the stainèd 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 theater, 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 chargèd to the mouths,
Till their soul-fearing clamors have brawled down
The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city.
I'd play incessantly upon these jades,
Even till unfencèd desolation
Leave them as naked as the vulgar air.
That done, dissever your united strengths
And part your mingled colors 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 favor 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*, to King Philip*
An 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 awhile 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 favor. We are bent to hear.

CITIZEN
That daughter there of Spain, the Lady Blanche,
Is near to England. Look upon the years
Of Louis 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 blessèd man,
Left to be finishèd 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,
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-closèd 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 enragèd 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.

King Philip and Louis the Dauphin walk aside and talk.

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 cudgeled. 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.

QUEEN 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 unsured 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, honors, 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 infixèd I beheld myself
Drawn in the flattering table of her eye.

He 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 anything 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 honor 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.

Dauphin and Blanche join hands and kiss.

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 Brittany
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. *Salisbury exits.* 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.

All but the Bastard exit.

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 armor 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 peisèd 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 honorable 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 raileth 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!

He exits.

ACT 3

Scene 1

Enter Constance, Arthur, and Salisbury.

CONSTANCE*, to Salisbury*
Gone to be married? Gone to swear a peace?
False blood to false blood joined? Gone to be friends?
Shall Louis 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 flighting 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.
Louis marry Blanche?—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,
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.
She sits down.
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.

Enter King John, hand in hand with King Philip of France, Louis the Dauphin, Blanche, Queen Eleanor, Bastard, Austria, and Attendants.

KING PHILIP*, to Blanche*
'Tis true, fair daughter, and this blessèd 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 splendor of his precious eye
The meager 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.
The grappling vigor 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, God!
Let not the hours of this ungodly day
Wear out the days in peace, but ere sunset
Set armèd 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 willfully 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 task 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 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 blessèd shall he be that doth revolt
From his allegiance to an heretic;
And meritorious shall that hand be called,
Canonizèd and worshiped 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.

QUEEN 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.
Forgo the easier.

BLANCHE That's the curse of Rome.

CONSTANCE
O Louis, stand fast! The devil tempts thee here
In likeness of a new untrimmèd bride.

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

CONSTANCE*, to King Philip*
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*, to King Philip*
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,
God knows they were besmeared and overstained
With slaughter's pencil, where revenge did paint
The fearful difference of incensèd 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 chafèd 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 God, first be to God performed,
That is, to be the champion of our Church!
What since thou swor'st is sworn against thyself
And may not be performèd by thyself,
For that which thou hast sworn to do amiss
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 scorchèd 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 marrièd?
What, shall our feast be kept with slaughtered men?
Shall braying trumpets and loud churlish drums,
Clamors of hell, be measures to our pomp?
She kneels.
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*, kneeling*
O, upon my knee
Made hard with kneeling, I do pray to thee,
Thou virtuous Dauphin, alter not the doom
Forethought by heaven!

BLANCHE*, to Dauphin*
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 honor.—O, thine honor, Louis, thine honor!

DAUPHIN*, to King Philip*
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*, dropping King John's hand*
Thou shalt not need.—England, I will fall from thee.

CONSTANCE*, rising*
O, fair return of banished majesty!

QUEEN 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.
BLANCHE*, rising*
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.
Assurèd 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*, to Bastard*
Cousin, go draw our puissance together.
Bastard exits.
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!
They exit.

Scene 2

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, Hubert.

KING JOHN
Hubert, keep this boy.—Philip, make up.
My mother is assailèd 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 labor to an happy end.
They exit.

Scene 3

Alarums, excursions, retreat.
Enter King John, Queen Eleanor, Arthur, Bastard, Hubert, Lords.

KING JOHN*, to Queen 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
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 coining 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 becks 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.
QUEEN ELEANOR
Farewell, gentle cousin.
KING JOHN Coz, farewell. *Bastard exits.*
QUEEN ELEANOR*, to Arthur*
Come hither, little kinsman. Hark, a word.
They walk aside.
KING JOHN
Come hither, Hubert. *He takes Hubert aside.*
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 cherishèd.
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 possessèd 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. *He turns to Queen Eleanor.* Madam, fare you well.
I'll send those powers o'er to your Majesty.

QUEEN 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!

They exit.

Scene 4

Enter King Philip of France,Louis the Dauphin, Pandulph, Attendants.

KING PHILIP
So, by a roaring tempest on the flood,
A whole armada 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, with her hair unbound.

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,
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.

She binds up her hair.

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,
As dim and meager 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.

She unbinds her hair.

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! *She exits.*

KING PHILIP

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

He exits, with Attendants.

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 world's taste,
That it yields naught 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 scepter 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 be but so.

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 customèd 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 Faulconbridge
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 offense.
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.

They exit.

ACT 4

Scene 1

Enter Hubert and Executioners, with irons and rope.

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 exit.
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 practices 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.
He shows Arthur a paper.
Read here, young Arthur. (*Aside.*) How now,
foolish rheum?
Turning dispiteous 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.

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 lien 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, an 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?
An 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 *stamps his foot and calls* Come forth.

Enter Executioners with ropes, a heated iron, and a brazier of burning coals.

Do as I bid you do.

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.

He takes the iron.

ARTHUR
Alas, what need you be so boist'rous-rough?

I will not struggle; I will stand stone-still.
For God's 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 wince 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*, to Executioners*

Go stand within. Let me alone with him.

EXECUTIONER

I am best pleased to be from such a deed.

Executioners exit.

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?

HUBERT None but to lose your eyes.

ARTHUR

O God, 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.

He seizes the iron.

Lo, by my troth, the instrument is cold,
And would not harm me.

HUBERT*, taking back the iron*

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

An 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 tar 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 disguisèd.

HUBERT Peace. No more. Adieu.
Your uncle must not know but you are dead.
I'll fill these doggèd 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.

They exit.

Scene 2

Enter King John, Pembroke, Salisbury, and other Lords. King John ascends the throne.

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 stainèd 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 refinèd 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 urgèd at a time unseasonable.

SALISBURY
In this the antique and well-noted face
Of plain old form is much disfigurèd,
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 endue 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,
Which for our goods we do no further ask
Than whereupon our weal, on you depending,
Counts it your weal he have his liberty.

KING JOHN

Let it be so. I do commit his youth
To your direction.

Enter Hubert.

Hubert, what news with you?

King John and Hubert talk aside.

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
Doth 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 color 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*, coming forward with Hubert*
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.
PEMBROKE
Stay yet, Lord Salisbury. I'll go with thee
And find th' inheritance of this poor child,
His little kingdom of a forcèd 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.
Pembroke, Salisbury, and other Lords exit.
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,
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 rumor's tongue
I idly heard. If true or false, I know not.
KING JOHN, *aside*
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.
KING JOHN Thou hast made me giddy
With these ill tidings.

Enter Bastard and Peter of Pomfret.

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 traveled hither through the land,
I find the people strangely fantasied,
Possessed with rumors, 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, *to Peter*
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. *Hubert and Peter exit.*
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
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.
He exits.

KING JOHN
Spoke like a sprightful 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.
Messenger exits.

KING JOHN My mother dead!

Enter Hubert.

HUBERT
My lord, they say five moons were seen tonight—
Four fixèd, 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 grip 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 embattlèd 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 humors 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
More upon humor than advised respect.

HUBERT*, showing a paper*

Here is your hand and seal for what I did.

KING JOHN

O, when the last accompt 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 endearèd 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 purposèd,
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 incensèd 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.

They exit.

Scene 3

Enter Arthur on the walls, dressed as a shipboy.

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 shipboy'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.

He jumps.

O me, my uncle's spirit is in these stones.
Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones.

He dies.

Enter Pembroke, Salisbury with a letter, 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 bestainèd cloak
With our pure honors, 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's else.

SALISBURY

This is the prison.
He sees Arthur's body.
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,
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,
Exampled by this heinous spectacle.

BASTARD

It is a damnèd 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 *He kneels.*
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*, kneeling*
Our souls religiously confirm thy words.

They rise.

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 his sword* 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.
He puts his hand on his sword.
I would not have you, lord, forget yourself,
Nor tempt the danger of my true defense,
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*, drawing his sword*
Cut him to pieces.

BASTARD*, drawing his sword* Keep the peace, I say.

SALISBURY
Stand by, or I shall gall you, Faulconbridge.

BASTARD
Thou wert better gall the devil, Salisbury.
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, renownèd Faulconbridge?
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 honored him, I loved him, and will weep
My date of life out for his sweet life's loss.
He weeps.
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 savors 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.
Lords exit.
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.
Hubert takes up Arthur's body.
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 scamble and to part by th' teeth
The unowed interest of proud-swelling state.

Now for the bare-picked bone of majesty
Doth doggèd 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 cincture 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.

They exit, with Hubert carrying Arthur's body.

ACT 5

Scene 1

Enter King John and Pandulph with the crown, and their Attendants.

KING JOHN
Thus have I yielded up into your hand
The circle of my glory.
PANDULPH*, handing John 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 humor
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.
He exits, with Attendants.
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, God 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 behaviors 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 farther 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 colors 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 defense.
KING JOHN
Have thou the ordering of this present time.
BASTARD
Away, then, with good courage! (*Aside.*) Yet I know
Our party may well meet a prouder foe.

They exit.

Scene 2

Enter, in arms, Louis the Dauphin, Salisbury, Melun, Pembroke, Bigot, and French and English Soldiers.

DAUPHIN*, handing a paper to Melun*
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 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 honorable rescue and defense
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 confusèd wrong.
And is 't not pity, O my grievèd 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 enforcèd cause,
To grace the gentry of a land remote,
And follow unacquainted colors 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 unneighborly. *He weeps.*

DAUPHIN

A noble temper dost thou show in this,
And great affections wrestling 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 honorable 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, renownèd 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 Louis himself.—So, nobles, shall you all,
That knit your sinews to the strength of mine.
And even there, methinks, an angel spake.

Enter Pandulph.

Look where the holy legate comes apace
To give us warrant from the hand of God,
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 colors 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 servingman 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 you now to tell me John hath made
His peace with Rome? What is that peace to me?
I, by the honor 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 promisèd
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.
A trumpet sounds.
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 willful-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 unadvisèd revel,
This unheard sauciness and boyish troops,
The King doth smile at, and is well prepared
To whip this dwarfish war, these 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 concealèd 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 armèd Englishman—
Shall that victorious hand be feebled 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 armèd 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 brabbler.
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 clamor 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.

They exit.

Scene 3

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, Faulconbridge,
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.

They exit.

Scene 4

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, Faulconbridge,
In spite of spite, alone upholds the day.
PEMBROKE
They say King John, sore sick, hath left the field.

Enter Melun, wounded, led by a Soldier.

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 lords 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 Louis do win the day,
He is forsworn if e'er those eyes of yours
Behold another daybreak 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 Louis 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 rumor 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 favor and the form
Of this most fair occasion, by the which
We will untread the steps of damnèd flight,
And like a bated and retirèd 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.

They exit, assisting Melun.

Scene 5

Enter Louis, the Dauphin and his train.

DAUPHIN

The sun of heaven, methought, was loath to set,
But stayed and made the western welkin blush,
When English measured 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 tott'ring colors 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.

They exit.

Scene 6

Enter Bastard and Hubert, severally.

HUBERT
Who's there? Speak ho! Speak quickly, or I shoot.
BASTARD
A friend. What art thou?
HUBERT Of the part of England.
BASTARD
Whither dost thou go?
HUBERT What's that to thee?
BASTARD
Why may not I demand of thine affairs
As well as thou of mine? 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. An 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 resolvèd 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 God,
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 devourèd them.
Myself, well mounted, hardly have escaped.
Away before. Conduct me to the King.
I doubt he will be dead or ere I come.

They exit.

Scene 7

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.

Bigot exits.

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, attended by Bigot.

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 parchèd lips
And comfort me with cold. I do not ask you much.
I beg cold comfort, and you are so strait
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 unreprievable, condemnèd 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 burnt,
And all the shrouds wherewith my life should sail
Are turnèd to one thread, one little hair.
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by,
Which holds but till thy news be utterèd,
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
Devourèd 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.—
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 honor and respect may take,
With purpose presently to leave this war.

BASTARD
He will the rather do it when he sees
Ourselves well-sinewèd to our defense.

SALISBURY
Nay, 'tis in a manner done already,
For many carriages he hath dispatched
To the sea-side, 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,
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. *He kneels.*

SALISBURY
And the like tender of our love we make
To rest without a spot forevermore.
Salisbury, Pembroke, and Bigot kneel.

PRINCE HENRY
I have a kind soul that would give you thanks
And knows not how to do it but with tears.
They rise.

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. Naught shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true.
They exit, bearing the body of King John.