

KING JOHN

A line-by-line translation

Act 1, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter KING JOHN, QUEEN ELINOR, PEMBROKE, ESSEX, SALISBURY,
and others, with CHATILLON

KING JOHN

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

CHATILLON

Thus, after greeting, speaks the King of France
In my behavior to the majesty,
The borrow'd majesty, of England here.

QUEEN ELINOR

5 A strange beginning: 'borrow'd majesty!'

KING JOHN

Silence, good mother; hear the embassy.

CHATILLON

Philip of France, in right and true behalf
Of thy deceased brother Geoffrey's son,
Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim
10 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 these same into young Arthur's hand,
15 Thy nephew and right royal sovereign.

KING JOHN

What follows if we disallow of this?

CHATILLON

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

KING JOHN

Here have we war for war and blood for blood,
20 Controlment for controlment: so answer France.

CHATILLON

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;
25 For ere thou canst report I will be there,
The thunder of my cannon shall be heard:
So hence! Be thou the trumpet of our wrath
And sullen presage of your own decay.
An honourable conduct let him have:
30 Pembroke, look to 't. Farewell, Chatillon.

Exeunt CHATILLON and PEMBROKE

QUEEN ELINOR

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,

Shakescleare Translation

KING JOHN, QUEEN ELINOR, PEMBROKE, ESSEX,
SALISBURY, and others enter, along with CHATILLON.

KING JOHN

Tell me, Chatillon, what does the king of France want from me?

CHATILLON

After greeting you, the King of France says I should behave
in this way to you, your Majesty—your borrowed Majesty—

QUEEN ELINOR

A strange beginning: "borrowed Majesty!"

KING JOHN

Be quiet, dear mother. Listen to the message.

CHATILLON

Philip of France, on behalf of your dead brother Geoffrey's
son, Arthur Plantagenet, lays claim lawfully to this beautiful
island and its territories: Ireland, Poitiers, Anjou, Touraine,
and Maine. He asks you to give up the power you have
stolen over these different places and give these territories
to young Arthur, your nephew and your true king.

KING JOHN

What will happen if I refuse to do this?

CHATILLON

Fierce and bloody war will force you to give back what you
have stolen to the rightful owner.

KING JOHN

We can return war for war, blood for blood, and force for
force: give that answer to the king of France.

CHATILLON

Then let me express my king's willingness to fight you. That
is the most I am allowed to do as ambassador.

KING JOHN

Tell him the same from me, and leave peacefully. Shoot
back like lightning to the king of France, because before you
can give your report I will be there and the thunder of my
cannons will be heard. So leave! Be a trumpet that
announces my anger and that frighteningly foretells your
own destruction. Escort him back honorably: Pembroke,
take care of it. Goodbye, Chatillon.

CHATILLON and PEMBROKE exit.

QUEEN ELINOR

What now, my son? Haven't I always said that that
ambitious Constance wouldn't stop until she got France
and the whole world to fight for her son's rights? This could

Upon the right and party of her son?
 35 This might have been prevented and made whole
 With very easy arguments of love,
 Which now the manage of two kingdoms must
 With fearful bloody issue arbitrate.

KING JOHN

Our strong possession and our right for us.

QUEEN ELINOR

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

Enter a Sheriff

ESSEX

My liege, here is the strangest controversy
 45 Come from country to be judged by you,
 That e'er I heard: shall I produce the men?

KING JOHN

Let them approach.
 Our abbeyes and our priories shall pay
 This expedition's charge.

50

Enter ROBERT and the BASTARD

KING JOHN

What men are you?

BASTARD

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

KING JOHN

What art thou?

ROBERT

The son and heir to that same Faulconbridge.

KING JOHN

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

BASTARD

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

QUEEN ELINOR

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

BASTARD

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

KING JOHN

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

have been prevented and the argument settled very easily
 by acting in a loving way, but now two kingdoms must
 settle the issue with a terrible and bloody fight.

KING JOHN

Our strong position and the rightfulness of our cause will be
 on our side.

QUEEN ELINOR

Your strong position will help much more than the fact that
 you're in the right, or this might go badly for me and you.
 My conscience whispers that much in your ear, which is
 something no one but heaven, you, and I will hear.

A Sheriff enters.

ESSEX

My king, this is the strangest case I've ever heard that has
 come from the countryside to be judged by you. Should I
 bring the men forward?

KING JOHN


Let them come. Our abbeyes and monasteries will pay their
 travel costs.


ROBERT and the BASTARD enter.

KING JOHN

Who are you?

BASTARD

I am your faithful subject, a gentleman born in
 Northamptonshire and the oldest son, I believe, of Robert
 Faulconbridge, a soldier who was knighted on the
 battlefield by the honor-giving hand of [Coeur-de-lion](#) .

 *Richard the Lionhearted (which is what Coeur-de-lion means in French), King John's older brother.*

KING JOHN

[To ROBERT] And who are you?

ROBERT

The son and heir to the same Faulconbridge.

KING JOHN

Is he the oldest, and you're the heir? You didn't come from
 the same mother then, it seems.

BASTARD

Certainly from the same mother, great king; that is well
 known. And, I think, the same father. But to know for
 certain that that it true, I direct you to heaven and my
 mother. I can doubt it, as all men's children can.

QUEEN ELINOR

You rude man! You shame your mother and insult her honor
 by doubting that.

BASTARD

I, ma'am? No, I have no reason to. That is my brother's
 argument and not mine. If he can prove it, he'll take away at
 least a good five hundred pounds a year from me. May
 heaven save my mother's honor and my land.

KING JOHN

You're a good, straightforward fellow. Why, being born later,
 does he claim your inheritance?

BASTARD

I know not why, except to get the land.
 But once he slander'd me with bastardy:
 But whether I be as true begot or no,
 That still I lay upon my mother's head,
 80 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,
 85 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 ELINOR

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

KING JOHN

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

BASTARD

95 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

My gracious liege, when that my father lived,
 Your brother did employ my father much,--

BASTARD

100 Well, sir, by this you cannot get my land:
 Your tale must be how he employ'd my mother.

ROBERT

And once dispatch'd him in an embassy
 To Germany, there with the emperor
 To treat of high affairs touching that time.
 105 The advantage of his absence took the king
 And in the mean time sojourn'd 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,
 110 As I have heard my father speak himself,
 When this same lusty gentleman was got.
 Upon his death-bed he by will bequeath'd
 His lands to me, and took it on his death
 That this my mother's son was none of his;
 115 And if he were, he came into the world
 Full fourteen weeks before the course of time.
 Then, good my liege, let me have what is mine,
 My father's land, as was my father's will.

KING JOHN

Sirrah, your brother is legitimate;
 120 Your father's wife did after wedlock bear him,
 And if she did play false, the fault was hers;
 Which fault lies on the hazards of all husbands
 That marry wives. Tell me, how if my brother,
 Who, as you say, took pains to get this son,
 125 Had of your father claim'd 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,
 130 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.

BASTARD

I don't know why, except to get the land. But once he
 slandered me by saying I was a bastard. Whether I was
 conceived in wedlock or not is on my mother's conscience.
 But that I am as well born, my king—God bless the bones
 that went through such labor for me!—you can compare
 our faces and judge for yourself. If old sir Robert was father
 to us both and this son looks like him, oh old sir Robert,
 father, I thank heaven on my knee that I don't look like you! 2

2 An elaborate insult. Robert is ugly and Robert looks like his father—thus, the Bastard is glad he doesn't look like him.

KING JOHN

What, what a crazy person God has given us here!

QUEEN ELINOR

His face looks like Coeur-de-lion's. The way he talks sounds
 like him. Do you not see some signs of my son in the whole
 makeup of this man?

KING JOHN

My eye has looked him over well and finds that he looks just
 like Richard. Speak, fellow, what makes you claim your
 brother's land?

BASTARD

Because half of his face looks like my father. With half that
 face he wants all my land. A half-faced 3 four-pence coin
 wants five hundred pounds a year!

3 This coin showed the king's profile, so half his face.

ROBERT

Kind king, when my father was alive, your brother had a lot
 of jobs for my father—

BASTARD

Well, sir, you can't get my land for that. Your story has to be
 about how he employed 4 my mother.

4 A euphemism for sex.

ROBERT

And once sent him as an ambassador to Germany, to
 negotiate with the emperor there about important matters
 of the time. The king took advantage of his absence and in
 the mean time stayed at my father's house. I am ashamed
 to talk about what he did there, but the truth is the truth.
 There were long stretches of sea and land between my
 father and my mother, as I have heard my father himself
 say, when this energetic gentlemen 5 was conceived. On
 his death-bed he left his land to me in his will, and as he
 was dying he claimed that my mother's son here was not
 his. If he was, he came into the world a good fourteen
 weeks early. Then, my good king, let me have what's mine,
 my father's land, as my father wished.

5 i.e. the Bastard

KING JOHN

Sir, your brother is legitimate. Your father's wife gave birth
 to him after marriage and if she was unfaithful, that's her
 fault. That is a risk all husbands take who marry wives. Tell
 me, what if my brother—who, as you say, was this son's real
 father—had gone to your father and claimed this boy as his
 son? Really, good friend, your father could have kept this
 calf his cow gave birth to secret from the world; really, he
 could have. Even if he were my brother's, my brother could
 not have claimed him. And your father never raised any
 suspicion about it. It follows, then, that my mother's son
 conceived your father's heir. Your father's heir must have
 your father's land. 6

6 King John is arguing that it doesn't matter who the Bastard's biological father was—since old Sir Robert was married to his mother and accepted him as his heir, he is entitled to inherit his land.

ROBERT

Shall then my father's will be of no force
To dispossess that child which is not his?

BASTARD

135 Of no more force to dispossess me, sir,
Than was his will to get me, as I think.

QUEEN ELINOR

Whether hadst thou rather be a Faulconbridge
And like thy brother, to enjoy thy land,
Or the reputed son of Coeur-de-lion,
140 Lord of thy presence and no land beside?

BASTARD

Madam, an if my brother had my shape,
And I had his, sir Robert's his, like him;
And if my legs were two such riding-rods,
My arms such eel-skins stuff'd, my face so thin
145 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;
150 I would not be sir Nob in any case.

QUEEN ELINOR

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.
155 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 ELINOR

Nay, I would have you go before me thither.

BASTARD

Our country manners give our betters way.

KING JOHN

160 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 bear'st:
Kneel thou down Philip, but rise more great,
165 Arise sir Richard and Plantagenet.

BASTARD

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

QUEEN ELINOR

170 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:
175 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,

ROBERT

So should my father's will have no power to disinherit the
child that is not his?


BASTARD


He has no more power to disinherit me than he had to
conceive me, I think.

QUEEN ELINOR

Would you prefer to be a Faulconbridge and like your
brother, so you could have your land? Or the supposed son
of Coeur-de-lion, lord of your body and no land to go with
it?

BASTARD

Madam, if my brother looked like me and I looked like him
and sir Robert, and if my legs were two whips like his, my
arms stuffed eel-skins, my face so thin that I didn't dare
stick a rose behind my ear for fear that men would say,
"Look, there goes a three-farthing  coin!" And if, in
addition to looking like him, I could be heir to all this land, I
would not choose to leave this place. I would give every
foot of land to have this face. I don't want to be sir Fool,
whatever happens.

 A very small coin with a rose on it.

QUEEN ELINOR

I like you. Will you abandon your fortune, leave your land to
him, and follow me? I am a soldier and now heading to
France.

BASTARD

Brother, you take my land, I'll take my chance. Your face has
gained you five hundred pounds a year, but sell your face
for five pence and it's overpriced. Ma'am, I'll follow you to
death.

QUEEN ELINOR

No, I would prefer you to go there ahead of me.

BASTARD

It's good manners in our country to let our superiors go
first.

KING JOHN

What is your name?

BASTARD

Philip, my king, that's how my name begins. Philip, good
old sir Robert's wife's oldest son.

KING JOHN

From now on you should have the name of the man you
look like. Kneel down Philip, but get up greater, get up as Sir
Richard and a Plantagenet.

BASTARD

Brother on my mother's side, give me your hand: my father
gave me honor, yours gave you land. Now may the hour of
night or day be blessed when I was conceived and Sir
Richard was away!

QUEEN ELINOR

That's the Plantagenet spirit! I am your grandmother,
Richard. Call me that.

BASTARD

Ma'am, by luck and not by honor. But who cares about that?
Roundabout, a little wrong, climbing in at the window or
over the roof: whoever doesn't dare go out in the daytime
must walk at night, and having is having however men get
it. Whether you're near or far off, winning means you shot
well. And I am me, however I was conceived.

And I am I, howe'er I was begot.

KING JOHN

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

180 Brother, adieu: good fortune come to thee!
For thou wast got i' the way of honesty.

Exeunt all but BASTARD

BASTARD

A foot of honour better than I was;
But many a many foot of land the worse.
Well, now can I make any Joan a lady.
185 'Good den, sir Richard!'—'God-a-mercy, fellow!'—
And if his name be George, I'll call him Peter;
For new-made honour doth forget men's names;
'Tis too respective and too sociable
For your conversion. Now your traveller,
190 He and his toothpick at my worship's mess,
And when my knightly stomach is sufficed,
Why then I suck my teeth and catechise
My picked man of countries: 'My dear sir,'
Thus, leaning on mine elbow, I begin,
195 '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:'
200 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.
205 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;
210 And not alone in habit and device,
Exterior form, outward accoutrement,
But from the inward motion to deliver
Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth:
Which, though I will not practise to deceive,
215 Yet, to avoid deceit, I mean to learn;
For it shall strew the footsteps of my rising.
But who comes in such haste in riding-ropes?
What woman-post is this? hath she no husband
That will take pains to blow a horn before her?

Enter LADY FAULCONBRIDGE and GURNEY

BASTARD

220 O me! it is 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 honour up and down?

BASTARD

225 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 unreverend boy,
Sir Robert's son: why scorn'st thou at sir Robert?
230 He is sir Robert's son, and so art thou.

KING JOHN

Go, Faulconbridge: now you have what you wanted. A
landless knight makes you a landed gentleman. Come,
ma'am and come, Richard, we must hurry to France, to
France, because it is more than necessary.

BASTARD

Brother, goodbye. May good fortune come to you! Because
you were conceived honestly.

All except the BASTARD exit.

BASTARD

I'm a foot more honorable than I was, but I have lost many
and many feet of land. Well, now I can make any girl a lady.
"Good day, Sir Richard!"—"God bless you, fellow!"—And if
his name is George, I'll call him Peter, because being made
more honorable makes your forget men's names.
Remembering people's names is too familiar and too
sociable for my new self. I'll have a traveler eat at my noble
table with his toothpick. When I have satisfied my knightly
appetite, I will purse my lips and question my picked
man about countries: "My dear sir," I will begin, leaning on
my elbow in this way, "I beg you"—that's me asking a
question now, and then he'll answer as though he's reading
out of an ABC book: "Oh sir," he says, answering, "as you
command; as you wish to employ me; at your service, sir."
"No sir," I say, questioning, "I, good sir, am at yours." And so,
before answer knows what question was asking, we'll have
a dialog full of compliments. And discussing the Alps and
Apennines, the Pyrenees and the river Po, we'll talk until
dinner. This is good society and is right for an ambitious
spirit like mine, because a man who doesn't strike you as
observant is just a bastard of his time period. And I am a
bastard, whether I strike or not. You can tell not just by how
he dresses and acts, his outside appearance, his exterior
equipment, but from how he expresses what's inside, giving
sweet sweet poison to the tooth of his age. Which, though I
will not try to deceive people, in order to avoid deceiving
them I want to learn. Because that will be a celebration of
my rise in importance, like strewing petals around myself.
But who comes here so quickly, wearing a riding outfit?
What post-woman is this? Doesn't she have a husband who
is willing to blow a horn in front of her?

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE and GURNEY enter.

BASTARD

Oh no! It's my mother. Hello, good lady! What brings you
here to court so quickly?

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE


Where is that slave your brother? Where is he? He hunts up
and down after my reputation, trying to kill it.


BASTARD

My brother Robert? Old Sir Robert's son? The giant
Colbrand, that same powerful man? Is it Sir Robert's son
you're looking for?

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE

Sir Robert's son! Yes, you disrespectful boy, Sir Robert's
son. Why are you rejecting Sir Robert? He is Sir Robert's son,
and so are you.

 Because he has a toothpick - after he's picked his teeth. It also has the current meaning of "chosen" and the obsolete meaning of "elegant" or "refined".

 A legendary giant. The Bastard uses the allusion ironically to comment on his brother's height.

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.

235

Exit GURNEY

BASTARD

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,
240 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.

240

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE

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

245

BASTARD

Knight, knight, good mother, Basilisco-like.
What! I am dubb'd! I have it on my shoulder.
But, mother, I am not sir Robert's son;
250 I have disclaim'd 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?

250

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE

Hast thou denied thyself a Faulconbridge?

BASTARD

255 As faithfully as I deny the devil.

255

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!
260 Thou art the issue of my dear offence,
Which was so strongly urged past my defence.

260

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,
265 And so doth yours; your fault was not your folly:
Needs must you lay your heart at his dispose,
Subjected tribute to commanding love,
Against whose fury and unmatched force
The aweless lion could not wage the fight,
270 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
275 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.

275

Exeunt

BASTARD

James Gurney, could you leave us for a while?

GURNEY

Gladly, good Philip.

BASTARD

Philip! That's a sparrow's name.¹⁰ James, there are
wonderful things going on abroad. I'll tell you more later.

¹⁰ It was a common pet name for a sparrow.

GURNEY exits.

BASTARD

Ma'am, I was not old Sir Robert's son. Sir Robert could have eaten the part of me he was responsible for on the fast day day Good-Friday without breaking his fast. Sir Robert could do well. But really, tell the truth: could he conceive me? Sir Robert couldn't do it. We know his handiwork. So good mother, who is responsible for these limbs of mine? Sir Robert never helped make this leg.

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE

Have you plotted with your brother too, when for your own sake you should defend my honor? What does this insult mean, you rude good-for-nothing?

BASTARD

Knight, knight, good mother, like the character Basilisco¹¹ in that play. I have been dubbed! I have it on my shoulder. But, mother, I am not Sir Robert's son. I have given up my claim to Sir Robert and my land. Legitimacy my name, and all other things are gone. So, my good mother, tell me who my father was. Some honorable man, I hope. Who was it, mother?

¹¹ Basilisco—a swaggering, boastful knight—is a character in Thomas Kyd's play *Soliman and Perseda* (1588).

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE

Have you denied you are a Faulconbridge?

BASTARD

As faithfully as I deny the devil.

LADY FAULCONBRIDGE

King Richard Coeur-de-lion was your father. After he argued vehemently for a long time he convinced me to make room for him in my husband's bed. May heaven not punish me for my sin! You are the result of my dear sin, which he argued for so strongly that I couldn't defend myself.

BASTARD

I swear, ma'am, if I were going to be conceived again I couldn't wish for a better father. Some sins give you benefits on earth, and yours is one of them. You were not foolish to commit that sin. You had to give him your heart, since you were his subject and his love commanded you. Even the lion that's not afraid of anything could not have fought against his passion and unequalled strength, or keep his royal heart out of Richard's hand. Anyone who violently robs lions of their hearts can easily win a woman's. Yes, my mother, I thank you with all my heart for my father! If anyone alive dares even to say you didn't do the right thing when I was conceived, I'll send his soul to hell. Come, lady, I will show you to my relatives; and they will say that if you had said no to Richard when he conceived me it would have been a sin. Whoever says it was, is lying. I say it was not.

They exit.

Act 2, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter AUSTRIA and forces, drums, etc. on one side: on the other KING PHILIP and his power; LEWIS, ARTHUR, CONSTANCE and attendants

LEWIS

Before Angiers well met, brave Austria,
Arthur, that great forerunner of thy blood,
Richard, that robb'd the lion of his heart
And fought the holy wars in Palestine,
5 By this brave duke came early to his grave:
And for amends to his posterity,
At our importance hither is he come,
To spread his colours, boy, in thy behalf,
And to rebuke the usurpation
10 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:
15 I give you welcome with a powerless hand,
But with a heart full of unstained love:
Welcome before the gates of Angiers, duke.

LEWIS

A noble boy! Who would not do thee right?

AUSTRIA

Upon thy cheek lay I this zealous kiss,
20 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
25 And coops from other lands her islanders,
Even till that England, hedged in with the main,
That water-walled bulwark, still secure
And confident from foreign purposes,
Even till that utmost corner of the west
30 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

35 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,
40 To cull the plots of best advantages:
We'll lay before this town our royal bones,
Wade to the market-place in Frenchmen's blood,
But we will make it subject to this boy.

CONSTANCE

Stay for an answer to your embassy,
45 Lest unadvised you stain your swords with blood:
My Lord Chatillon may from England bring,
That right in peace which here we urge in war,

Shakescleare Translation

The duke of AUSTRIA enters with his troops, playing drums, on one side. On the other side KING PHILIP and his army enter, along with LEWIS, ARTHUR, CONSTANCE, and their attendants.

LEWIS

A pleasure to see you here in front of Angiers, brave king of Austria. Arthur, your great relative, Richard, who robbed the lion of his heart and fought the holy wars in Palestine, was killed young by this great duke. To make up for it to Richard's relative, he's come here at my request to fight on your side, boy, and to punish your unnatural uncle the English king John for stealing your throne. Hug him, love him, and welcome him here.

ARTHUR

God will forgive you for Coeur-de-lion's death because you give his children life, protecting their rights by going to war. I welcome you with a powerless hand, but with a heart full of pure love. Welcome here to the gates of Angiers, duke.

LEWIS

You're a noble boy! Who wouldn't do what was right by you?

AUSTRIA

I kiss you eagerly on your cheek as a seal to this contract, which I make out of love for you. I won't return to my home until Angiers and what rightfully belongs to you in France, along with that pale white-faced shore whose foot kicks back the ocean's roaring waves and keeps the islanders safe from other countries—until that England, I mean, hedged in by the sea, that water-walled fort, always safe and confident that it will not be harmed by foreign armies—until even that farthest corner of the west recognizes you as its king. Until then, dear boy, I won't think about home, but will keep fighting.

CONSTANCE

Oh, his mother thanks you, a widow thanks you, until your strong hand helps give him strength to pay you back more for your love.

AUSTRIA

Heaven's peace waits for those who fight in such a just and generous war.

KING PHILIP

Well then, let's go to work. Our cannons will be turned toward the walls of this resisting town. Call for our best soldiers to figure out how we can take the advantage. We'll camp our royal bones in front of this town and wade to the market-place in the blood of Frenchmen if we have to, to make it obey this boy.

CONSTANCE

Just wait for an answer to your message, in case you stain your swords with blood unnecessarily. My Lord Chatillon might bring from England an acknowledgement of your rightful claim in peace, instead of us having to fight for it

And then we shall repent each drop of blood
That hot rash haste so indirectly shed.

Enter CHATILLON

KING PHILIP

50 A wonder, lady! lo, upon thy wish,
Our messenger Chatillon is arrived!
What England says, say briefly, gentle lord;
We coldly pause for thee; Chatillon, speak.

CHATILLON

Then turn your forces from this paltry siege
55 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 stay'd, have given him time
To land his legions all as soon as I;
60 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 Blanch of Spain;
65 With them a bastard of the king's deceased,
And all the unsettled humours of the land,
Rash, inconsiderate, fiery volunteers,
With ladies' faces and fierce dragons' spleens,
Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,
70 Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs,
To make hazard of new fortunes here:
In brief, a braver choice of dauntless spirits
Than now the English bottoms have waft o'er
Did nearer float upon the swelling tide,
75 To do offence and scath in Christendom.

Drum beats

CHATILLON

The interruption of their churlish drums
Cuts off more circumstance: they are at hand,
To parley or to fight; therefore prepare.

KING PHILIP

80 How much unlook'd for is this expedition!

AUSTRIA

By how much unexpected, by so much
We must awake endeavour for defence;
For courage mounteth with occasion:
Let them be welcome then: we are prepared.

Enter KING JOHN, QUEEN ELINOR, BLANCH, the BASTARD, Lords, and forces

KING JOHN

85 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

90 Peace be to England, if that war return
From France to England, there to live in peace.
England we love; and for that England's sake
With burden of our armour here we sweat.
This toil of ours should be a work of thine;
95 But thou from loving England art so far,
That thou hast under-wrought his lawful king,
Cut off the sequence of posterity,
Out-faced infant state and done a rape
Upon the maiden virtue of the crown.
100 Look here upon thy brother Geoffrey's face;
These eyes, these brows, were moulded out of his:

here. If that happens we will regret every drop of blood that
we hurried rashly to shed before getting an answer.

CHATILLON enters.

KING PHILIP

What a miracle! Look, as you wished, our messenger
Chatillon has arrived! Tell us briefly what the king of
England says, kind lord. We've been waiting for you before
we start fighting. Speak, Chatillon.

CHATILLON

Then turn your forces away from this unimportant siege
and encourage them to do a more difficult task. The king of
England, annoyed by your just demands, has armed
himself. The wind was against me and I had to wait for it to
change. That gave him time to land his army at the same
time I landed. He marches quickly toward this town. His
troops are strong, his soldiers confident. The queen mother
comes with him like the goddess of disorder, encouraging
him to shed blood and fight. With her is her niece, the Lady
Blanch of Spain. And with them too is a bastard of the dead
king, and all the restless passions of the country, foolhardy,
unthinking, aggressive volunteers, with the faces of ladies
and the guts of fierce dragons. They have sold their
fortunes back home, carrying everything they own proudly
on their backs to gamble for new fortunes here. In short, a
braver set of fearless men than the English ships have
carried over has never floated on the swelling sea to do
harm and damage in Christian Europe.

Sound of beating drums.

CHATILLON

The interruption of their rude drums cuts off more
explanation. They are close by, either to negotiate or fight.
So get ready.

KING PHILIP

This attack is so unexpected!

AUSTRIA

However unexpected it is, we'll have to make all the more
effort to defend ourselves. Courage increases when you
need it most. So let's welcome them. We are ready.

KING JOHN, QUEEN ELINOR, BLANCH, the BASTARD, Lords, and troops enter.

KING JOHN

May France be at peace if France allows me to enter it
peacefully as its rightful owner. If not, may France bleed
and peace rise up to heaven while I, God's angry
representative, punish the proud disobedience that makes
His peace run away to heaven.

KING PHILIP

May England be at peace if war returns from France to
England to live there at peace. I love England. For England's
sake I'm sweating here in heavy armor. This work of mine
should be your work too. But you're so far from loving
England that you undermined its lawful king, cut off his heir
from his inheritance, defied a child king, and raped the
virtuous virgin crown. *[Points at ARTHUR]* Look here at your
brother Geoffrey's face; these eyes, these eyebrows, were
molded out of his. This little summary contains in small the
large shape of dead Geoffrey, and the hand of time will draw
out this brief summary into as huge a volume. Geoffrey was
your older brother and this is his son. England belonged to

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.

105 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 call'd a king,
When living blood doth in these temples beat,
110 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,
115 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

120 Excuse; it is to beat usurping down.

QUEEN ELINOR

Who is it thou dost call usurper, France?

CONSTANCE

Let me make answer; thy usurping son.

QUEEN ELINOR

Out, insolent! thy bastard shall be king,
That thou mayst be a queen, and cheque the world!

CONSTANCE

125 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.
130 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 ELINOR

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

CONSTANCE

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

AUSTRIA

135 Peace!

BASTARD

Hear the crier.

AUSTRIA

What the devil art thou?

BASTARD

One that will play the devil, sir, with you,
An a' may catch your hide and you alone:
140 You are the hare of whom the proverb goes,
Whose valour 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.

Geoffrey and this is Geoffrey's heir. In the name of God, why
are you called a king when this boy is alive and owns the
crown you have taken from him?

KING JOHN

Who gave you this job of forcing me to answer your
questions?

KING PHILIP

That heavenly judge who encourages good thoughts in
anyone with power to look into crimes. That judge made
me this boy's guardian. With a warrant from him I impeach
you for your crime, and I mean to punish it with his help.

KING JOHN

Sadly, you have no right to that power.

KING PHILIP

Excuse my presumption, since I take it in order to punish
you from stealing the power that rightfully belongs to
someone else.

QUEEN ELINOR

Who do you say has stolen power?

CONSTANCE

Let *me* answer: your stealing son.

QUEEN ELINOR

You rude woman! Your bastard will be king so you can be a
queen and tax the whole world!

CONSTANCE

I was always as faithful to your son as you were to your
husband. This boy looks more like his father Geoffrey than
you and John are alike in your manners. And you two are as
alike as rain and water, or the devil and his mother. You call
my boy a bastard! By my soul, I think his father was not
conceived as legitimately. He can't have been, if you were
his mother.

QUEEN ELINOR

That's a good mother you have, boy, who insults your
father.

CONSTANCE

That's a good grandmother you have, boy, who insults you.

AUSTRIA

Stop!

BASTARD

Listen to the announcer.

AUSTRIA

Who the devil are you?

BASTARD

One who wants to act like a devil with you, sir, if I can catch
you and your skin alone. You are the hare in that proverb
who's brave enough to pull dead lions by the beard. I'll
smoke you out of your skin, if I can catch you at the right
time. Watch out for it, fellow. Really, I'll do it, really.

BLANCH

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

BASTARD

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

AUSTRIA

150 What craker is this same that deafs our ears
With this abundance of superfluous breath?

KING PHILIP

Lewis, determine what we shall do straight.

LEWIS

Women and fools, break off your conference.
King John, this is the very sum of all;
155 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 Bretagne, yield thee to my hand;
160 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 ELINOR

Come to thy grandam, child.

CONSTANCE

Do, child, go to it grandam, child:
165 Give grandam kingdom, and it grandam will
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig:
There's a good grandam.

ARTHUR

Good my mother, peace!
I would that I were low laid in my grave:
170 I am not worth this coil that's made for me.

QUEEN ELINOR

His mother shames him so, poor boy, he weeps.

CONSTANCE

Now shame upon you, whether she does or no!
His grandam's wrongs, and not his mother's shames,
Draws those heaven-moving pearls from his poor eyes,
175 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 ELINOR

Thou monstrous slanderer of heaven and earth!


CONSTANCE


Thou monstrous injurer of heaven and earth!
180 Call not me slanderer; thou and thine usurp
The dominations, royalties and rights
Of this oppressed boy: this is thy eld'st son's son,
Infortunate in nothing but in thee:
Thy sins are visited in this poor child;
185 The canon of the law is laid on him,
Being but the second generation
Removed from thy sin-conceiving womb.

KING JOHN

Bedlam, have done.

BLANCH

Oh, the man who took the skin from the lion looked good in
that lion skin !

 Austria seems to wear a lion skin
throughout the play.

BASTARD

It looks as good on him as great Hercules's would look on a
donkey. But, donkey, I'll take that burden off your back or
throw on one that will make your shoulders crack.

AUSTRIA

Who is this croaker who deafens us with all his excessive
noise?

KING PHILIP

Lewis, decide what we will do immediately.

LEWIS

Women and fools, stop talking. King John, this is the heart
of the matter: on Arthur's behalf I claim from you England,
Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, and Maine. Will you hand them
over and lay down your weapons?

KING JOHN

I would just as soon lay down my life. I defy you, king of
France. Arthur of Bretagne, surrender to me and out of my
dear love for you I'll give you more than the French coward
can win. Surrender to me, boy.

QUEEN ELINOR

Come to your grandmother, child.

CONSTANCE

Do, child, go to grandma, child. Give grandma kingdom,
and grandma will give you a plum, a cherry, and a fig. That's
a good grandma.

ARTHUR

Mother, stop! I wish I were dead. I'm not worth this fight I'm
causing.

QUEEN ELINOR

He's so ashamed of his mother, poor boy, he's crying.

CONSTANCE

Shame on you, whether he's ashamed of his mother or not!
His grandmother's crimes, not being ashamed of his
mother, draw those tears from his poor eyes that would
convince even heaven, and which heaven will take as
payment for fighting on his side. Yes, with these crystal
tears heaven will be bribed to bring justice to him and take
revenge on you.

QUEEN ELINOR

You monstrous slanderer of heaven and earth!

CONSTANCE

You monstrous harmer of heaven and earth! Don't call me a
slanderer. You and yours steal the power, royalty, and rights
of this oppressed boy. This is your oldest son's son,
unfortunate in nothing except being related to you. This
poor child is punished for your sins. The law is punishing
him for being only the second generation removed from
your sinful womb.

KING JOHN

You're crazy! Stop talking.

CONSTANCE

I have but this to say,
 190 That he is not only plagued for her sin,
 But God hath made her sin and her the plague
 On this removed issue, plague for her
 And with her plague; her sin his injury,
 Her injury the beadle to her sin,
 195 All punish'd in the person of this child,
 And all for her; a plague upon her!

QUEEN ELINOR

Thou unadvised scold, I can produce
 A will that bars the title of thy son.

CONSTANCE

Ay, who doubts that? a will! a wicked will:
 200 A woman's will; a canker'd grandam's will!

KING PHILIP

Peace, lady! pause, or be more temperate:
 It ill beseems this presence to cry aim
 To these ill-tuned repetitions.
 Some trumpet summon hither to the walls
 205 These men of Angiers: let us hear them speak
 Whose title they admit, Arthur's or John's.

Trumpet sounds. Enter certain Citizens upon the walls

FIRST CITIZEN

Who is it that hath warn'd us to the walls?

KING PHILIP

'Tis France, for England.

KING JOHN

England, for itself.
 210 You men of Angiers, and my loving subjects--

KING PHILIP

You loving men of Angiers, Arthur's subjects,
 Our trumpet call'd you to this gentle parle--

KING JOHN

For our advantage; therefore hear us first.
 These flags of France, that are advanced here
 215 Before the eye and prospect of your town,
 Have hither march'd 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:
 220 All preparation for a bloody siege
 All 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,
 225 By the compulsion of their ordinance
 By this time from their fixed beds of lime
 Had been dishabited, and wide havoc made
 For bloody power to rush upon your peace.
 But on the sight of us your lawful king,
 230 Who painfully with much expedient march
 Have brought a countercheque before your gates,
 To save unscratch'd your city's threatened cheeks,
 Behold, the French amazed vouchsafe a parle;
 And now, instead of bullets wrapp'd in fire,
 235 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 labour'd spirits,
 240 Forwearied in this action of swift speed,
 Crave harbourage within your city walls.

CONSTANCE

I only have this to say: that he is not only punished for her sin, but God has made her sin and her the punishment of this child descended from her. She's punished and she punishes him. Her sin harms him, and the harm she does compounds her sin. All the punishment falls on this child, and all because of her. Damn her!

QUEEN ELINOR

You thoughtless scolder, I can show you a will that disinherits your son.

CONSTANCE

Yes, who doubts that? A will! A wicked will; a woman's will; a decayed grandmother's will!

KING PHILIP

Stop, lady! Stop, or be more calm. It isn't fitting to repeat these unpleasant things in this company. *[To a servant]* Blow a trumpet to summon the men of Angiers here to the walls. Let's hear them say whose claim they recognize, Arthur's or John's.

Trumpets sound. Some Citizens enter on the walls.

FIRST CITIZEN

Who is it who calls us to the walls?

KING PHILIP

It's the king of France, on behalf of the king of England.

KING JOHN

The king of England, for myself. You men of Angiers, and my loving subjects--

KING PHILIP

You loving men of Angiers, Arthur's subjects, our trumpets called you to this polite discussion--

KING JOHN

For our advantage. So hear us first. These French flags camped here where you can see them have marched here to attack you. The cannons are loaded with anger and stand ready to spit out their iron anger at your walls. All these things are preparations for a bloody attack. You can see for yourself all of their cruel preparations. If I hadn't gotten here, these sleeping stones in the wall that surrounds your city like a waist would by this time have been detached by the force of the French guns from their limestone beds. In the terrible confusion, bloody violence would have attacked your peace. But I, your lawful king, by marching quickly and painfully, brought an opposing army to your gates to save your threatened city's cheeks from being scratched. At the sight of me, see, the French are amazed and are willing to talk. And now, instead of bullets wrapped in fire that would make your walls shake with fever, they only shoot calm words covered in smoke to convince you to make a dishonorable mistake. Don't trust them, kind citizens, and let me, your king, exhausted by his speedy march here, beg for shelter inside your city walls.

KING PHILIP

When I have said, make answer to us both.
 Lo, in this right hand, whose protection
 Is most divinely vow'd upon the right
 245 Of him it holds, stands young Plantagenet,
 Son to the elder brother of this man,
 And king o'er him and all that he enjoys:
 For this down-trodden equity, we tread
 In warlike march these greens before your town,
 250 Being no further enemy to you
 Than the constraint of hospitable zeal
 In the relief of this oppressed child
 Religiously provokes. Be pleased then
 To pay that duty which you truly owe
 255 To that owes it, namely this young prince:
 And then our arms, like to a muzzled bear,
 Save in aspect, hath all offence seal'd up;
 Our cannons' malice vainly shall be spent
 Against the invulnerable clouds of heaven;
 260 And with a blessed and unprov'd retire,
 With unhack'd 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.
 265 But if you fondly pass our proffer'd 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 harbour'd in their rude circumference.
 270 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?

FIRST CITIZEN

In brief, we are the king of England's subjects:
 275 For him, and in his right, we hold this town.

KING JOHN

Acknowledge then the king, and let me in.

FIRST CITIZEN

That can we not; but he that proves the king,
 To him will we prove loyal: till that time
 Have we ramm'd up our gates against the world.

KING JOHN

280 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

285 As many and as well-born bloods as those,--

BASTARD

Some bastards too.

KING PHILIP

Stand in his face to contradict his claim.

FIRST CITIZEN

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

KING PHILIP

When I have spoken, answer both of us. Look, held by this
 right hand--which God will protect when it fights for the
 rights of the boy it holds--stands young Plantagenet, son of
 this man's older brother, and king of him and everything he
 owns. For his ignored rights we are marching on this green
 land in front of your town. We're not your enemies except
 insofar as we have to be in our religious, kind eagerness to
 help this oppressed child. So agree to do what you should
 and obey the right person, this young prince. Then our
 weapons, like a muzzled bear, will not hurt you except by
 frightening you. Our cannons' anger will be taken out
 pointlessly against the clouds of heaven, which can't be
 harmed. And with a blessed and peaceful retreat, with
 swords not hacked and helmets not battered, we will carry
 back home the energetic blood which we came here to
 spout against your town and we will leave your children,
 your wives, and you in peace. But if you foolishly pass up
 our offer, the curves of your old-faced walls can't hide you
 from our messengers of war, even if all these English people
 and their army are camped around their rough edges. So
 tell us, will your city call this person we've threatened it for
 its ruler? Or will we give the signal to our anger and take the
 city with blood?

FIRST CITIZEN

In short, we are the king of England's subjects. We hold this
 town for him, defending his rights.

KING JOHN

So acknowledge the king and let me in.

FIRST CITIZEN

We can't do that, but we will be loyal to whoever proves
 himself king. Until then we've shut our gates against the
 whole world.

KING JOHN

Doesn't having the crown of England prove me king? And if
 that doesn't, I bring you witnesses: an army of thirty
 thousand hearts from England--

BASTARD

Bastards, and others.

KING JOHN

To prove my title with their lives.

KING PHILIP

As many and as well-born people as those--

BASTARD

Some bastards too.

KING PHILIP

Face him to contradict his claim.

FIRST CITIZEN

Until you agree who has the best claim, we withhold
 obedience from both of you to reserve it for the worthiest.

KING JOHN

290 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

295 Saint George, that swinged the dragon, and e'er since
Sits on his horseback at mine hostess' door,
Teach us some fence!

To AUSTRIA

BASTARD

300 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

305 O tremble, for you hear the lion roar.

KING JOHN

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

BASTARD

Speed then, to take advantage of the field.

KING PHILIP

310 It shall be so; and at the other hill
Command the rest to stand. God and our right!

Exeunt

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 Bretagne, in,
Who by the hand of France this day hath made
315 Much work for tears in many an English mother,
Whose sons lie scattered on the bleeding ground;
Many a widow's husband grovelling lies,
Coldly embracing the discolour'd earth;
And victory, with little loss, doth play
320 Upon the dancing banners of the French,
Who are at hand, triumphantly display'd,
To enter conquerors and to proclaim
Arthur of Bretagne England's king and yours.

Enter English Herald, with trumpet

ENGLISH HERALD

325 Rejoice, you men of Angiers, ring your bells:
King John, your king and England's doth approach,
Commander of this hot malicious day:
Their armours, that march'd hence so silver-bright,
Hither return all gilt with Frenchmen's blood;
There stuck no plume in any English crest
330 That is removed by a staff of France;
Our colours do return in those same hands
That did display them when we first march'd forth;

KING JOHN

Then may God forgive the sins of all those souls that will fly
to their eternal homes before evening, to be judged terribly
by our kingdom's king!

KING PHILIP


Amen, amen! On your horses, knight! To arms!


BASTARD

Saint George, who beat the dragon, and ever since sits on
horseback on the sign at my local pub, teach us some
fencing!

To AUSTRIA

BASTARD

Fellow, if I were at home at your den, fellow, with your
lioness, I would put an ox's head  on your lion skin and
make a monster out of you.

 This is a reference to the cuckold or betrayed husband's horns: if a wife was unfaithful, she was said to make a cuckold or horned animal of her husband. Austria wears a lion skin, so he would be a monstrous combination of ox and lion.

AUSTRIA

Stop! No more of that sort of talk.

BASTARD

Oh be afraid, because you hear the lion roar.

KING JOHN

Let's get to higher ground. There we'll put all our troops in
order.

BASTARD

Hurry, then, to get the best part of the battlefield.

KING PHILIP

That's right. And command the rest to stand at the other
hill. For God and our right!

They exit.

After some fighting the Herald of France enters and goes to the gate while trumpets are sounding.

FRENCH HERALD

Men of Angiers, open wide your gates and let in young
Arthur, duke of Bretagne, who by the power of the king of
France today gave many English mothers reason to cry
because their sons lie scattered on the bloody ground.
Many widows' husbands lie on the ground, passionlessly
embracing the stained earth. The French have won the
battle with few casualties, as you can see from their
dancing banners. They are waiting triumphantly nearby to
enter as conquerors and to proclaim Arthur of Bretagne
your and all of England's king.

The English Herald enters with trumpets sounding.

ENGLISH HERALD

Be joyful, men of Angiers, ring your bells. King John, your
and all of England's king, approaches, winner of this
intense and deadly battle. The armors of those who
marched here used to be bright silver, and they will return
decorated with the blood of Frenchmen. No feather stuck in
an English helmet was removed by a French spear. Our
banners return in the same hands that held them when we
first marched out. Our energetic Englishmen come like a
band of happy hunters, with red hands dyed in the dying

335 And, like a troop of jolly huntsmen, come
Our lusty English, all with purpled hands,
Dyed in the dying slaughter of their foes:
Open your gates and gives the victors way.

FIRST CITIZEN

Heralds, from off our towers we might behold,
From first to last, the onset and retire
Of both your armies; whose equality
340 By our best eyes cannot be censured:
Blood hath bought blood and blows have answered blows;
Strength match'd with strength, and power confronted
power:
Both are alike; and both alike we like.
345 One must prove greatest: while they weigh so even,
We hold our town for neither, yet for both.

Re-enter KING JOHN and KING PHILIP, with their powers, severally

KING JOHN

France, hast thou yet more blood to cast away?
Say, shall the current of our right run on?
Whose passage, vex'd with thy impediment,
350 Shall leave his native channel and o'erswell
With course disturb'd 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,
355 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,
360 Or add a royal number to the dead,
Gracing the scroll that tells of this war's loss
With slaughter coupled to the name of kings.

BASTARD

Ha, majesty! how high thy glory towers,
When the rich blood of kings is set on fire!
365 O, now doth Death line his dead chaps with steel;
The swords of soldiers are his teeth, his fangs;
And now he feasts, mousing the flesh of men,
In undetermined differences of kings.
Why stand these royal fronts amazed thus?
370 Cry, 'havoc!' kings; back to the stained field,
You equal potents, fiery kindled spirits!
Then let confusion of one part confirm
The other's peace: till then, blows, blood and death!

KING JOHN

Whose party do the townsmen yet admit?

KING PHILIP

375 Speak, citizens, for England; who's your king?

FIRST 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,
380 Lord of our presence, Angiers, and of you.

blood of their enemies. Open your gates and let the winners
in.

FIRST CITIZEN

Heralds, we could see from our towers the charge and
retreat of both your armies from beginning to end. They
seemed equal even to the best observer among us. Blood
bought blood and hits answered hits. Strength was
matched with strength and power fought power. They're
both equal and we like both equally. One must prove itself
to be the greatest. While they're so evenly balanced, we
must keep our town safe for neither, but for both.

*KING JOHN and KING PHILIP enter from opposite sides,
with their armies.*

KING JOHN

France, do you have more blood to throw away? Will the
tide of our right to the crown run on? If you try to block the
tide, the water will leave its home river and flood violently
over your shores, unless you let its silver water keep
peacefully flowing to the ocean.

KING PHILIP

England, you haven't lost a single drop of blood less than
we French have in this intense battle. Rather, you've lost
more. And I swear, by this hand that rules all the land
around here, before we put down our weapons carried in a
just cause we'll put you down, against whom we carry these
weapons. Or add a royal name to the list of the dead,
decorating the scroll on which the names of people lost in
this war are written by adding the name of kings.

BASTARD

Ha, royalty! You look and act so glorious when kings get
angry! Oh, now Death lines his dead jaws with steel.
Soldiers' swords are his teeth, his fangs. And now he feasts,
tearing the flesh of men, not distinguishing the difference
between kings. Why are these royal faces staring at me
blankly? Kings, shout "Go!" Go back to the blood-stained
battlefield, you equal armies and angry spirits! Then let
destruction of one side secure the peace of the other. Until
then, blows, blood, and death!

KING JOHN

Whose side are the townspeople on now?

KING PHILIP

Speak, citizens, for England: who's your king?

FIRST CITIZEN

The king of England--when we know who the king is.

KING PHILIP

Recognize me as the king, since I'm fighting for his rights
here.

KING JOHN

No, recognize me, since I do my own great work and stand
here, lord of my army, Angiers, and of you.

FIRST CITIZEN

A greater power than we denies all this;
 And till it be undoubted, we do lock
 Our former scruple in our strong-barr'd gates;
 King'd of our fears, until our fears, resolved,
 385 Be by some certain king purged and deposed.

BASTARD

By heaven, these scroyles of Angiers flout you, kings,
 And stand securely on their battlements,
 As in a theatre, whence they gape and point
 At your industrious scenes and acts of death.
 390 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
 395 Their battering cannon charged to the mouths,
 Till their soul-fearing clamours have brawl'd down
 The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city:
 I'd play incessantly upon these jades,
 Even till unfenced desolation
 400 Leave them as naked as the vulgar air.
 That done, dissever your united strengths,
 And part your mingled colours once again;
 Turn face to face and bloody point to point;
 Then, in a moment, Fortune shall cull forth
 405 Out of one side her happy minion,
 To whom in favour she shall give the day,
 And kiss him with a glorious victory.
 How like you this wild counsel, mighty states?
 Smacks it not something of the policy?

KING JOHN

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

BASTARD

An if thou hast the mettle of a king,
 415 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 dash'd them to the ground,
 Why then defy each other and pell-mell
 420 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

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

BASTARD

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!

FIRST CITIZEN

430 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:
 435 Persever not, but hear me, mighty kings.

FIRST CITIZEN

A higher power than us denies all this. Until there's no
 dispute about it, we lock our uncertainty inside our
 strongly-barr'd gates. Our fears are our kings until our
 fears, resolved, are gotten rid of and deposed by a definite
 king.

BASTARD

By heaven, these good-for-nothings of Angiers defy you,
 kings, and stand safely on their walls like in a theater. From
 there they gawp and point at your hardworking scenes and
 acts of death. Take my advice, kings: follow the example of
 the rebels in Jerusalem. Be friends for a while and join
 forces to do your worst to this town. France and England
 can both point their fully charged cannons from east and
 west, until their terrifying sounds have knocked down the
 hard ribs of this disrespectful city. I want to keep attacking
 these worthless people until wall-less destruction leaves
 them as naked as the common air. When that's done, stop
 working together and separate out your banners again,
 which were mingled together. Turn face to face with bloody
 weapons. Then, in a moment, Fortune will choose a happy
 follower from one of the sides. She'll make him win and kiss
 him with a glorious victory. How do you like this wild
 advice, powerful kings? Doesn't it sound like good politics?

KING JOHN

Now, by the sky that hangs above our heads, I like it.
 France, shall we combine our forces and knock this Angiers
 to the ground, then afterward fight about who will be king
 of it?

BASTARD

If you have the character of a king, you won't tolerate being
 treated badly by this disobedient town. Turn the mouths of
 your cannons, as we will do with ours, against these
 disrespectful walls. And when we have beat them to the
 ground, we'll defy each other and attack each other every
 which way, for heaven or hell.

KING PHILIP

Very well. Where will you attack?

KING JOHN

We will send destruction into the city's breast from the
 west.

AUSTRIA

And I from the north.

KING PHILIP

Our thunder from the south will rain bullets on the town.

BASTARD

Oh wise strategy! From north to south, Austria and France
 shoot in each other's faces. I'll encourage them. Come on,
 let's go! Let's go!

FIRST CITIZEN

Listen to us, great kings: agree to wait a while and I will
 show you a way to make peace and an honest alliance. Win
 this city without violence or wounds. Rescue the people still
 breathing and alive who come here as sacrifices on this
 battlefield so they can die in bed later. Don't go on with this
 plan but listen to me, powerful kings.

KING JOHN

Speak on with favour; we are bent to hear.

FIRST CITIZEN

That daughter there of Spain, the Lady Blanch,
Is niece to England: look upon the years
Of Lewis the Dauphin and that lovely maid:
440 If lusty love should go in quest of beauty,
Where should he find it fairer than in Blanch?
If zealous love should go in search of virtue,
Where should he find it purer than in Blanch?
If love ambitious sought a match of birth,
445 Whose veins bound richer blood than Lady Blanch?
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,
450 If want it be not that she is not he:
He is the half part of a blessed man,
Left to be finished by such as she;
And she a fair divided excellence,
Whose fulness of perfection lies in him.
455 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.
460 This union shall do more than battery can
To our fast-closed gates; for at this match,
With swifter spleen than powder can enforce,
The mouth of passage shall we fling wide ope,
And give you entrance: but without this match,
465 The sea enraged is not half so deaf,
Lions more confident, mountains and rocks
More free from motion, no, not Death himself
In moral fury half so peremptory,
As we to keep this city.

BASTARD

470 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
475 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 cudgell'd; not a word of his
480 But buffets better than a fist of France:
Zounds! I was never so bethump'd with words
Since I first call'd my brother's father dad.

QUEEN ELINOR

Son, list to this conjunction, make this match;
Give with our niece a dowry large enough:
485 For by this knot thou shalt so surely tie
Thy now unsure assurance to the crown,
That yon green boy shall have no sun to ripe
The bloom that promiseth a mighty fruit.
I see a yielding in the looks of France;
490 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.

FIRST CITIZEN

495 Why answer not the double majesties
This friendly treaty of our threaten'd town?

KING PHILIP

Speak England first, that hath been forward first
To speak unto this city: what say you?

KING JOHN

Continue to speak. We're listening.

FIRST CITIZEN

That Spanish woman, the Lady Blanch, is a niece of the king of England. Compare the ages of Lewis the Dauphin and that beautiful virgin. If young love were to go looking for beauty, who is more beautiful than Blanch? If true love were to go looking for virtue, who is more pure than Blanch? If ambitious love looked for a marriage that matched its social station, who is more noble than Lady Blanch? Just as she is perfect in beauty, virtue, and family, the young Dauphin is also complete in those things. Except not complete, because he is not her. And she also lacks nothing, except one thing, which is that she is not him. He is half of a blessed man, left to be finished by someone like her. And she is half of a divided beautiful excellence, who will be fully perfect when combined with him. Two silver streams, when they join, make the banks that contain them more glorious. If you have them marry each other one stream will join two shores: you two kings will be two controlling limits to these two royals. This marriage will achieve more than attacking our tightly-closed gates can. Because once this match is made, faster than gunpowder can force us to do the same thing, we will fling the passageway open and let you in. But without this marriage, the angry sea is not half as deaf, lions half as confident, mountains and rocks more firmly stuck, no, Death himself is not half as quick to kill in his rage as we are to defend this city.

BASTARD

That's a sentence that shakes Death's rotten corpse out of his rags! That's a big mouth that spits out death and mountains, rocks and seas, and talks as familiarly about roaring lions as thirteen-year-old girls talk about puppy dogs! What gunman conceived this energetic man? He speaks cannon fire, and smoke, and bouncing. He beats you with his tongue. Our ears are clubbed. Every word of his hits better than a French fist. By God! I've never been so thumped with words since I first called my brother's father dad.

QUEEN ELINOR

Son, listen to this proposal. Make this marriage happen. Give our niece a large enough dowry. By this marriage you will certainly ensure your threatened claim to the crown. This way young Arthur won't become powerful: he'll be like a flower that doesn't get enough sun to develop from a green bud into a fruit. The king of France looks like he'll agree. See how they're whispering. Encourage them while they are capable of being convinced to do this, so that anger, melted by weak begging, pity, and regret, can't cool and congeal back to what it was before.

FIRST CITIZEN

Why don't the two kings answer this friendly proposal from our threatened town?

KING PHILIP

Let England speak first, since before they've always insisted on speaking first to this city. What do you say?

KING JOHN

500 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,
505 Find liable to our crown and dignity,
Shall gild her bridal bed and make her rich
In titles, honours and promotions,
As she in beauty, education, blood,
Holds hand with any princess of the world.

KING PHILIP

510 What say'st thou, boy? look in the lady's face.

LEWIS

I do, my lord; and in her eye I find
A wonder, or a wondrous miracle,
The shadow of myself form'd in her eye:
Which being but the shadow of your son,
515 Becomes a sun and makes your son a shadow:
I do protest I never loved myself
Till now infixed I beheld myself
Drawn in the flattering table of her eye.

Whispers with BLANCH

BASTARD

520 Drawn in the flattering table of her eye!
Hang'd in the frowning wrinkle of her brow!
And quarter'd in her heart! he doth espy
Himself love's traitor: this is pity now,
That hang'd and drawn and quartered, there should be
In such a love so vile a lout as he.

BLANCH

525 My uncle's will in this respect is mine:
If he see ought in you that makes him like,
That any thing he sees, which moves his liking,
I can with ease translate it to my will;
Or if you will, to speak more properly,
530 I will enforce it easily 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
535 judge,
That I can find should merit any hate.

KING JOHN

What say these young ones? What say you my niece?

BLANCH

That she is bound in honour still to do
What you in wisdom still vouchsafe to say.

KING JOHN

540 Speak then, prince Dauphin; can you love this lady?


LEWIS


Nay, ask me if I can refrain from love;
For I do love her most unfeignedly.

KING JOHN

545 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 JOHN

If the Dauphin there, your royal son, can read the words "I love" in this book of beauty , her dowry will be equal to a queen's. Anjou and beautiful Touraine, Maine, Poitiers, and everything on this side of the sea, except this city we're attacking now, that we find fitting for our power and dignity, will decorate her marriage bed and make her as rich in titles, honors, and rank as she is in beauty, education, family—which is to say equal to any princess in the world.

 i.e. Lady Blanch

KING PHILIP


What do you say, boy? Look at the lady's face.


LEWIS

I am looking, my lord, and in her eye I find a wonder, or a wonderful miracle, my own shape formed in her eye. Since this is only the shadow of your son, it becomes a sun and makes your son a shadow. I swear I never loved myself until I now say myself drawn on the flattering paper of her eye.

He whispers with BLANCH.

BASTARD

Drawn on the flattering paper of her eye! Hanged in the frowning wrinkle of her forehead! And cut into quarters her heart! He sees himself as love's traitor . This is a pity, that such a disgusting fool as he is should be hanged, drawn, and quartered in such a love.

 The punishment for treason was hanging, drawing, and quartering, an unpleasant combination of being hanged, having one's insides pulled out, and being pulled apart while still alive.

BLANCH

[To the Dauphin] I will do what my uncle wants in this matter. If he sees anything in you that makes him like you, I can easily make myself see whatever he sees in you. Or I mean, to speak more properly, I can force myself to love you. I won't flatter you, my lord, by saying that everything I see in you makes me love you. But I'll say this: I can see nothing in you, although you'll have to be the judge of any bad thoughts you have, that would make me hate you.

KING JOHN

What do these young people say? What does my niece say?

BLANCH

That it's her duty to do what you wisely say she should.


KING JOHN


Then speak, prince Dauphin: can you love this lady?

LEWIS

No, ask me if I can stop loving her, because I genuinely love her.

KING JOHN

Then I give the five provinces of Volquessen, Touraine, Maine, Poitiers, and Anjou to you along with her. And in addition to this, thirty thousand marks  in English coins. Philip of France, if this pleases you then command your son and daughter to take each other's hands.

 The mark does not have a constant value but probably ranges between a half pound and two-thirds of a pound of silver.

KING PHILIP

It likes us well; young princes, close your hands.

AUSTRIA

550 And your lips too; for I am well assured
That I did so when I was first assured.

KING PHILIP

Now, citizens of Angiers, ope your gates,
Let in that amity which you have made;
For at Saint Mary's chapel presently
555 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.

LEWIS

560 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;
565 Which we, God knows, have turn'd another way,
To our own vantage.

KING JOHN

We will heal up all;
For we'll create young Arthur Duke of Bretagne
And Earl of Richmond; and this rich fair town
570 We make him lord of. Call the Lady Constance;
Some speedy messenger bid her repair
To our solemnity: I trust we shall,
If not fill up the measure of her will,
Yet in some measure satisfy her so
575 That we shall stop her exclamation.
Go we, as well as haste will suffer us,
To this unlook'd for, unprepared pomp.

Exeunt all but the BASTARD

BASTARD

Mad world! mad kings! mad composition!
John, to stop Arthur's title in the whole,
580 Hath willingly departed with a part,
And France, whose armour conscience buckled on,
Whom zeal and charity brought to the field
As God's own soldier, rounded in the ear
With that same purpose-changer, that sly devil,
585 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,
590 That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling Commodity,
Commodity, the bias of the world,
The world, who of itself is peised well,
Made to run even upon even ground,
Till this advantage, this vile-drawing bias,
595 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,
600 Clapp'd on the outward eye of fickle France,
Hath drawn him from his own determined aid,
From a resolved and honourable war,
To a most base and vile-concluded peace.
And why rail I on this Commodity?
605 But for because he hath not woo'd me yet:
Not that I have the power to clutch my hand,
When his fair angels would salute my palm;

KING PHILIP

It does please me. Young royals, take each other's hands.

AUSTRIA

And kiss each other too, because I'm sure I did that when I
got engaged.

KING PHILIP

Now, citizens of Angiers, open your gates and let in the
friendship you made. The marriage will take place soon at
Saint Mary's chapel. Is the Lady Constance not in this
crowd? I know she isn't, because her presence would have
kept this match from being made. Where are her son and
her? Tell me, if anyone knows.

LEWIS

She's back at your tent, sad and angry.

KING PHILIP


I bet this alliance we made won't cure her sadness. My
brother of England, how can we satisfy this widowed lady? I
came to fight for her. God knows, I have turned things to my
own advantage.


KING JOHN

I will heal this all. I will make young Arthur Duke of Bretagne
and Earl of Richmond and the lord of this beautiful rich
town. Call Lady Constance. Have some speedy messenger
ask her to come to the ceremony. I trust that even if we
don't give her everything she wants we will give her enough
to stop her complaining. Let's go as quickly as we can to
this ceremony, which we didn't prepare for or expect.

All except the BASTARD exit.

BASTARD

Crazy world! Crazy kings! Crazy alliance! John, to stop
Arthur's claim to the whole, willingly parted with a part.
France--with armor buckled on by conscience, and who was
brought to the field by eagerness and charity like the
soldier of God himself--was smooth-talked by that purpose-
changer, that clever devil, that middleman who always
hurts faithfulness's head, that daily oath-breaker who wins
from everyone. It wins from kings, from beggars, old men
young men, virgins—it cheats a poor virgin out of the only
thing she owns, the word "virgin". That smooth-faced
gentleman is tickling Convenience, Convenience. It tilts the
world one way or the other, although the world left alone is
equally balanced and made to run evenly on even ground.
Until, that is, this advantage, that draws people to evil, this
swaying, this Convenience, this pimp, this middleman, this
word that changes everything, thrown in the eyes of the
unreliable king of France, distracts him from the goal he
had set, from a clear and honorable war to a cowardly and
badly negotiated peace. Why do I complain about
Convenience? Because he hasn't tried to buy my affection
yet. I'm sure I wouldn't have the power to close my hand
when his beautiful angels  want to greet my palm. But
my hand, not tested yet, complains like a poor beggar
about rich people. Well, while I am a beggar, I will complain
and say that being rich is the only sin. And when I'm rich,
my virtue will then be to say there is no sin but begging.
Since kings break alliances when it's convenient, be my
lord, Profit, and I will worship you.

 An angel was a unit of currency in
early modern England.

But for my hand, as unattempted yet,
 Like a poor beggar, railleth on the rich.
 610 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,
 615 Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee.

Exit

He exits.

Act 3, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter CONSTANCE, ARTHUR, and SALISBURY

CONSTANCE

Gone to be married! gone to swear a peace!
 False blood to false blood join'd! gone to be friends!
 Shall Lewis have Blanch, and Blanch those provinces?
 It is not so; thou hast misspoke, misheard:
 5 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;
 10 I have a king's oath to the contrary.
 Thou shalt be punish'd for thus frightening me,
 For I am sick and capable of fears,
 Oppress'd with wrongs and therefore full of fears,
 A widow, husbandless, subject to fears,
 15 A woman, naturally born to fears;
 And though thou now confess thou didst but jest,
 With my vex'd spirits I cannot take a truce,
 But they will quake and tremble all this day.
 What dost thou mean by shaking of thy head?
 20 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?
 25 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,
 30 Teach thou this sorrow how to make me die,
 And let belief and life encounter so
 As doth the fury of two desperate men
 Which in the very meeting fall and die.
 Lewis marry Blanch! O boy, then where art thou?
 35 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

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

ARTHUR

I do beseech you, madam, be content.

Shakescleare Translation

CONSTANCE, ARTHUR, and SALISBURY enter.

CONSTANCE

Gone to get married! Gone to make peace! Lying blood is
 joined to lying blood! Gone to be friends? Will Lewis have
 Blanch, and Blanch have those provinces? It isn't true. You
 misspoke or misheard. Be cautious, tell your story again. It
 can't be true, you're just saying it's true. I trust I can't trust
 you, because your word is just the empty sounds made by a
 common man. Believe me, I don't believe you, man. I have
 a king's oath to do the opposite of what you say. You will be
 punished for frightening me in this way, because I am sick
 and easy to scare and I'm a woman, naturally afraid. And
 even if you confess now that you were only joking, I can't
 calm my troubled mind, but it will tremble with fear all day.
 What do you mean by shaking your head? Why do you look
 so sadly at my son? What does that hand on your chest
 mean? Why is your eye crying so sadly, like a proud river
 swelling over its banks? Do these sad signs confirm your
 words? Then speak again. Don't tell the whole story again,
 but say this one word: whether your story is true.

SALISBURY

My story is as true as you think these people's promises
 were false.

CONSTANCE

Oh, if you teach me to believe this sad thing, teach this sad
 thing how to kill me, and let belief and life fight like two
 furious, desperate men who fall and die at the moment they
 clash together. Lewis is marrying Blanch! Oh, boy, then
 where are you? Now that France is friends with England,
 what will happen to me? Man, go away. I can't stand the
 sight of you. This news has made you a very ugly man.

SALISBURY

What harm have I done, good lady, except that I told you
 the harm done by others?

CONSTANCE

That harm is so terrible in itself that it makes anyone who
 speaks of it harmful.

ARTHUR

Please, ma'am, accept what's happened.

CONSTANCE

If thou, that bid'st me be content, wert grim,
 Ugly and slanderous to thy mother's womb,
 45 Full of unpleasing blots and sightless stains,
 Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious,
 Patch'd 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
 50 Become thy great birth nor deserve a crown.
 But thou art fair, and at thy birth, dear boy,
 Nature and Fortune join'd to make thee great:
 Of Nature's gifts thou mayst with lilies boast,
 And with the half-blown rose. But Fortune, O,
 55 She is corrupted, changed and won from thee;
 She adulterates hourly with thine uncle John,
 And with her golden hand hath pluck'd on France
 To tread down fair respect of sovereignty,
 And made his majesty the bawd to theirs.
 60 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
 65 Am bound to under-bear.

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;
 70 For grief is proud and makes his owner stoop.
 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;
 75 Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.

Seats herself on the ground

Enter KING JOHN, KING PHILLIP, LEWIS, BLANCH, QUEEN ELINOR, the BASTARD, AUSTRIA, and Attendants

KING PHILIP

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

CONSTANCE

A wicked day, and not a holy day!
 85

Rising

CONSTANCE

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,
 90 This day of shame, oppression, perjury.
 Or, if it must stand still, let wives with child
 Pray that their burthens may not fall this day,
 Lest that their hopes prodigiously be cross'd:
 But on this day let seamen fear no wreck;
 95 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!

CONSTANCE

[*To ARTHUR*] If you who ask me to accept this were grim,
 ugly, and an insult to your mother's womb, full of
 unpleasant blots and disgusting stains, lame, foolish,
 misshapen, dark, monstrous, covered in ugly moles and
 offensive-looking marks, I wouldn't care. Then I would
 accept this, because then I would not love you. No, and you
 wouldn't do credit to your great family or deserve the
 crown. But you are handsome, and at your birth, dear boy,
 Nature and Fortune joined together to make you great. You
 can compare favorably the gifts Nature gave you with lilies
 and half-opened roses. But Fortune, oh, she has been
 corrupted, changed, and stolen from you. She's committing
 adultery every hour with your uncle John, and with her
 golden hand has encouraged the king of France to walk all
 over the rightful king and made him their pimp. France is a
 pimp to Fortune and King John. Fortune is a prostitute and
 John is a thief! [*To SALISBURY*] Tell me, you fellow, hasn't
 the king of France broken his promise? Poison him with
 words, or go and leave me alone to bear the sorrows I'm the
 only one who has to bear.

SALISBURY

I'm sorry, ma'am, I can't go to the kings without you.

CONSTANCE

You can and you will. I will not go with you. I will turn my
 sorrow into pride. Sadness is proud and makes its owner
 bow to it. Let kings assemble around me and the authority
 of my great sadness, because my sadness is so great that no
 support except the huge firm earth can hold it up. Here
 sorrows and I sit. Here is my throne. Ask kings to come bow
 to it.

She sits on the ground.

KING JOHN, KING PHILLIP, LEWIS, BLANCH, QUEEN ELINOR, the BASTARD, AUSTRIA, and Attendants enter.

KING PHILIP

It's true, beautiful daughter, and this blessed day will
 always be celebrated as a festival in France. To celebrate
 this day the glorious sun stops in its track and acts like a
 scientist, turning the meager muddy earth into glittering
 gold with the brightness of his precious eye. When this day
 comes up every year it will always be treated as a holiday.


CONSTANCE

An evil day, not a holy day!

She rises.

CONSTANCE

What has this day deserved? What has it done to be set in
 golden letters among the saint's days on the calendar?
 No, instead remove this day from the week, this day of
 shame, oppression, lies. Or, if it must remain, let pregnant
 wives pray not to give birth on this day, fearing that their
 hopes will end in disaster. May sailors not fear shipwreck
 except on this day. May no bargains be broken that are not
 made on this day. May everything begun on this day end
 badly, yes, may faith itself change into hollow lies!

 Constance is referring to elaborately decorated "books of hours," which contained calendars of saint's days.

KING PHILIP

By heaven, lady, you shall have no cause
To curse the fair proceedings of this day:
100 Have I not pawn'd to you my majesty?

CONSTANCE

You have beguiled me with a counterfeit
Resembling majesty, which, being touch'd and tried,
Proves valueless: you are forsworn, forsworn;
You came in arms to spill mine enemies' blood,
105 But now in arms you strengthen it with yours:
The grappling vigour and rough frown of war
Is cold in amity and painted peace,
And our oppression hath made up this league.
Arm, arm, you heavens, against these perjured kings!
110 A widow cries; be husband to me, heavens!
Let not the hours of this ungodly day
Wear out the day in peace; but, ere sunset,
Set armed discord 'twixt these perjured kings!
Hear me, O, hear me!

AUSTRIA

115 Lady Constance, peace!

CONSTANCE

War! war! no peace! peace is to me a war
O Lymoges! O Austria! thou dost shame
That bloody spoil: thou slave, thou wretch, thou
coward!
120 Thou little valiant, great in villany!
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,
125 And soothest 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
130 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 calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

AUSTRIA

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

BASTARD

135 And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

AUSTRIA

Thou darest not say so, villain, for thy life.

BASTARD

And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

KING JOHN

We like not this; thou dost forget thyself.

Enter CARDINAL PANDULPH

KING PHILIP

140 Here comes the holy legate of the pope.

CARDINAL 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,
145 Do in his name religiously demand
Why thou against the church, our holy mother,
So wilfully dost spurn; and force perforce

KING PHILIP

By heaven, lady, you will have no reason to curse the good
things that have happened today. Haven't I sold my
kingship to you?


CONSTANCE

You tricked me with a fake that looked like kingship, which,
being touched and tested, proved to be worthless. You
broke your oath, broke your oath. You came armed to spill
my enemies' blood, but now you strengthen it by giving
someone of your blood into their arms. The fighting
strength and rough frown of war can do nothing in
friendship and gaudy peace, and this alliance was made by
oppressing us. To arms, heaven, to fight these lying kings! A
widow cries out: be a husband to me, heaven! Don't let the
hours of this unholy day use up the day peacefully. But,
before sunset, make these lying kings fight again! Hear me,
oh hear me!

AUSTRIA

Calm down, Lady Constance!

CONSTANCE

War! War! No peace. Peace is a war to me. Oh Lymoges! Oh
Austria! You shame that bloody lion skin! You slave, you
weaking, you coward! You're not very brave, but very evil!
You're always acting strong on the stronger side! You're
Fortune's fighter, and never fight except when you can be
sure that [unpredictable lady](#)  is near to guide you to
safety! You're a liar too, and you flatter great men. What a
fool you are, a roaring fool, to brag and stamp and swear on
my side! You cold-blooded slave, haven't you spoken like
thunder on my behalf and sworn to be my soldier, telling
me to rely on your luck, your fortune, and your strength?
And now you fall over in front of me? You wear a lion's skin!
Take it off, be ashamed of yourself, and hang a calf's skin on
those cowardly limbs.

 i.e. Fortune

AUSTRIA

Oh, I wish a man had spoken those words to me—!

BASTARD

And hang a calf's skin on those cowardly limbs.

AUSTRIA

You don't dare say so, you good-for-nothing—you'd be
dead.

BASTARD

And hang a calf's skin on those cowardly limbs.

KING JOHN

I don't like this. Behave yourself.

CARDINAL PANDULPH enters.

KING PHILIP

Here comes the pope's holy deputy.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Greetings, you holy deputies of God! I have a holy message
for you, King John. I, Pandulph, cardinal of beautiful Milan,
and deputy of Pope Innocent, in his name religiously ask
why you're stubbornly disobeying the church, our holy
mother. Why are you using force to stop Stephen Langton,
our chosen archbishop of Canterbury, from taking up his

Keep Stephen Langton, chosen archbishop
Of Canterbury, from that holy see?

150 This, in our foresaid holy father's name,
Pope Innocent, I do demand of thee.

KING JOHN

What earthly name to interrogatories
Can task the free breath of a sacred king?
Thou canst not, cardinal, devise a name
155 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;

160 But as we, under heaven, are supreme head,
So under Him that great supremacy,
Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,
Without the assistance of a mortal hand:
So tell the pope, all reverence set apart
165 To him and his usurp'd 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;
170 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,
175 Yet I alone, alone do me oppose
Against the pope and count his friends my foes.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

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

CONSTANCE

185 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.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

190 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;
195 Therefore, since law itself is perfect wrong,
How can the law forbid my tongue to curse?

CARDINAL 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,
200 Unless he do submit himself to Rome.

QUEEN ELINOR

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

holy office? I ask you this in the name our holy father, Pope
Innocent.

KING JOHN

What earthly authorities can question a holy king's
freedom? Cardinal, you can't think of a name more
unimportant, worthless, and ridiculous to tell me to do
anything as the Pope's. Tell him this. And tell him this much
more from the king of England's mouth: that no Italian
priest will tax my country. But since I, under God, am the
highest leader, I will rule my great country for God without
help from any mortal. Tell the pope that as respectfully as
he and his stolen authority deserve.

KING PHILIP

Brother, you're speaking sinfully.

KING JOHN

Although you and all the Christian kings are ordered around
by this meddling priest, paying him money because you're
afraid of being cursed; and since with disgusting gold,
scum, and dust, you buy corrupted forgiveness from a man
who will not be forgiven by God for selling it; and although
you and the rest are ordered around and love and pay for
this deceitful witchcraft--I alone, alone, oppose the pope
and consider his friends my enemies.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Then by the lawful power I have, you will be cursed and
excommunicated. And anyone who rebels against you--
since you're a heretic--will be blessed. And the hand that
assassinates you and takes your hateful life away will be
called worthy, and will be made a saint and worshipped.

CONSTANCE

Oh, let it be lawful for me to curse along with Rome for a
while! Good father cardinal, say amen to my sharp curses.
Because without including a reference to the wrong he did
me, no tongue has power to curse him properly.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Lady, there's law and reason behind my curse.

CONSTANCE

And mine too. When law can't do right, let it be legal to do
wrong. Law can't give my child his kingdom, because
whoever has the kingdom is in charge of the law. So, since
the law itself is completely wrong, how can the law keep me
from cursing?

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Philip of France, you will be cursed if you don't let go of the
hand of that terrible heretic and attack him with all the
power of France, unless he submits to Rome.

QUEEN ELINOR

Do you look scared, France? Don't let go.

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

205 And hang a calf's-skin 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 say'st thou to the cardinal?

CONSTANCE

What should he say, but as the cardinal?

LEWIS

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

BLANCH

That's the curse of Rome.

CONSTANCE

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

BLANCH

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

CONSTANCE

220 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

225 The king is moved, and answers not to this.

CONSTANCE

O, be removed from him, and answer well!

AUSTRIA

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

BASTARD

Hang nothing but a calf's-skin, most sweet lout.

KING PHILIP

I am perplex'd, and know not what to say.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

230 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,

235

CONSTANCE

Take care that he doesn't, devil. If France repents and lets
go, hell will lose a soul.

AUSTRIA

King Philip, listen to the cardinal.

BASTARD

And hang a calf's skin on those cowardly limbs.

AUSTRIA

Well, you criminal, I have to pocket these insults because--

BASTARD

Your pants can carry them best.

KING JOHN

Philip, what do you say to the cardinal?

CONSTANCE

What should he say except to agree with the cardinal?

LEWIS

Consider, father. The options are to suffer a painful curse
from Rome or the small loss of England as a friend. Give up
what's easiest.

BLANCH

That's the curse of Rome.

CONSTANCE

Oh Lewis, be strong! The devil tempts you here in the shape
of a wild new bride.

BLANCH

The Lady Constance isn't speaking according to what she
believes, but what she needs.

CONSTANCE

Oh, if you grant that I have needs only because you
betrayed and broke faith with me, you have to agree that
faith would be alive again if my needs died. So tread my
needs down and faith rises up again. Keep my needs up,
and faith is trampled down!

KING JOHN

The king is moved by something and doesn't answer.

CONSTANCE

Oh, ignore him and give a good answer!

AUSTRIA

Do, King Philip. Don't hang on any longer to make a
decision.

BASTARD

Don't hang anything on except a calf's skin, you sweet idiot.

KING PHILIP

I'm troubled and don't know what to say.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

What can you say that will trouble you more than if you're
excommunicated and cursed?

KING PHILIP

Good wise father, imagine you were me and tell me what
you would do. This king and I have just been joined in an
alliance, and we are deeply tied to each other by a

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
 240 Between our kingdoms and our royal selves,
 And even before this truce, but new before,
 No longer than we well could wash our hands
 To clap this royal bargain up of peace,
 Heaven knows, they were besmear'd and over-stain'd
 245 With slaughter's pencil, where revenge did paint
 The fearful difference of incensed kings:
 And shall these hands, so lately purged of blood,
 So newly join'd in love, so strong in both,
 Unyoke this seizure and this kind regret?
 250 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,
 255 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
 260 To do your pleasure and continue friends.

CARDINAL 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,
 265 A mother's curse, on her revolting son.
 France, thou mayst hold a serpent by the tongue,
 A chafed lion by the mortal paw,
 A fasting tiger safer by the tooth,
 Than keep in peace that hand which thou dost hold.

KING PHILIP

270 I may disjoin my hand, but not my faith.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

So makest thou faith an enemy to faith;
 And like a civil war set'st oath to oath,
 Thy tongue against thy tongue. O, let thy vow
 First made to heaven, first be to heaven perform'd,
 275 That is, to be the champion of our church!
 What since thou sworest is sworn against thyself
 And may not be performed by thyself,
 For that which thou hast sworn to do amiss
 Is not amiss when it is truly done,
 280 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,
 285 And falsehood falsehood cures, as fire cools fire
 Within the scorched veins of one new-burn'd.
 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,
 290 And makest 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;
 295 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
 300 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

marriage, coupled and linked together with the religious strength of holy vows. The last words we said were to promise strong faith, peace, friendship, and true love between our kingdoms and our royal selves. Before this truce--right before, not much longer before than the time it took us to wash our hands to shake on this royal peace deal--heaven knows, our hands were smeared and stained with murder's paintbrush, where revenge painted the terrible fights of angry kings. And will these hands, so recently washed clean of blood, so recently joined in love, and so strong in both respects, betray this handshake and this kind reconciliation? Play fast and loose with faith? Joke with heaven and make myself an unpredictable child, as I would if I snatched my palm from his? Should I take back a promise of faithfulness and on the marriage-bed of smiling peace march a bloody army, and start a riot on the gentle forehead of true honesty? Oh, holy sir, my respected father, don't let that happen! Kindly think of, command, and give me a gentler order, and then I will feel blessed to do what you wish and continue to be friends.

CARDINAL PANDULPH


There's no custom that's a custom, no order that is orderly, except what is used to oppose England. So to arms! Fight for our church or let the church our mother speak her curse, a mother's curse against her revolting son. France, it would be safer for you to hold a snake by its tongue, an angry lion by its deadly paw, a starving tiger by its tooth, than to keep peace with the hand you hold.

KING PHILIP

I can break the handshake, but not my promise.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

So you make faithfulness an enemy to religious faith, and like a civil war you oppose promise to promise, your own words to your own words. Oh, you should keep the promise you first made to heaven, which is to fight for our church! What you promised since then was promised against yourself and you can't do it, because a promise to do something wrong is not wrong when you do what's right. When it isn't done, when doing it would be evil, you're being most honest by not doing it. The better act when you made a mistake by promising something is to make another mistake. Although that's wrong, you're making right out of wrong, and lying cures lying, like fire cools fire in the scorched veins of someone recently burned. It is religion that makes you keep your promises. But you've promised to act against religion, by using what you swear by against the thing you swear by, and making an oath act against an oath. The truth you are unsure about swearing only swears not to break a promise; otherwise it's pointless to make a promise! But you make a promise only to break a promise and you break the most promises by sticking to what you promised. So your later promises against your first are you revolting against yourself. And you can never have a better triumph than to defend your trustworthy and nobler parts against these foolish and sinful suggestions. Our prayers will support this better part, your soul, if you allow them to. But if not, then you should know that our dangerous curses will fall on you so heavily you can't shake them off, and you'll die in despair under their black weight.

 This is speech is deliberately very hard to follow since it's a parody of Catholic reasoning, which Shakespeare is saying allows you to lie and break your oath. This was a common stereotype in Shakespeare's time.

305 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 calf's-skin stop that mouth of thine?

LEWIS

Father, to arms!

BLANCH

310 Upon thy wedding-day?
Against the blood that thou hast married?
What, shall our feast be kept with slaughter'd men?
Shall braying trumpets and loud churlish drums,
Clamours of hell, be measures to our pomp?
315 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

320 O, upon my knee,
Made hard with kneeling, I do pray to thee,
Thou virtuous Dauphin, alter not the doom
Forethought by heaven!

BLANCH

325 Now shall I see thy love: what motive may
Be stronger with thee than the name of wife?

CONSTANCE

That which upholdeth him that thee upholds,
His honour: O, thine honour, Lewis, thine honour!

LEWIS

I muse your majesty doth seem so cold,
When such profound respects do pull you on.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

330 I will denounce a curse upon his head.

KING PHILIP

Thou shalt not need. England, I will fall from thee.

CONSTANCE

O fair return of banish'd majesty!

QUEEN ELINOR

O foul revolt of French inconstancy!

KING JOHN

France, thou shalt rue this hour within this hour.

BASTARD

335 Old Time the clock-setter, that bald sexton Time,
Is it as he will? well then, France shall rue.

BLANCH

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;
340 And in their rage, I having hold of both,
They swirl 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;


345

AUSTRIA

Rebellion, complete rebellion!

BASTARD

What? Won't a calf's skin  shut that mouth of yours?

 This refers back to the Bastard's repetition of the phrase "Don't hang anything on except a calf's skin."

LEWIS

Father, take up your weapons!

BLANCH

On your wedding day? Against the family you married into?
What, will murdered men attend our feast? Will loud
trumpets and rude drums, noises from hell, play the music
for our ceremony? Husband, listen to me! How new
"husband" is in my mouth! By that name, which I have
never said until now, I beg on my knee, don't go to war
against my uncle.

CONSTANCE

Oh, on my knee, made hard with kneeling, I pray to you,
you virtuous Dauphin, don't try to stop the punishment
planned by heaven!

BLANCH

Now I will test your love. What motive can be stronger for
you than the name "wife?"

CONSTANCE

He depends on his honor, just like you depend on him. Oh,
your honor, Lewis, your honor!

LEWIS

I'm surprised you seem so uncertain, your majesty, when
such great authority orders you on.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

I will curse him.

KING PHILIP

You won't need to. England, I will betray you.

CONSTANCE

Oh what a beautiful return of kingliness!

QUEEN ELINOR

Oh what a disgusting rebellion of French trustworthiness!

KING JOHN

France, you will regret this choice within an hour.

BASTARD

Old Time the clock-winder, that bald officer time, is
everything going as he wishes? Well then, France will regret
this.

BLANCH

The sun is overcast with blood. Beautiful day, goodbye!
Which side should I go with? I am with both. Each army has
one of my hands. In their rage, with me holding on to both,
they swirl apart and dismember me. Husband, I can't pray
that you'll win. Uncle, I have to pray you'll lose. Father, I
can't wish you to be fortunate. Grandmother, I won't wish
you good fortune. Whoever wins, I'll lose on that side. I'm
sure to lose before the match begins.

Grandam, I will not wish thy fortunes thrive:
Whoever wins, on that side shall I lose
Assured loss before the match be play'd.

LEWIS

Lady, with me, with me thy fortune lies.

BLANCH

There where my fortune lives, there my life dies.

KING JOHN

350 Cousin, go draw our puissance together.

Exit BASTARD

KING JOHN

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

KING PHILIP

Thy rage sham 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

360 No more than he that threatens. To arms let's hie!

Exeunt

LEWIS

Lady, your fortune is with me now.

BLANCH

That's where my fortune lives and where my life dies.

KING JOHN

Cousin, go raise our army.

BASTARD exits.

KING JOHN

France, I'm burning up with anger. My rage burns so hot
that nothing can put it out, nothing but blood--the blood,
and the most valued blood, of France.

KING PHILIP

Your rage will burn you up, and you will turn to ashes,
before our blood puts out that fire. Watch out for yourself,
you're in danger.

KING JOHN

No more than the man making that threat. Let's go, to
arms!

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Alarums, excursions. Enter the BASTARD, with AUSTRIA'S head

BASTARD

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

Enter KING JOHN, ARTHUR, and HUBERT

KING JOHN

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

BASTARD

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

Exeunt

Shakescleare Translation

Trumpets sound and there is fighting. The BASTARD enters holding AUSTRIA's head.

BASTARD

By my life, this day has become very hot. Some air devil is
hovering in the sky, pouring down mischief. Lie there,
Austria's head, while Philip is alive.

KING JOHN, ARTHUR, and HUBERT enter.

KING JOHN

Hubert, guard this boy. Philip, let's go. My mother is being
attacked in our tent, and I fear she's been captured.

BASTARD

My lord, I rescued her. She's safe, don't worry. Keep going,
my king. Very little effort will make this work end happily.

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Shakescleare Translation

Alarums, excursions, retreat. Enter KING JOHN, QUEEN ELINOR, ARTHUR, the BASTARD, HUBERT, and Lords

KING JOHN

[To QUEEN ELINOR] So shall it be; your grace shall stay behind
So strongly guarded.

To ARTHUR

KING JOHN

- 5 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

- 10 [To the BASTARD] Cousin, away for England!
haste before:
And, ere our coming, see thou shake the bags
Of hoarding abbots; imprisoned angels
Set at liberty: the fat ribs of peace
15 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,
20 If ever I remember to be holy,
For your fair safety; so, I kiss your hand.

ELINOR

Farewell, gentle cousin.

KING JOHN

Coz, farewell.

Exit the BASTARD

QUEEN ELINOR

- 25 Come hither, little kinsman; hark, a word.

KING JOHN

- Come hither, Hubert. O my gentle Hubert,
We owe thee much! within this wall of flesh
There is a soul counts thee her creditor
And with advantage means to pay thy love:
30 And my good friend, thy voluntary oath
Lives in this bosom, dearly cherished.
Give me thy hand. I had a thing to say,
But I will fit it with some better time.
By heaven, Hubert, I am almost ashamed
35 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 from me to do thee good.
40 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 gawds
To give me audience: if the midnight bell
45 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,


Trumpets sound, there are skirmishes, an army retreats. KING JOHN, QUEEN ELINOR, ARTHUR, the BASTARD, HUBERT, and Lords enter.


KING JOHN

[To QUEEN ELINOR] That's how it will be. You will stay behind, well guarded.

To ARTHUR

KING JOHN


Cousin , don't look so sad. Your grandmother loves you, and your uncle will be as dear to you as your father was.


 The word is used of any relative in this period.

ARTHUR

Oh, this will make my mother die of sadness!

KING JOHN

[To the BASTARD] Cousin, let's go to England! Hurry ahead: before we arrive, make sure you shake out the pockets of hoarding abbots. Set free imprisoned angels . The fat ribs of peace must be eaten by the hungry. You have the authority to act with my power.

 An angel was a unit of currency in medieval England.

BASTARD

They won't be able to drive me away by performing an exorcism with a bell, book, and candle, when gold and silver are driving me on. I'll leave you. Grandmother, I will pray, if I ever remember to pray, for your safety. I kiss your hand.

ELINOR

Goodbye, dear cousin.

KING JOHN

Goodbye, cousin.

The BASTARD exits.

QUEEN ELINOR

Come here, little relative. Let me talk to you.

KING JOHN

Come here, Hubert. Oh my dear Hubert, I owe you so much! In this wall of flesh there's a soul that considers itself in debt to you and means to repay your love with interest. My good friend, I appreciate the promise you made voluntarily. Give me your hand. I had something to say, but I will say it at some better time. By heaven, Hubert, I'm almost ashamed to say how good an opinion I have of you.

HUBERT

I am indebted to you, your majesty.

KING JOHN

Good friend, you have no reason to say that yet. But you will, and however slowly time creeps, I will at some point do a good deed for you. I had something to say, but it doesn't matter. The sun is in the sky, and the proud day, filled with all the pleasures in the world, is too inviting and full of distractions to make anyone listen to me. If a clock were striking midnight with its iron and bronze mouth in drowsy night, if this place where we stand were a churchyard and you had done a thousand bad deeds, or if that grumpy ghost, depression, had baked your blood and made it thick and heavy, which otherwise runs tickling up

And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs,
 Or if that surly spirit, melancholy,
 50 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,
 55 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,
 60 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 lovest me well.

HUBERT

So well, that what you bid me undertake,
 Though that my death were adjunct to my act,
 65 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;
 70 And whereso'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

75 Death.

HUBERT

My lord?

KING JOHN

A grave.

HUBERT

He shall not live.

KING JOHN

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

ELINOR

My blessing go with thee!

KING JOHN

85 For England, cousin, go:
 Hubert shall be your man, attend on you
 With all true duty. On toward Calais, ho!


Exeunt


and down the veins, making that idiot, laughter, stay in
 men's eyes and makes them strain their cheeks in pointless
 happiness, an emotion that is not fitting for my
 purposes—or if you could see me without eyes, hear me
 without ears, and reply without a tongue, using thought
 alone, without eyes, ears, and the harmful sound of
 words—then, despite young watchful day, I would pour my
 thoughts into your heart. But I won't! But I like you a lot.
 And I really think you like me.

HUBERT

So much that I would do whatever you asked me to do,
 even if I had to die to do it.

KING JOHN

Don't I know you would? Good Hubert, Hubert, look at that
 young boy . I tell you, my friend, he is a snake in my path.
 Wherever this foot of mine walks he's lying in front of me.
 Do you understand me? You are his guard.

 i.e. Arthur

HUBERT

I'll guard him so he won't offend you, your majesty.

KING JOHN

Death.

HUBERT

My lord?

KING JOHN

A grave.

HUBERT

He won't survive.

KING JOHN

That's enough. I could be happy now. Hubert, I love you.
 Well, I won't say what I'll do for you: remember. Ma'am,
 goodbye: I'll send those troops over to you.

ELINOR

Bless you!

KING JOHN

Go to England, cousin, go. Hubert will be your servant and
 serve you dutifully. Go to Calais!

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter KING PHILIP, LEWIS, CARDINAL PANDULPH, and Attendants

Shakescleare Translation

KING PHILIP, LEWIS, CARDINAL PANDULPH, and servants enter.

KING PHILIP

So, by a roaring tempest on the flood,
A whole armado of convicted sail
Is scatter'd and disjoin'd from fellowship.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Courage and comfort! all shall yet go well.

KING PHILIP

- 5 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?

LEWIS

- 10 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

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

Enter CONSTANCE

KING PHILIP

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

CONSTANCE

Lo, now I now see the issue of your peace.

KING PHILIP

Patience, good lady! comfort, gentle Constance!

CONSTANCE

- No, I defy all counsel, all redress,
25 But that which ends all counsel, true redress,
Death, death; O amiable lovely death!
Thou odouriferous stench! sound rottenness!
Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,
Thou hate and terror to prosperity,
30 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:
35 Come, grin on me, and I will think thou smilest
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:
40 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.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

- 45 Lady, you utter madness, and not sorrow.

KING PHILIP

So, because of a roaring storm at sea, a whole fleet of ships
has been scattered.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Take courage and comfort! Everything will still turn out
well.

KING PHILIP

What can go well when we have done so badly? Haven't we
been beaten? Isn't Angiers lost? Hasn't Arthur been taken
prisoner? Haven't many of our dear friends been killed? And
hasn't the bloody king of England gone to England,
defeating anyone standing in his way? And France couldn't
stop him.

LEWIS

What he's won, he's protected. There's never been an
example of such great speed in following such good military
advice, such calm order in such a fierce battle. Who has
read or heard of any action like this?

KING PHILIP

I could bear for England to be paid that compliment, if only
we could find another example of shame like ours.

CONSTANCE enters.

KING PHILIP

Look who's here! A grave for a soul, holding the eternal soul
against its will in the disgusting prison of painful life.
Please, lady, let me take you away from here.

CONSTANCE

Now I see what your peace has come to.

KING PHILIP

Be patient, good lady! Don't worry, dear Constance!

CONSTANCE

No, I refuse all advice, all help--except the help that ends all
advice, real help, death, death. Oh friendly lovely death! You
beautiful-smelling stink! Healthy rottenness! Get up off the
couch of eternal night, you who are hated and feared by
prosperous people, and I will kiss your hateful bones and
put my eyeballs in your hollow eye sockets and put your
common worms around your fingers like rings and plug this
gap through which I breathe with smelly dust and be a dead
monster like you. Come grin at me and I will think you
smile, and kiss you like your wife. You whom miserable
people love, oh, come to me!

KING PHILIP

Oh, beautiful sadness, stop!

CONSTANCE

No, no, I won't while I have breath to cry out. Oh, I wish my
tongue were in the thunder's mouth! Then I would shake
the world with emotion and wake that horrible skeleton,
death, that can't hear a lady's weak voice and that won't
answer my prayers.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Lady, you're saying crazy things, not sad ones.

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:
50 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;
55 For being not mad but sensible of grief,
My reasonable part produces reason
How I may be deliver'd of these woes,
And teaches me to kill or hang myself:
If I were mad, I should forget my son,
60 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!
65 Where but by chance a silver drop hath fallen,
Even to that drop ten thousand wiry friends
Do glue themselves in sociable grief,
Like true, inseparable, faithful loves,
Sticking together in calamity.

CONSTANCE

70 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,
75 As they have given these hairs their liberty!'
But now I envy at their liberty,
And will again commit them to their bonds,
Because my poor child is a prisoner.
And, father cardinal, I have heard you say
80 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.
85 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 meagre as an ague's fit,
And so he'll die; and, rising so again,
90 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.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

You hold too heinous a respect of grief.

CONSTANCE

He talks to me that never had a son.

KING PHILIP

95 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,
100 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,

CONSTANCE

You aren't holy to lie about me like that. I'm not crazy. This hair I tear is mine. My name is Constance. I was Geoffrey's wife. Young Arthur is my son, and he has been lost. I am not crazy. I wish to God I were! Then I would probably forget who I was. If I could do that, I would forget so much sadness! Tell me some philosophy to make me mad and you will be made a saint, cardinal. Since I'm not crazy but able to be sad, my brain thinks about how to save myself from these sorrows and tells me to kill or hang myself. If I were mad I would forget my son or crazily think a baby were him. I am not crazy. I feel too well, too well, the different tragedy in each disaster.

KING PHILIP

Tie up your hair. Oh, I see so much love in all her beautiful hair! Where by chance a silver tear falls, ten thousand wiry friends glue themselves together in friendly sorrow like true, inseparable, faithful lovers sticking together in a disaster.

CONSTANCE

Let's go to England if you want.

KING PHILIP

Tie up your hair.

CONSTANCE

I will. Why will I do it? I tore them out of their ties and cried aloud "I wish these hands could free my sons the way they have given these hairs their liberty!" But now I envy their liberty and will put them back in their chains because my poor child is a prisoner. Father cardinal, I have heard you say we will see and recognize our friends in heaven. If that's true, I'll see my boy again. Because from the birth of Cain, the first male child, to one born just yesterday, a more wonderful creature has never been born. But now decaying sorrow will eat that flower and chase his natural beauty from his cheek and he will look as a hollow as a ghost and as dim and thin as a fever, and he'll die. When I have been resurrected and meet him in heaven I will not recognize him. So I will never, never see my pretty Arthur again.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

You're giving in to your sadness too much.


CONSTANCE


The man who's talking to me never had a son.

KING PHILIP

You are as fond of sadness as of your child.

CONSTANCE

Sadness fills the space left by my absent child, lies in his bed, walks up and down with me, takes on his pretty appearance, repeats his words, reminds me of all his good qualities, stuffs his empty clothes with his shape. So do you see now why I have reason to be fond of grief? Goodbye: if you'd lost as much as I have, I could comfort you better than you do me. I won't keep order on my head  when

 i.e. by tying up her hair

I could give better comfort than you do.
I will not keep this form upon my head,
105 When there is such disorder in my wit.
O Lord! my boy, my Arthur, my fair son!
My life, my joy, my food, my all the world!
My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure!

Exit

KING PHILIP

I fear some outrage, and I'll follow her.
110

Exit

LEWIS

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 spoil'd the sweet world's taste
115 That it yields nought but shame and bitterness.

CARDINAL 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:
120 What have you lost by losing of this day?

LEWIS

All days of glory, joy and happiness.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

If you had won it, certainly you had.
No, no; when Fortune means to men most good,
She looks upon them with a threatening eye.
125 '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?

LEWIS

As heartily as he is glad he hath him.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Your mind is all as youthful as your blood.
130 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.
135 John hath seized Arthur; and it cannot be
That, whiles warm life plays in that infant's veins,
The misplaced John should entertain an hour,
One minute, nay, one quiet breath of rest.
A sceptre snatch'd with an unruly hand
140 Must be as boisterously maintain'd as gain'd;
And he that stands upon a slippery 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.

LEWIS

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

CARDINAL PANDULPH

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

LEWIS

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

CARDINAL PANDULPH

How green you are and fresh in this old world!
150 John lays you plots; the times conspire with you;

there's so much disorder in my mind. Oh Lord! My boy, my
Arthur, my handsome son! My life, my joy, my food, my
whole world! My comfort in being widowed and the cure to
my sadness!

She exits.

KING PHILIP

I'm afraid something bad will happen, so I'll follow her.

He exits.

LEWIS

Nothing in this world can make me happy. Life is as boring
as a story told twice, annoying the ear of a drowsy man, and
terrible shame has spoiled the sweet taste of the world so it
doesn't give me anything except shame and bitterness.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Before a bad disease is cured, at the very moment you're
cured and made healthy, you're sickest. Evil things seem
most evil as they leave. What have you lost by losing this
battle?

LEWIS

All honor, joy, and happiness.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

If you had won it, you certainly would have lost those
things. No, no. When Fortune means best for men she looks
at them threateningly. It's strange to think how much King
John has lost in this battle he thinks has been clearly won.
Aren't you sad Arthur is his prisoner?

LEWIS

As sad as he's glad to have him.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Your mind is as young as your body. Listen to me tell the
future, because even the breath of what I'm going to say
will blow all the dust, straw, and every little obstacle, out of
the path which will lead your foot directly to the throne of
England, so listen. John has captured Arthur and while that
child is still alive, John won't enjoy his stolen power in
peace for an hour--no, not for a minute. Power grabbed by a
rebellious hand has to be kept as violently as it was won.
Someone standing on a slippery place is willing to grab any
disgusting thing to stay standing. Arthur has to fall so John
can stand. Let that happen, because that's how it has to be.

LEWIS

But what will I get if young Arthur falls?

CARDINAL PANDULPH

You can then make the same claim to power that Arthur did
in the cause of Lady Blanch your wife.

LEWIS

And lose my life and everything else like Arthur did.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

You're so young and fresh in this old world! John is working
for you, time is working for you. Anyone who buys safety by

For he that steeps his safety in true blood
 Shall find but bloody safety and untrue.
 This act so evilly born shall cool the hearts
 Of all his people and freeze up their zeal,
 155 That none so small advantage shall step forth
 To cheque his reign, but they will cherish it;
 No natural exhalation in the sky,
 No scope of nature, no distemper'd day,
 No common wind, no customed event,
 160 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.

LEWIS

May be he will not touch young Arthur's life,
 165 But hold himself safe in his prisonment.

CARDINAL 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
 170 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
 175 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,
 180 Or as a little snow, tumbled about,
 Anon becomes a mountain. O noble Dauphin,
 Go with me to the king: 'tis wonderful
 What may be wrought out of their discontent,
 Now that their souls are topful of offence.
 185 For England go: I will whet on the king.

LEWIS

Strong reasons make strong actions: let us go:
 If you say ay, the king will not say no.

Exeunt

shedding honest blood will only find bloody and dishonest
 safety. This evil action will cool the affections of his people
 and freeze up their support, so that anyone even slightly
 better could step forward to end his rule and they would
 love him. No natural phenomenon in the sky, no wonder of
 nature, no disorderly day, no common wind, no customary
 event will happen without them discarding its natural
 cause and calling it a meteor, omen, and sign. Monstrous
 births, premonitions and voices from heaven will plainly
 call for revenge on John.

LEWIS

He might not harm young Arthur but instead keep him
 safely locked up.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Oh sir, when he hears that you're coming, if young Arthur
 isn't already gone, he'll die at that news. Then the hearts of
 all his people will revolt and kiss unknown change on the
 lips and find good cause for rebellion and anger in the
 bloody deeds done by John. I can almost see this mess
 happening. And oh, better things are waiting for you than I
 have said! The bastard Faulconbridge is now in England
 looting from the church, offending charity. If only a dozen
 Frenchmen were there with weapons, they would be able to
 call out ten thousand English people to train with them, in
 the same way a little snow tumbling around soon piles up
 into a mountain. Oh noble Dauphin, go with me to the king:
 it's amazing what can be done with the people's
 unhappiness now that they are offended. Go to England. I
 will encourage the king.

LEWIS

Strong reasons make you act strongly. Let's go. If you say
 yes, the king won't say no.

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 1

Shakespeare

*Enter HUBERT and Executioners***HUBERT**

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

FIRST EXECUTIONER

I hope your warrant will bear out the deed.

HUBERT

Uncleanly scruples! fear not you: look to't.

*Exeunt Executioners***HUBERT**

Young lad, come forth; I have to say with you.
 10

Shakescleare Translation

*HUBERT and Executioners enter.***HUBERT**

Heat these irons hot for me. And make sure you stand
 behind the curtain. When I stamp my foot on the ground,
 rush out and tie the boy tightly to the chair. Pay attention.
 Go and watch.

FIRST EXECUTIONER

I hope you have a warrant for this.

HUBERT

Filthy doubts! Don't worry. Do your job.

*The Executioners exit.***HUBERT**

Young boy, come here. I have something to say to 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

15 Indeed, I have been merrier.

ARTHUR

Mercy on me!
Methinks no body should be sad but I:
Yet, I remember, when I was in France,
Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,
20 Only for wantonness. By my christendom,
So I were out of prison and kept sheep,
I should be as merry as the day is long;
And so I would be here, but that I doubt
My uncle practises more harm to me:
25 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
30 He will awake my mercy which lies dead:
Therefore I will be sudden and dispatch.

ARTHUR

Are you sick, Hubert? you look pale to-day:
In sooth, I would you were a little sick,
That I might sit all night and watch with you:
35 I warrant I love you more than you do me.

HUBERT

[*Aside*] His words do take possession of my bosom.
Read here, young Arthur.

*Showing a paper**Aside***HUBERT**

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

ARTHUR

Too fairly, Hubert, for so foul effect:
45 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,
50 I knit my handkercher about your brows,

*ARTHUR enters.***ARTHUR**

Good morning, Hubert.

HUBERT

Good morning, little prince.

ARTHUR

I'm as little of a prince as is possible, since I have such a
good claim to be even more a prince. You are sad.

HUBERT

Yes, I have been happier.

ARTHUR

Goodness! I think no one except me should be sad. But I
remember, when I was in France, young men would be as
sad as night just because they felt like it. By my Christian
faith, if I were out of jail and were a shepherd, I would be as
happy as the day is long. And I would be that happy here,
except I worry my uncle means to hurt me more. He is
afraid of me and I am afraid of him. Is it my fault I was
Geoffrey's son? No, it isn't. I wish I were your son so you
would love me, Hubert.

HUBERT

[*To himself*] If I talk to him, he'll make me feel pity for him
with his innocent babbling, which is a feeling I'm not used
to. So I will do this quickly.

ARTHUR

Are you sick, Hubert? You look pale today. Really, I wish you
were a little sick so I could sit all night and stay awake with
you. I bet I love you more than you love me.

HUBERT

[*To himself*] His words take over my heart. Read this, young
Arthur.

*Shows him a paper.**To himself***HUBERT**

What? Silly tears! Turning away pitiless torture! I have to be
quick so that my strength of mind doesn't drop out of my
eyes in weak womanly tears. Can't you read it? Isn't it well
written?

ARTHUR

Too well, Hubert, for so terrible a message. Must you burn
out both my eyes with hot irons?

HUBERT

Young boy, I must.

ARTHUR

And will you?

HUBERT

And I will.

ARTHUR

Do you have the heart to do it? When your head only ached,
I wrapped my handkerchief around your forehead, the best

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,
 55 Still and anon cheer'd up the heavy time,
 Saying, 'What lack you?' and 'Where lies your grief?'
 Or 'What good love may I perform for you?'
 Many a poor man's son would have lain still
 And ne'er have spoke a loving word to you;
 60 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?
 65 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!
 70 The iron of itself, though heat red-hot,
 Approaching near these eyes, would drink my tears
 And quench his fiery indignation
 Even in the matter of mine innocence;
 Nay, after that, consume away in rust
 75 But for containing fire to harm mine eye.
 Are you more stubborn-hard than hammer'd 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

80 Come forth.

Stamps

Re-enter Executioners, with a cord, irons, & c

HUBERT

Do as I bid you do.

ARTHUR

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

HUBERT

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

ARTHUR

Alas, what need you be so boisterous-rough?
 I will not struggle, I will stand stone-still.
 For heaven sake, Hubert, let me not be bound!
 90 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 angrily:
 Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you,
 95 Whatever torment you do put me to.

HUBERT

Go, stand within; let me alone with him.

FIRST EXECUTIONER

I am best pleased to be from such a deed.

Exeunt Executioners

one I had. A princess made it for me, and I never asked you for it back. I held your head with my hand at midnight, and like the minute hand waits on to the hour hand, kept cheering you up in your time of suffering, saying, "What do you need?" and "Where does it hurt?" or "What good deed can I do for you?" Many poor men's sons would have lain still and never spoken a loving word to you. But you had a prince taking care of you. You may think my love was crafty and call it self-serving. Do, if you want to. If God wants you to treat me badly, you have to. Will you put out my eyes? These eyes that never did or will do as much as frown at you.

HUBERT

I promised to do it, and I must burn them out with hot irons.

ARTHUR

Oh, no one would do that except in this iron age! The iron itself, even if heated red-hot, approaching these eyes, would drink my tears and put out its fiery anger with the tears of my innocence. No, after that, it would rust away just for holding fire to harm my eye. Are you more stubbornly cruel than hammered iron? If an angel had come to me and told me Hubert would put out my eyes I would not have believed him. I wouldn't believe anyone saying it except Hubert.

HUBERT

Come out.

He stamps his foot.

The executioners come back in with a rope, irons, etc.

HUBERT

Do what I told you to do.

ARTHUR

Oh, save me, Hubert, save me! my eyes have been put out just by the fierce stares of these violent men.

HUBERT

Give me the iron, and tie him up here.

ARTHUR

Why do you need to be so violent? I won't struggle, I'll stand as still as a rock. For heaven's sake, Hubert, don't have them tie me up! No, listen, Hubert, send these men away and I will sit as calmly as a lamb. I won't move or wince or say a word or look angrily at the iron. Just push these men away and I'll forgive you, however you torture me.

HUBERT

Go stand inside. Leave me alone with him.

FIRST EXECUTIONER

I am very happy to be sent away from a deed like this.

The executioners exit.

ARTHUR

Alas, I then have chid away my friend!
 100 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

105 None, but to lose your eyes.

ARTHUR

O heaven, that there were but a mote in yours,
 A grain, a dust, a gnat, a wandering hair,
 Any annoyance in that precious sense!
 Then feeling what small things are boisterous there,
 110 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;
 115 Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue,
 So I may keep mine eyes: O, spare mine eyes.
 Though to no use but still to look on you!
 Lo, by my truth, the instrument is cold
 And would not harm me.

HUBERT

120 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;
 125 The breath of heaven has blown his spirit out
 And strew'd repentent 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:
 130 Nay, it perchance will sparkle in your eyes;
 And like a dog that is compell'd to fight,
 Snatch at his master that doth tarre him on.
 All things that you should use to do me wrong
 Deny their office: only you do lack
 135 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,
 140 With this same very iron to burn them out.

ARTHUR

O, now you look like Hubert! all this while
 You were disguised.

HUBERT

Peace; no more. Adieu.
 Your uncle must not know but you are dead;
 145

ARTHUR

Oh no, then I have sent away my friend! He had a mean look
 but a kind heart. Let him come back, so his compassion can
 inspire you.

HUBERT

Come on, boy, prepare yourself.

ARTHUR

Is there no way out?

HUBERT

None, except to lose your eyes.

ARTHUR

Oh God, I wish there were just a speck in yours, a seed, a
 piece of dust, a fly, a loose hair, or anything annoying to
 your precious sense of sight! Then feeling what small things
 hurt you there, your disgusting intention would necessarily
 seem horrible to you.

HUBERT

Is this what you promised? Stop, be quiet.

ARTHUR

Hubert, the words of many tongues would not be able to
 beg enough for what two eyes are worth. Don't make me
 hold my tongue; don't, Hubert. Or if you want, cut out my
 tongue so I can keep my eyes. Oh, save my eyes, though
 they'll have no use except to look at you! Look, the iron is
 cold and wouldn't harm me.

HUBERT

I can heat it, boy.

ARTHUR

No, I don't think so. The fire is dead with sadness, having
 been created for comfort, to warm people when they need
 help. You see, there is no evil in this burning coal. The
 breath of God blew it out and made it repent by covering it
 with ashes.

HUBERT

I can bring it back to life with my breath, boy.

ARTHUR

If you do, you will just make it blush and glow with shame
 at what you're doing, Hubert. No, maybe it will sparkle in
 your eyes and, like a dog that is forced to fight, bite its
 master that provokes it. Everything you would use to hurt
 me refuses to do its job. Only you don't have the pity of
 even fierce fire and iron, creatures known for their pitiless
 uses.

HUBERT

Well, see and stay alive. I won't touch your eye for all the
 treasure your uncle owns. But I promised and I did mean to
 burn them out with this very iron, boy.

ARTHUR

Oh, now you look like Hubert again! You were disguised this
 whole time.

HUBERT

Stop; no more. Goodbye. Your uncle must think you're
 dead. I'll give these persistent spies false reports. Pretty

I'll fill these dogged spies with false reports:
And, pretty child, sleep doubtless and secure,
That Hubert, for the wealth of all the world,
Will not offend thee.

ARTHUR

O heaven! I thank you, Hubert.

HUBERT

150 Silence; no more: go closely in with me:
Much danger do I undergo for thee.

Exeunt

child, sleep safely and know that Hubert wouldn't hurt you
for all the money in the world.

ARTHUR

Oh God! Thank you, Hubert.

HUBERT

Be quiet. No more of that. Come with me. I'm in a lot of
danger because of you.

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter KING JOHN, PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and other Lords

KING JOHN

Here once again we sit, once again crown'd,
And looked upon, I hope, with cheerful eyes.

PEMBROKE

This 'once again,' but that your highness pleased,
Was once superfluous: you were crown'd before,
5 And that high royalty was ne'er pluck'd off,
The faiths of men ne'er stained with revolt;
Fresh expectation troubled not the land
With any long'd-for change or better state.

SALISBURY

Therefore, to be possess'd with double pomp,
10 To guard a title that was rich before,
To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light
15 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,
20 Being urged at a time unseasonable.

SALISBURY

In this the antique and well noted face
Of plain old form is much disfigured;
And, like a shifted wind unto a sail,
It makes the course of thoughts to fetch about,
25 Startles and frights consideration,
Makes sound opinion sick and truth suspected,
For putting on so new a fashion'd robe.

PEMBROKE

When workmen strive to do better than well,
They do confound their skill in covetousness;
30 And oftentimes excusing of a fault
Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse,
As patches set upon a little breach
Discredit more in hiding of the fault
Than did the fault before it was so patch'd.

SALISBURY

35 To this effect, before you were new crown'd,
We breathed our counsel: but it pleased your highness

Shakesclare Translation

KING JOHN, PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and other lords enter.

KING JOHN

I sit here once again, crowned once again and looked at, I
hope, by cheerful eyes.

PEMBROKE

This "once again" is pointlessly repeated, except that it
pleases you, your highness. You were crowned before and
your royalty was never taken away. The faithfulness of your
men was never stained by rebelling. The country wasn't
troubled by new expectations or any desire for change or a
better ruler.

SALISBURY

So to have a second ceremony, to decorate a title that was
already beautiful, to gild pure gold, to paint a lily, to throw
perfume on a violet, to smooth ice, or add another color to
the rainbow, or to try to decorate the beautiful sun with a
candle's light--that's all wastefully and ridiculously
excessive.

PEMBROKE

What you desire has to be done, but this action is like an
ancient story told again. And it's boring the second time
you tell it, since it's told at an inconvenient time.

SALISBURY

In doing this the ancient and well-known face of plain old
custom is disfigured. And, like a change of wind in a sail, it
changes the course of thought, startles and frightens
people, make good opinions sick, and makes truth seem
suspicious for putting on such a fashionable new dress.

PEMBROKE

When workmen try to do better than well they ruin things
by being greedy. Often covering up a mistake makes the
mistake worse by covering it, like patches put on a small
hole look worse hiding the flaw than the flaw did before it
was patched up.

SALISBURY

We gave you this advice before you were crowned again,
but you preferred to ignore it. Still, we're all pleased, since

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

- 40 Some reasons of this double coronation
I have possess'd you with and think them strong;
And more, more strong, then lesser is my fear,
I shall induce you with: meantime but ask
What you would have reform'd that is not well,
45 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 purpose of all their hearts,
Both for myself and them, but, chief of all,
50 Your safety, for the which myself and them
Bend their best studies, heartily request
The enfranchisement of Arthur; whose restraint
Doth move the murmuring lips of discontent
To break into this dangerous argument,--
55 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
60 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
65 Than whereupon our weal, on you depending,
Counts it your weal he have his liberty.

Enter HUBERT

KING JOHN

Let it be so: I do commit his youth
To your direction. Hubert, what news with you?

Taking him apart

PEMBROKE

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

SALISBURY

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

PEMBROKE

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

KING JOHN

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

SALISBURY

Indeed we fear'd his sickness was past cure.

every part of what we wants comes down to what you want,
your highness.

KING JOHN

I have given you some reasons for this second coronation
and I think they're good reasons. And I will give you
stronger ones for why I'm less afraid. Meanwhile just tell me
what you want changed, and you will see how willingly I will
hear and do what you ask.

PEMBROKE

Then I, speaking for these men to tell you what they all
think, ask you to free Arthur--both for me and them but,
most of all, for your safety, which they and I often think
about. His captivity makes unhappy people mutter and say
this dangerous things: if you have a right to the power you
hold, why do your fears (they say) make you act wrongly in
locking up your young relative and choking his life with
barbaric ignorance and denying him the advantage of good
exercise in his youth? You asked us what we want, and we
ask for his freedom, so your enemies don't have this excuse
to grumble against you anymore. We don't ask for this for
any reason except that it will be good for us, since we
depend on you, if you do what is good for you and set him
free.

Hubert enters.

KING JOHN

Very well: you decide what to do with him. Hubert, what
news do you have?

Takes HUBERT aside to speak to him.

PEMBROKE

This is the man who was supposed to do the murder. He
showed his warrant to a friend of mine. His eyes look like
they've seen some evil terrible sin. That secretive look in
him shows the mood of a very trouble heart. I am afraid
that it's been done--I mean the thing we were so afraid he
had been ordered to do.

SALISBURY

The king's turning pale and blushing, torn between what he
wanted and his conscience, like messengers passing
between two powerful armies. His emotions are so strong,
they'll have to come out.

PEMBROKE

And when it comes out, I'm afraid we'll hear of the
disgusting sin of a sweet child's death.

KING JOHN

We can't stop the strong hand of death. Good lords,
although my desire to give you what you want is alive, the
demand you made is gone and dead. He tells us Arthur died
tonight.

SALISBURY

We were afraid his sickness couldn't be cured.

PEMBROKE

Indeed we heard how near his death he was
Before the child himself felt he was sick:
90 This must be answer'd 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
95 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 the inheritance of this poor child,
His little kingdom of a forced grave.
100 That blood which owed the breadth of all this isle,
Three foot of it doth hold: bad world the while!
This must not be thus borne: this will break out
To all our sorrows, and ere long I doubt.

Exeunt Lords

KING JOHN

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

Enter a Messenger

KING JOHN

A fearful eye thou hast: where is that blood
That I have seen inhabit in those cheeks?
110 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.
115 The copy of your speed is learn'd by them;
For when you should be told they do prepare,
The tidings come that they are all arrived.

KING JOHN

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

MESSENGER

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

KING JOHN

Withhold thy speed, dreadful occasion!
O, make a league with me, till I have pleased
130 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 givest out are landed here?

MESSENGER

Under the Dauphin.

PEMBROKE

We heard how near death he was before the child himself
knew he was sick. They'll pay for this crime, either here or
somewhere else.

KING JOHN

Why do you look at me with such serious faces? Do you
think I decide who lives and dies? Do I command life to go
on?

SALISBURY

It's clearly foul play, and it's shameful that someone
powerful would do this so obviously. So good luck with
your plots! And goodbye.

PEMBROKE

Wait, Lord Salisbury. I'll go with you and find the
inheritance of this poor child, his little kingdom that
became a forced grave. The blood that owned this whole
island will be held in three feet of it. What a bad world this
is! This must not be allowed. This will end badly for all of us,
and before long, I think.

The Lords exit.

KING JOHN

They're furious. I regret this. Blood doesn't make you safe.
You can't be certain of your own life by killing others.

A Messenger enters.

KING JOHN

You have a frightened look. You're very pale--where is the
blood that I have seen before in those cheeks? Such a bad
sky doesn't clear up without a storm. Pour down your
weather. How is everything in France?

MESSENGER

I've come from France to England. Such an army was never
gathered from a country for any foreign war. They learned
from your speed, because when you should be told they are
preparing, the news is that they have arrived.

KING JOHN

Oh, where has our intelligence been drunk? Where has it
slept? What has my mother been doing, that such an army
could be gathered in France without her hearing about it?

MESSENGER

My lord, her ear is filled with dust. Your noble mother died
on the first of April. And I hear, my lord, that the Lady
Constance died, having gone crazy, three days before. But
this is a rumor; I don't know whether it's true or false.

KING JOHN

Slow down, horrible disaster! Make an alliance with me,
until I've satisfied my unhappy noblemen! What! Mother is
dead! My territory in France has no leader then! Who led
these French troop that you tell me have landed here?

MESSENGER

The Dauphin.

KING JOHN

135 Thou hast made me giddy
With these ill tidings.

Enter the BASTARD and PETER of Pomfret

KING JOHN

Now, what says the world
To your proceedings? do not seek to stuff
140 My head with more ill news, for it is full.

BASTARD

But if you be afraid to hear the worst,
Then let the worst unheard fall on your bead.

KING JOHN

Bear with me cousin, for I was amazed
145 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.
150 But as I travell'd hither through the land,
I find the people strangely fantasied;
Possess'd with rumours, full of idle dreams,
Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear:
And here a prophet, that I brought with me
155 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

160 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 hang'd.
165 Deliver him to safety; and return,
For I must use thee.

Exeunt HUBERT with PETER

KING JOHN

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-ekindled fire,
And others more, going to seek the grave
Of Arthur, who they say is kill'd to-night
175 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

180 I will seek them out.

KING JOHN

You've made me dizzy with all this news.

The BASTARD and PETER of Pomfret enter.

KING JOHN

Now, what does the world say about what you've been
doing? Don't try to stuff my head with more bad news
because it's full.

BASTARD

If you're afraid to hear the worst, it will sneak up on you
without you knowing about it.

KING JOHN

Bear with me, cousin, because I was overwhelmed by the
flood of misfortune. But now I breathe and am above the
water, and can listen to any voice, whatever it says.

BASTARD

The amount of money I've collected will show how I've
done among the churchmen. But as I traveled through the
country I found the people thinking strange things,
convinced by rumors, full of false ideas, afraid without
knowing what they were afraid of. And here is a prophet I
brought with me from the streets of Pomfret. I found him
with many hundreds of people following him. He sang to
them in rough harsh-sounding rhymes that, before the next
Ascension day at noon, you would give up your crown, your
highness.

KING JOHN

You crazy dreamer, why did you do that?

PETER

I foresaw that it would happen.

KING JOHN

Hubert, take him away. Lock him up. On that day at noon
on which he says I will give up my crown, have him hanged.
Deliver him to prison, and then come back, because I have
a job for you.

HUBERT exits with PETER.

KING JOHN

Oh my dear cousin, did you hear the news about who has
arrived?

BASTARD

The French, my lord. Everyone's talking about it. Besides, I
met Lord Bigot and Lord Salisbury, with eyes as red as
newly-started fire, and more people, going to look for
Arthur's grave. They say he was killed tonight on your
orders.

KING JOHN

Good relative, go, and join their group. I have a plan to
make them love me again. Bring them to me.

BASTARD

I will look for them.

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!
185 Be Mercury, set feathers to thy heels,
And fly like thought from them to me again.

BASTARD

The spirit of the time shall teach me speed.

Exit

KING JOHN

190 Spoke like a sprightly noble gentleman.
Go after him; for he perhaps shall need
Some messenger betwixt me and the peers;
And be thou he.

MESSENGER

With all my heart, my liege.

Exit

KING JOHN

195 My mother dead!

Re-enter HUBERT

HUBERT

My lord, they say five moons were seen to-night;
Four fixed, and the fifth did whirl about
The other four in wondrous motion.

KING JOHN

200 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
205 And whisper one another in the ear;
And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,
Whilst he that hears makes fearful action,
With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.
I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus,
210 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,
215 Told of a many thousand warlike French
That were embattailed and rank'd in Kent:
Another lean unwash'd artificer
Cuts off his tale and talks of Arthur's death.

KING JOHN

220 Why seek'st thou to possess me with these fears?
Why urgest thou so oft young Arthur's death?
Thy hand hath murder'd 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

225 It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves that take their humours for a warrant
To break within the bloody house of life,
And on the winking of authority
To understand a law, to know the meaning
Of dangerous majesty, when perchance it frowns
230

KING JOHN

Hurry, go as fast as you can. My subjects can't be my
enemies when foreign enemies frighten my towns with the
terrible display of a strong invasion! Be like the messenger-
god Mercury, put wings on your heels, and fly as quickly as
thought from them back to me.

BASTARD

I know it's a time to be quick.

He exits.

KING JOHN

That's what a lively noble gentleman should say. Follow
him, because he may need some messenger between me
and the nobles. Be that messenger.

MESSENGER

Gladly, my king.

He exits.

KING JOHN

My mother, dead!

HUBERT re-enters.

HUBERT

My lord, they say five moons were seen tonight. Four stood
still and the fifth whirled around the other four in an
amazing movement.

KING JOHN

Five moons!

HUBERT

Old men and women on the streets make dangerous
prophecies about it. They're all talking about young
Arthur's death and when they talk about him they shake
their heads and whisper in one another's ears. The person
speaking grips the hearer's wrist, while the one hearing
makes terrible motions with a wrinkled forehead, with
nods, with rolling eyes. I saw a blacksmith stand with his
hammer, like this, while his iron cooled on the anvil,
listening to a tailor tell the news with an open mouth. The
tailor, with his scissors and tape measure in his hand,
standing in slippers which he'd put on the wrong feet in his
hurry, told about many thousands of French warriors ready
for battle in Kent. Another thin dirty workman cut off his
story and talked about Arthur's death.

KING JOHN

Why do you try to frighten me? Why do you mention
Arthur's death so much? You murdered him yourself. I had
very good reason to want him dead, but you had none to
kill him.

HUBERT

No reason, my lord! Didn't you ask me to?

KING JOHN

It's the curse of kings to be served by slaves who take their
moods as a warrant to commit bloody murder. When an
authority figure winks, they think they understand the law,
that they know what a powerful king means—but maybe
he's frowning more out of moodiness than a considered
opinion.

More upon humour than advised respect.

HUBERT

Here is your hand and seal for what I did.

KING JOHN

O, when the last account 'twixt heaven and earth
Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal
Witness against us to damnation!

235 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 mark'd,
Quoted and sign'd to do a deed of shame,
This murder had not come into my mind:
240 But taking note of thy abhor'd aspect,
Finding thee fit for bloody villany,
Apt, liable to be employ'd in danger,
I faintly broke with thee of Arthur's death;
And thou, to be endeared to a king,
245 Made it no conscience to destroy a prince.

HUBERT

My lord--

KING JOHN

Hadst thou but shook thy head or made a pause
When I spake darkly what I purposed,
Or turn'd an eye of doubt upon my face,
250 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;

255 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,
260 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

265 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.
270 Within this bosom never enter'd yet
The dreadful motion of a murderous thought;
And you have slander'd nature in my form,
Which, howsoever rude exteriorly,
Is yet the cover of a fairer mind
275 Than to be butcher of an innocent child.

KING JOHN

Doth Arthur live? O, haste thee to the peers,
Throw this report on their incensed rage,
And make them tame to their obedience!
Forgive the comment that my passion made
280 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.
285 I conjure thee but slowly; run more fast.

Exeunt

HUBERT

[Shows the letter] Here is your handwriting and your seal
ordering me to do what I did.

KING JOHN

Oh, when the last judgment happens, this handwriting and
seal will be the evidence that damns me! How often seeing
a way to do something bad makes you do bad things! If you
hadn't been nearby--since you're a man who naturally
looks like you would do a shameful deed--this murder
would not have occurred to me. But seeing your thuggish
appearance and finding you willing to do bloody crimes,
good at it, and available to be employed in a dangerous
business, I hinted to you that I wanted Arthur dead. And
you, to gain the favor of a king, didn't trouble your
conscience about killing a prince.

HUBERT

My lord--

KING JOHN

If you had only shaken your head or paused when I hinted
at what I wanted, or looked doubtfully at me, as though to
ask me to spell out what I meant, deep shame would have
made me quiet, made me break off, and your fears might
have made me afraid. But you understood me by the signs I
made and with signs talked about sin. Yes, without pausing
you let your heart agree, and then let your rough hand do
the deed which both of us considered too disgusting to
name. Get out of my sight and never look at me again! My
nobles are leaving me and my power is threatened in my
own country by foreign armies. And in my own body--this
fleshy land, this kingdom, this fort made of blood and
breath--violence and civil war are taking place between my
conscience and my cousin's death.

HUBERT

Take arms against your other enemies, and I'll make peace
between you and your soul. Young Arthur is alive. This hand
of mine is still a virgin and an innocent hand, not painted
with red spots of blood. My heart was never moved by a
murderous thought. And you have slandered nature by
what you said about my appearance. However rough I am
on the outside, the roughness covers a mind too kind to
butcher an innocent child.

KING JOHN

Arthur is alive? Oh, hurry to the nobles and tell them, so
that they can tame their anger and obey me! Forgive the
comment my emotions made me make about your
appearance. My rage was blind, and disgusting imaginary
visions of blood made you seem more hideous than you
are. Don't answer, but bring the angry nobles to my room as
quickly as possible. I'm asking you slowly. Run faster.

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 3

Shakespeare

*Enter ARTHUR, on the walls***ARTHUR**

The wall is high, and yet will I leap down:
 Good ground, be pitiful and hurt me not!
 There's few or none do know me: if they did,
 This ship-boy's semblance hath disguised me quite.
 5 I am afraid; and yet I'll venture it.
 If I get down, and do not break my limbs,
 I'll find a thousand shifts to get away:
 As good to die and go, as die and stay.

*Leaps down***ARTHUR**

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

*Dies**Enter PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and BIGOT***SALISBURY**

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

PEMBROKE

15 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

To-morrow morning let us meet him then.

SALISBURY

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

*Enter the BASTARD***BASTARD**

Once more to-day well met, distemper'd lords!
 The king by me requests your presence straight.

SALISBURY

25 The king hath disposess'd himself of us:
 We will not line his thin bestain'd cloak
 With our pure honours, nor attend the foot
 That leaves the print of blood where'er it walks.
 Return and tell him so: we know the worst.

BASTARD

30 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.

Shakescleare Translation

*ARTHUR enters on the walls.***ARTHUR**

The wall is high but I'll jump down. Kind ground, take pity
 and don't hurt me! Few people or none will recognize me.
 Even if they could, I'm well disguised as a ship-boy. I am
 afraid but I'll try this. If I get down and don't break my
 limbs, I'll find a thousand ways to get away. It's as good to
 go and die as to stay and die.

*He jumps down.***ARTHUR**

Poor me! My uncle's hatred of me is in these rocks. May
 heaven take my soul and England keep my bones!

*He dies.**PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and BIGOT enter.***SALISBURY**

Lords, I will meet him at Saint Edmundsbury. This will keep
 us safe, and we must accept this kind offer in this
 dangerous time.

PEMBROKE

Who brought that letter from the cardinal?

SALISBURY

The Count Melun, a French nobleman whose private
 conversation with me about the Dauphin's kindness was
 more extensive than this letter shows.

BIGOT

Let's meet him tomorrow morning then.

SALISBURY

Or instead let's go now; it will be two long days' journey,
 lords, before we meet him.

*The BASTARD enters.***BASTARD**

Hello again today, angry lords! The king sends me to ask
 you to go to him immediately.

SALISBURY

The king has lost us. We will not line his thin blood-stained
 cloak with the pure medals of our honor, or walk behind a
 foot that leaves a bloody footprint wherever it walks.
 Return and tell him that: we know the consequences.

BASTARD

Whatever you think, I think polite words would be better.

SALISBURY

Our sadness is talking now, not our manners.

BASTARD

But your sadness is unreasonable, so there's good reason
 for you to have manners now.

PEMBROKE

Sir, sir, impatience hath his privilege.

BASTARD

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

SALISBURY

This is the prison. What is he lies here?

Seeing ARTHUR

PEMBROKE

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

SALISBURY

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

BIGOT

Or, when he doom'd this beauty to a grave,
Found it too precious-princely for a grave.

SALISBURY

Sir Richard, what think you? have you beheld,
45 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,
50 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:
55 And this, so sole and so unmatched,
Shall give a holiness, a purity,
To the yet unbegotten sin of times;
And prove a deadly bloodshed but a jest,
Exampl'd by this heinous spectacle.

BASTARD

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

SALISBURY

If that it be the work of any hand!
We had a kind of light what would ensue:
65 It is the shameful work of Hubert's hand;
The practise and the purpose of the king:
From whose obedience I forbid my soul,
Kneeling before this ruin of sweet life,
And breathing to his breathless excellence
70 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,
75 By giving it the worship of revenge .

BIGOT

Our souls religiously confirm thy words.

Enter HUBERT

HUBERT

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

PEMBROKE

Sir, sir, impatience has its rights.

BASTARD

It's true--to hurt the man who's impatient, no one else.

SALISBURY

This is the prison. Who is this lying here?

He sees ARTHUR.

PEMBROKE

Oh death, decorated with pure and princely beauty!
The earth doesn't have a hole deep enough to hide this crime.

SALISBURY

Murder, hating what it has done, lays the body in plain sight
to encourage revenge.

BIGOT

Or, when it doomed this beauty to a grave, found it too
precious and royal for a grave.

SALISBURY

Sir Richard, what do you think? Have you seen, or have you
read or heard, or could you think of, or could you even
almost think of--although you see it--what you see? Could
imagination, without seeing this, imagine anything like
this? This is the top, the height, the peak, the peak of the
peak, of murder's coat of arms. This is the most shameful
murder, the wildest savagery, the ugliest blow, that
cross-eyed anger or staring rage ever gave to the tears of
gentle sadness.

PEMBROKE

All past murders are excused by this one. This one, so
unique and unmatched, will make all the sins that haven't
been committed yet seem holy and pure. This makes
murder seem like a joke compared to this terrible display.

BASTARD

It is a damned and bloody deed, the sinful action of an evil
hand--if it's the work of any hand.

SALISBURY

If it's the work of any hand! We thought this might happen.
It is the shameful work of Hubert's hand, the plot and idea
of the king I forbid myself to obey. Kneeling in front of this
sweet ruined life, I breathe to his breathless excellence an
incense-like promise, a holy promise, never to indulge in
worldly pleasures, never to be infected with joy or familiar
with comfort and rest, until I have made my hand glorious
by taking holy revenge.

BIGOT

Our souls say amen to your words.

HUBERT enters.

HUBERT

Lords, I am sweating in my hurry to find you. Arthur is alive.
The king has sent for you.

SALISBURY

80 O, he is old and blushes not at death.
Avaunt, thou hateful villain, get thee gone!

HUBERT

I am no villain.

SALISBURY

Must I rob the law?

Drawing his sword

BASTARD

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

SALISBURY

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

HUBERT

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

BIGOT

Out, dunghill! darest thou brave a nobleman?

HUBERT

Not for my life: but yet I dare defend
95 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

100 Cut him to pieces.

BASTARD

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,
105 Or teach thy hasty spleen to do me shame,
I'll strike thee dead. Put up thy sword betime;
Or I'll so maul you and your toasting-iron,
That you shall think the devil is come from hell.

BIGOT

What wilt thou do, renowned Faulconbridge?
110 Second a villain and a murderer?

HUBERT

Lord Bigot, I am none.

BIGOT

Who kill'd this prince?

SALISBURY

Oh, he's old and isn't ashamed to look at death. Go, you
hateful criminal, go away!

HUBERT

I am no criminal!

SALISBURY

Do I have to rob justice of its due by executing you myself?

He draws his sword.

BASTARD

Your sword is bright, sir. Put it away again.

SALISBURY

Not until I sheathe it in a murderer's skin.

HUBERT

Stand back, Lord Salisbury, stand back. By God, I think my
sword is as sharp of yours. I don't want you to act badly, my
lord, or tempt me to defend myself against you. Seeing you
so angry, I might forget your position, power, and nobility.

BIGOT

Get out, you pile of crap! Do you dare threaten a nobleman?

HUBERT

No, I swear by my life. But I will fight for my innocent life
even against an emperor.

SALISBURY

You are a murderer.

HUBERT

Don't make me one. But I'm not. Whoever speaks that
falseness isn't telling the truth. Whoever doesn't speak the
truth is lying.

PEMBROKE

Cut him to pieces.

BASTARD

No, keep the peace.

SALISBURY

Stand back or I'll stab you, Faulconbridge.

BASTARD

You'd be better off stabbing the devil, Salisbury. If you just
frown at me or move your foot, or rashly insult me, I'll kill
you. Put away your sword now, or I'll maul you and your
little skewer so badly you'll think the devil has come from
hell to do it.

BIGOT

What will you do, famous Faulconbridge? Fight for a
criminal and a murderer?

HUBERT

Lord Bigot, I am not those things.

BIGOT

Who killed this prince?

HUBERT

'Tis not an hour since I left him well:
I honour'd him, I loved him, and will weep
115 My date of life out for his sweet life's loss.

SALISBURY

Trust not those cunning waters of his eyes,
For villany is not without such rheum;
And he, long traded in it, makes it seem
120 Like rivers of remorse and innocency.
Away with me, all you whose souls abhor
The uncleanly savours of a slaughter-house;
For I am stifled with this smell of sin.

BIGOT

Away toward Bury, to the Dauphin there!

PEMBROKE

125 There tell the king he may inquire us out.

Exeunt Lords

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 damn'd, Hubert.

HUBERT

130 Do but hear me, sir.

BASTARD

Ha! I'll tell thee what;
Thou'rt damn'd as black--nay, nothing is so black;
Thou art more deep damn'd than Prince Lucifer:
There is not yet so ugly a fiend of hell
135 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
140 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,
145 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,
150 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.
155 How easy dost thou take all England up!
From forth this morsel of dead royalty,
The life, the right and truth of all this realm
Is fled to heaven; and England now is left
To tug and scramble and to part by the teeth
160 The unowed interest of proud-swelling state.
Now for the bare-pick'd bone of majesty
Doth dogged war bristle his angry crest
And snarleth in the gentle eyes of peace:

HUBERT

I left him healthy less than an hour ago. I respected him, I loved him, and I will cry for the rest of my life over the loss of his sweet life.

SALISBURY

Don't trust the deceitful tears in his eyes because criminals can cry like that. He's been doing this for a long time and can make it seem like he's crying out of sadness and innocence. Let's go, everyone whose soul hates the dirty smells of a slaughter-house. I am choking on this smell of sin.

BIGOT

Let's go to Bury, to the Dauphin there!


PEMBROKE

Tell the king he can find us there.

The Lords exit.

BASTARD

This is a strange world! Did you know about this good work? You're damned out of the infinite reach of mercy if you did this murder, Hubert.

 This is sarcastic - the murder of Arthur is not "good work."

HUBERT

Just listen to me, sir.

BASTARD

Ha! I'll tell you what. You're damned as black--no, nothing is as black--you're more deeply damned than Prince Lucifer. There isn't a devil in hell as ugly as you will be, if you killed this child.

HUBERT

By my soul--

BASTARD

If you only agreed to this cruel deed, despair. And if you don't have a rope, the smallest thread a spider ever twisted from its belly will be enough to strangle you, a piece of straw will be a beam to hang you on. Or if you want to drown yourself, just put a little water in a spoon and it will be as big as the whole ocean, enough to drown such a criminal. I strongly suspect you.

HUBERT

If in action, in agreeing to this, or by sinning in my thoughts, I'm guilty of stealing the sweet breath that was bound up in this beautiful body, hell won't contain enough tortures for me. I left him healthy.

BASTARD

Go, carry him in your arms. I am lost, I think, and lose my way in the thorns and dangers of this world. [HUBERT picks up ARTHUR's body] How easily you pick up all of England! From this scrap of dead royalty, the life, the justice, and the truth of this whole kingdom have flown away to heaven. England is now left to tug and quarrel and bite apart the stolen power of this proud king. Now stubborn war bristles his angry fur and snarls at peace's sweet eyes over the bare bones of majesty. Now foreign invaders and civil war meet to fight in a single army. And terrible confusion, like a vulture on a sick animal, waits for the king's stolen power to fall apart at any moment. Now anyone whose cloak and

165 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
170 And follow me with speed: I'll to the king:
A thousand businesses are brief in hand,
And heaven itself doth frown upon the land.

Exeunt

belt can hold together in this storm is happy. Carry away that child and follow me quickly. I'll go to the king. There are a thousand things to do now and heaven itself frowns at the country.

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter KING JOHN, CARDINAL PANDULPH, and Attendants

KING JOHN

Thus have I yielded up into your hand
The circle of my glory.

Giving the crown

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Take again

5 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.

10 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 mistemper'd humour
15 Rests by you only to be qualified:
Then pause not; for the present time's so sick,
That present medicine must be minister'd,
Or overthrow incurable ensues.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

It was my breath that blew this tempest up,
20 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 blustering land.
On this Ascension-day, remember well,
25 Upon your oath of service to the pope,
Go I to make the French lay down their arms.

Exit

KING JOHN

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

Enter the 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:
35 Your nobles will not hear you, but are gone
To offer service to your enemy,

Shakescleare Translation

KING JOHN, CARDINAL PANDULPH, and servants enter.

KING JOHN

So I have given my glorious crown to you.

He gives the crown.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Take it back from me, admitting that your great power and authority comes from the Pope.

KING JOHN

Now keep your holy promise: go meet the French and use all the Pope's power to stop their advance before they destroy us. My unhappy counties are rebelling and my people refuse to obey, swearing allegiance and love to enemies, to foreign kings. This flood of bad emotions can only be stopped by you. So don't wait, because this age is so sick that medicine must be given to it immediately or it will die.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

My words started this storm because you were treating the Pope badly. But now that you have converted back and are obedient, my words will end this storm of war and make good weather in your wind-blown country. Remember that on [Ascension Day](#), now you've sworn loyalty to the Pope today, I'm going to make the French put down their weapons.

He exits.


KING JOHN

Is it Ascension Day? Didn't that prophet say that I would give away my crown before Ascension Day at noon? I have done that. I thought I would be forced to do it, but, thank God, it was voluntary.

The BASTARD enters.

BASTARD

All of Kent has surrendered. No one there holds out except Dover Castle. London has received the Dauphin and his army like a good host. Your nobles refuse to listen to you and have gone to offer their services to your enemy, and

 A Christian holiday commemorating the Ascension of Jesus into heaven.

And wild amazement hurries up and down
The little number of your doubtful friends.

KING JOHN

40 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 damn'd hand was robb'd and ta'en away.

KING JOHN

That villain Hubert told me he did live.

BASTARD

45 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:
50 Be stirring as the time; be fire with fire;
Threaten the threatener 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
55 The dauntless spirit of resolution.
Away, and glisten 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,
60 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 comes so nigh.

KING JOHN

65 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,
70 Send fair-play orders and make compromise,
Insinuation, parley and base truce
To arms invasive? shall a beardless boy,
A cocker'd silken wanton, brave our fields,
And flesh his spirit in a warlike soil,
75 Mocking the air with colours idly spread,
And find no cheque? Let us, my liege, to arms:
Perchance the cardinal cannot make your peace;
Or if he do, let it at least be said
They saw we had a purpose of defence.

KING JOHN

80 Have thou the ordering of this present time.

BASTARD

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

Exeunt

your few remaining friends are full of doubts and wild
confusion.

KING JOHN

My lords wouldn't come back to me after they heard young
Arthur was alive?

BASTARD

They found him dead and thrown into the streets, an empty
box from which the jewel of life was stolen and taken away
by some damned hand.

KING JOHN

That criminal Hubert told me he was alive.

BASTARD

He did, because he thought it was true, I swear. But why are
you drooping? Why do you look sad? Act greatly, just as
your thoughts have been great. Don't let the world see fear
and sad worry in your kingly eyes. Be as strong as the time
calls for, be fire to meet fire. Threaten the threatener, and
stare down boastful horror in the face. Your inferiors, who
copy the behavior of great men, will follow your example
and become fearless and brave. Go, and shine like the god
of war when he wants to join a battle. Show bravery and
ambitious confidence. What, can they search for the lion in
his own den and frighten him there? And make him tremble
there? Oh, don't let that be said of you. Go out and run to
meet anger further from your doors, and wrestle with him
before he comes so close.

KING JOHN

The Pope's messenger was with me and I have made peace
with him on good terms. He has promised to send away the
army led by the Dauphin.

BASTARD

What a shameful alliance! Will we, on our own land, play
fair and make compromises, agreements, discussions, and
low peace with invading armies? Will a beardless boy, a
childish immoral brat, dare come to our fields and wave his
weapons around on our ground, mocking the air with his
foolishly spread banners, and not meet with any resistance?
Let's go to battle, my king. Maybe the cardinal can't make
peace for you. Or if he does, at least let it be said they saw
we were prepared to defend ourselves.

KING JOHN

You're in charge for now.

BASTARD

Go bravely then! But I know our side may well meet an even
prouder enemy.

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Shakescleare Translation

Enter, in arms, LEWIS, SALISBURY, MELUN, PEMBROKE, BIGOT, and
Soldiers

LEWIS

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,
5 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
10 A voluntary zeal and an unurged faith
To your proceedings; yet believe me, prince,
I am not glad that such a sore of time
Should seek a plaster by contemn'd revolt,
And heal the inveterate canker of one wound
15 By making many. O, it grieves my soul,
That I must draw this metal from my side
To be a widow-maker! O, and there
Where honourable rescue and defence
Cries out upon the name of Salisbury!
20 But such is the infection of the time,
That, for the health and physic of our right,
We cannot deal but with the very hand
Of stern injustice and confused wrong.
And is't not pity, O my grieved friends,
25 That we, the sons and children of this isle,
Were 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
30 Upon the spot of this enforced cause,—
To grace the gentry of a land remote,
And follow unacquainted colours here?
What, here? O nation, that thou couldst remove!
That Neptune's arms, who clippeth thee about,
35 Would bear thee from the knowledge of thyself,
And grapple thee unto a pagan shore;
Where these two Christian armies might combine
The blood of malice in a vein of league,
And not to spend it so unneighbourly!

LEWIS

40 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!
45 Let me wipe off this honourable dew,
That silverly doth progress on thy cheeks:
My heart hath melted at a lady's tears,
Being an ordinary inundation;
But this effusion of such manly drops,
50 This shower, blown up by tempest of the soul,
Startles mine eyes, and makes me more amazed
Than had I seen the vaulty top of heaven
Figured quite o'er with burning meteors.
Lift up thy brow, renowned Salisbury,
55 And with a great heart heave away the storm:
Commend these waters to those baby eyes
That never saw the giant world enraged;
Nor met with fortune other than at feasts,
Full of warm blood, of mirth, of gossiping.
60 Come, come; for thou shalt thrust thy hand as deep
Into the purse of rich prosperity
As Lewis himself: so, nobles, shall you all,
That knit your sinews to the strength of mine.
And even there, methinks, an angel spake:

Enter CARDINAL PANDULPH

LEWIS, SALISBURY, MELUN, PEMBROKE, BIGOT, and soldiers
enter, armed for battle.

LEWIS

Lord Melun, have this copied and keep it safe for our
records. [*Gives paper to MELUN*] Return the original to
these lords so that we have the agreement written down.
Then both they and we, looking over these notes, will know
why we swore to remain firmly faithful to each other.

SALISBURY

We will never break this agreement. And, noble Dauphin,
although we swear willingly and without you asking for it,
believe me, prince, I'm not glad that this wound we have at
this time is trying to cure itself by sinfully rebelling, which
heals the endless pain of one wound by making many
more. Oh, I'm sad to have to draw my sword to make wives
into widows! Oh, and to kill exactly the people who should
be able to call on me to honorably rescue and defend them!
But that's the infection of this age, that in order to make
justice healthy we have to act with terrible injustice and
confused wrongdoing. And isn't it a pity, oh my sad friends,
that we, the sons and children of this island, lived to see
such a sad time as this. Do we have to follow a foreigner
over this island's kind breast and fight for our country's
enemies—I have to go apart and cry here where we are
forced to do this—to help nobles from a foreign land and
follow unknown flags here? What, here? Oh country, I wish
you could go away! I wish the sea-god's arms that surround
you could carry you away so you didn't know what was
happening to you, and bring you to a non-Christian shore.
There, these two Christian armies could forget their anger
toward each other and fight together against non-
Christians, rather than expressing their anger here in such
an unneighbourly way!

LEWIS

You show a noble character in saying this, and the great
emotions wrestling in your heart make a noble earthquake.
Oh, you've fought such a noble battle between what you
were forced to do and your brave loyalty! Let me wipe away
these honorable tears that flow like silver down your
cheeks. My heart has melted at a woman's tears, which are
an ordinary occurrence. But this flow of manly tears, this
rainstorm blown off from thunderstorms in your soul,
startles me and makes me more amazed than I would be if I
have seen the sky covered with burning meteors. Look up,
famous Salisbury, and bravely push away the storm. Let
baby eyes cry, since they've never seen the giant world get
angry or had any experience other than feasts full of energy,
happiness, and gossiping. Come, come. You'll get as much
money out of this as Lewis himself. So will you, nobles, who
put your strength behind mine. And just now, I think, an
angel speaks:

CARDINAL PANDULPH enters.

LEWIS

65 Look, where the holy legate comes apace,
To give us warrant from the hand of heaven
And on our actions set the name of right
With holy breath.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Hail, noble prince of France!
70 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 threatening colours now wind up;
75 And tame the savage spirit of wild war,
That like a lion foster'd up at hand,
It may lie gently at the foot of peace,
And be no further harmful than in show.

LEWIS

Your grace shall pardon me, I will not back:
80 I am too high-born to be propertied,
To be a secondary at control,
Or useful serving-man and instrument,
To any sovereign state throughout the world.
Your breath first kindled the dead coal of wars
85 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,
90 Acquainted me with interest to this land,
Yea, thrust this enterprise into my heart;
And come ye now to tell me John hath made
His peace with Rome? What is that peace to me?
I, by the honour of my marriage-bed,
95 After young Arthur, claim this land for mine;
And, now it is half-conquer'd, 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,
100 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
105 'Vive le roi!' as I have bank'd their towns?
Have I not here the best cards for the game,
To win this easy match play'd for a crown?
And shall I now give o'er the yielded set?
No, no, on my soul, it never shall be said.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

110 You look but on the outside of this work.

LEWIS

Outside or inside, I will not return
Till my attempt so much be glorified
As to my ample hope was promised
Before I drew this gallant head of war,
115 And cull'd these fiery spirits from the world,
To outlook conquest and to win renown
Even in the jaws of danger and of death.

Trumpet sounds

LEWIS

What lusty trumpet thus doth summon us?

Enter the BASTARD, attended

BASTARD

120 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

LEWIS

Look, the holy deputy is coming quickly to give us a warrant
from God and to show us that the heavens approve of our
actions.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Greetings, noble prince of France! This is the news: King
John has been reconciled with Rome. He's changed his
mind since the time he stood against the holy church, the
great city and authority of Rome. So put away your
threatening banners and calm the savage emotion of wild
war that, like a lion raised as a pet, can lie gently at peace's
foot and not cause any harm, although it looks dangerous.

LEWIS

I'm sorry, your grace, I won't turn back. I'm too noble to
obey orders, to be second in command, or to be a useful
servant and tool to any state in the world. Your breath
started the fire again in the dead coals of war between this
punished kingdom and me and brought wood to feed this
fire. Now it's far too huge to be blown out by the same weak
breath that started it. You taught me to know what was
right, showed me my right to this country, made me want to
start this. And are you coming now to tell me John made his
peace with Rome? What does that peace have to do with
me? By the honor of my marriage-bed, I claim this country
as mine after young Arthur. Now it is half-conquered, must I
go back because John has made his peace with Rome? Am I
Rome's slave? What penny has Rome contributed, what
men has it provided, what equipment has it sent to support
this war? Wasn't I the one who paid for this? Who else
except for me and those who follow me have sweated to do
this business and fight this war? Haven't I heard these
islanders shout out "Long live the king!" as I fortified their
towns? Don't I have the best cards in this game to win this
easy match that we play for a crown? And should I now give
up the game I've won? No, no, I swear that will never be
said of me.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

You're just considering this from the outside.

LEWIS

Outside or inside, I won't return until I win as much as was
promised to me and as much as I hoped before I drew up
this army. I picked these brave men out of their ordinary
lives to dare to conquer and to win fame in the jaws of
danger and death.

A sound of a trumpet.

LEWIS

What loud trumpet calls for us?

The BASTARD enters with servants.

BASTARD

According to fair play, let me talk to you. I have been sent as
a messenger. My holy lord of Milan, I come from the king to

I come, to learn how you have dealt for him;
And, as you answer, I do know the scope
125 And warrant limited unto my tongue.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

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

BASTARD

By all the blood that ever fury breathed,
130 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 harness'd masque and unadvised revel,
135 This unhair'd 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,
140 To cudgel you and make you take the hatch,
To dive like buckets in concealed wells,
To crouch in litter of your stable planks,
To lie like pawns lock'd up in chests and trunks,
To hug with swine, to seek sweet safety out
145 In vaults and prisons, and to thrill and shake
Even at the crying of your nation's crow,
Thinking his voice an armed Englishman;
Shall that victorious hand be feebled here,
That in your chambers gave you chastisement?
150 No: know the gallant monarch is in arms
And like an eagle o'er his airy towers,
To souse annoyance that comes near his nest.
And you degenerate, you ingrate revolts,
You bloody Neroes, ripping up the womb
155 Of your dear mother England, blush for shame;
For your own ladies and pale-visaged maids
Like Amazons come tripping after drums,
Their thimbles into armed gauntlets change,
Their needles to lances, and their gentle hearts
160 To fierce and bloody inclination.

LEWIS

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

CARDINAL PANDULPH

165 Give me leave to speak.

BASTARD

No, I will speak.

LEWIS

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

BASTARD



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


learn how you have negotiated for him. Depending on your
answer, I know what I am allowed to say.


CARDINAL PANDULPH

The Dauphin is stubbornly opposing me and won't do what
I beg him to. He bluntly says he won't lay down his
weapons.

BASTARD

By all the blood that anger ever breathed, the young man
speaks well. Now listen to our English king because I speak
for him. He is prepared, and there's good reason he should
be: the king laughs at this ape-like and rude approach, this
costume dance with armor, this unwise game, this hairless
boldness, this boyish army. He's well prepared to whip this
dwarf-like war and these pygmy weapons, out of his
territory. His hand had the strength, at your own door, to
beat you and make you leap out the door, to dive like
buckets into wells and hide, to crouch on your dirty stable
floors, to lie like pawned objects locked up in chests and
trunks, to hug pigs, to look for sweet safety in tombs and
prisons, and to tremble at the cry of one of your country's
crows, thinking his voice was an armed Englishman. Will
the conquering hand that punished you in your own rooms
be made weak here? No. You should know the brave king is
armed and hovers like an eagle over his nest to get rid of
annoyances that come near it. You corrupted, ungrateful
rebels, you bloody tyrants ripping up the womb  of your
dear mother England, blush with shame. Your own wives
and pale-faced daughters are tripping after drums like
Amazonian  warriors, changing their thimbles into
armored gloves, their needles into lances, and their sweet
hearts into fierce and bloody tendencies.

 The Emperor Nero is said to have
cut into his own mother's womb to
see where he came from.

 The Amazons were mythical
warrior women.

LEWIS

Stop your bragging there and get away from us unharmed. I
admit you're better at scolding than I am. Goodbye. My
time is worth too much to be spent with such a babblor.

CARDINAL PANDULPH

Let me speak.


BASTARD

No, I will speak.

LEWIS

I won't listen to either of you. Strike the drums, and let
war's mouth announce my claim and my reason for being
here.

BASTARD

Yes, your drums will cry out when they're beaten. And so
will you, when you're beaten. Just start an echo with the
sound of your drum and close by a drum is ready to echo it
back just as loud. Beat another, and another will rattle the
sky's ear as loudly as yours and imitate loud thunder. John
is nearby, ready for war, not trusting this clumsy deputy 
he made use of because it amused him, not out of
necessity. On his forehead sits a skeleton death, whose job
today is to feast on thousands of the French.

 i.e. Cardinal Pandulph

LEWIS

Strike up our drums, to find this danger out.

BASTARD

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

185

Exeunt

LEWIS

Beat our drums to find this danger.

BASTARD

And you will find it, Dauphin, don't doubt it.

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 3

Shakespeare

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!

5

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

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

KING JOHN

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

Exeunt

Shakescleare Translation

Trumpets sound. KING JOHN and HUBERT enter.

KING JOHN

How is the battle going? Oh, tell me, Hubert.

HUBERT

Badly, I'm afraid. How are you, your majesty?

KING JOHN

This fever I've suffered from so long is weighing on me. Oh,
my heart is sick!

A messenger enters.

MESSENGER

My lord, your brave relative, Faulconbridge, wants you to
leave the battlefield and send me back to tell him which
way you're going.

KING JOHN

Tell him toward Swinstead, to the abbey there.


MESSENGER

Don't worry; the many reinforcements expected by the
Dauphin here were shipwrecked three nights ago on
[Goodwin Sands](#). Richard heard the news just now. The
French aren't fighting enthusiastically and they're
retreating.

KING JOHN

Oh poor me! This tyrant of a fever burns me up and won't
let me feel happy at this good news. Go on toward
Swinstead. Take me to my stretcher. I'm overcome by
weakness and feel faint.

They exit.

 *Goodwin Sands is a beach in Kent, England.*

Act 5, Scene 4

Shakespeare

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.

Shakescleare Translation

SALISBURY, PEMBROKE, and BIGOT enter.

SALISBURY

I didn't think the king had so many friends.

PEMBROKE

Let's pick ourselves back up. Encourage the French. If they
are defeated we are too.

SALISBURY

5 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

MELUN

Lead me to the revolts of England here.

SALISBURY

When we were happy we had other names.

PEMBROKE

10 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.
15 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 moe with me,
20 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,
25 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?
30 Why should I then be false, since it is true
That I must die here and live hence by truth?
I say again, if Lewis do win the day,
He is forsworn, if e'er those eyes of yours
Behold another day break in the east:
35 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
40 Even with a treacherous fine of all your lives,
If Lewis by your assistance win the day.
Commend me to one Hubert with your king:
The love of him, and this respect besides,
For that my grandsire was an Englishman,
45 Awakes my conscience to confess all this.
In lieu whereof, I pray you, bear me hence
From forth the noise and rumour of the field,
Where I may think the remnant of my thoughts
In peace, and part this body and my soul
50 With contemplation and devout desires.

SALISBURY

We do believe thee: and beshrew my soul
But I do love the favour and the form
Of this most fair occasion, by the which
We will untread the steps of damned flight,
55 And like a bated and retired flood,
Leaving our rankness and irregular course,
Stoop low within those bounds we have o'erlook'd

SALISBURY

That illegitimate devil Faulconbridge is winning the battle
despite everything.

PEMBROKE

They say King John left the battlefield very sick.

MELUN enters, wounded.

MELUN

Take me to the English rebels here.

SALISBURY

When we were happy we were called something else.

PEMBROKE

It's the Count Melun.

SALISBURY

Fatally wounded.

MELUN

Run away, English nobles, you've made a bad bargain.
Unthread rebellion's needle and welcome back your
discarded loyalty. Find King John and fall to his feet.
Because if the French prince wins this fierce battle he
means to reward the work you did by cutting off your
heads. He swore this, and so did I and many more people
too, on the altar at Saint Edmundsbury--yes, the same altar
where we swore dear friendship and eternal love to you.

SALISBURY

Is this possible? Is this true?

MELUN

Am I not about to die horribly? Don't I have just a small
amount of life left, which bleeds away like a wax statue
losing its shape in front of a fire? What in the world would
make me lie now, since I have to give up all lying? Why
would I be dishonest, since it's true I have to die here and
from now on I have to just tell the truth? I tell you again, if
Lewis wins the battle he will break his promise to you if
those eyes of yours live to see another day break in the east.
Or you might die tonight--the night's black unhealthy
breath already smokes around the burning top of the old,
weak sun worn out from day, and if you keep fighting your
breathing will end. You'll pay the price of costly betrayal by
being betrayed and killed if Lewis wins this battle with your
help. Send my love to a certain Hubert, who's with your
king. Love for him and the fact that my grandfather was an
Englishman make me feel I should confess all this. So in
exchange for this, I beg you, carry me away from the noise
of the battlefield to somewhere I can think my last thoughts
in peace, and part my soul from this body with
thoughtfulness and holy wishes.

SALISBURY

We believe you. And damn me, I love this beautiful
opportunity given to us to go back on the steps of our
damned betrayal. Like a flood that has ended and drawn
back, we'll leave our wild and unusual course, stoop low
into the restraints we've escaped from, and run on
obediently to our ocean, to our great King John. My arm will
help to carry you away because I see you're dying. Let's go,

And cabby run on in obedience
 Even to our ocean, to our great King John.
 60 My arm shall give thee help to bear thee hence;
 For I do see the cruel pangs of death
 Right in thine eye. Away, my friends! New flight;
 And happy newness, that intends old right.

Exeunt, leading off MELUN

my friends! This is a new betrayal, but a happy newness
 that goes back to old right actions.

They exit, supporting MELUN.

Act 5, Scene 5

Shakespeare

Enter LEWIS and his train

LEWIS

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

Enter a Messenger

MESENTER

Where is my prince, the Dauphin?

LEWIS

10 Here: what news?

MESENTER

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

LEWIS

15 Ah, foul shrewd news! beshrew thy very heart!
 I did not think to be so sad to-night
 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?

MESENTER

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

LEWIS

Well; keep good quarter and good care to-night:
 The day shall not be up so soon as I,
 To try the fair adventure of to-morrow.

Exeunt

Shakesclare Translation

LEWIS and his servants enter.

LEWIS

I thought the sun seemed reluctant to set, and instead
 stayed and made the western sky blush when the English
 retreated weakly over their own ground. We came off
 bravely when, shooting unnecessarily after them, we said
 good night after such bloody work and wrapped our ripped
 banners up, last on the battlefield and almost winners of it!

A messenger enters.

MESENTER

Where is my prince, the Dauphin?

LEWIS

Here: what news do you have?

MESENTER

The Count Melun has been killed. He persuaded the English
 lords to desert. Your reinforcements that you've waited for
 so long have been shipwrecked and sunk on Goodwin
 Sands.

LEWIS

Oh, terrible bad news! Damn your heart! I didn't think I'd be
 as sad tonight as this news made me. Who was it who said
 King John ran away an hour or two before our tired armies
 stopped fighting for the night?

MESENTER

Whoever said it, it's true, my lord.

LEWIS

Well. Sleep well and take care tonight. The sun won't be up
 as soon as I am to see what luck tomorrow will bring us.

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 6

Shakespeare

Enter the BASTARD and HUBERT, severally

HUBERT

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

Shakesclare Translation

The BASTARD and HUBERT enter separately.

HUBERT

Who's there? Speak! Speak quickly or I'll shoot.

BASTARD

A friend. What art thou?

HUBERT

Of the part of England.

BASTARD

Whither dost thou go?

HUBERT

- 5 What's that to thee? why may not I demand
Of thine affairs, as well as thou of mine?

BASTARD

Hubert, I think?

HUBERT

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

BASTARD

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

HUBERT

- 15 Unkind remembrance! thou and eyeless 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

- 20 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

- 25 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 poison'd by a monk:
I left him almost speechless; and broke out
To acquaint you with this evil, that you might
30 The better arm you to the sudden time,
Than if you had at leisure known of this.

BASTARD

How did he take it? who did taste to him?

HUBERT

- A monk, I tell you; a resolved villain,
Whose bowels suddenly burst out: the king
35 Yet speaks and peradventure may recover.

BASTARD

Who didst thou leave to tend his majesty?

BASTARD

A friend. Who are you?

HUBERT

I'm on the English side.

BASTARD

Where are you going?

HUBERT

Why does it matter to you? Why can't I ask you about what
you're doing instead of you asking me that?

BASTARD

Hubert, I think?

HUBERT

Your guess is correct. I will guess you are my friend since
you know my voice so well. Who are you?

BASTARD

Whoever you want, and if you want you can consider me a
friend because I am descended from the Plantagenets on
one side.

HUBERT

A cruel reminder! You and the dark night have shamed me.
Brave soldier, forgive me for my ear not recognizing any
sound coming from your mouth.

BASTARD

Come on, come on. Don't bother complimenting me--what
news is there?

HUBERT

I'm walking here under the black forehead of night to find
you.

BASTARD

In short, then: what's the news?

HUBERT

Oh, my dear sir, news fitting to the night, black, frightening,
without comfort, and horrible.

BASTARD


Show me the wound of this bad news. I'm not a woman, I
won't faint at it.

HUBERT

I'm afraid the king has been poisoned by a monk. When I
left he was almost speechless. I left to tell you about this
evil deed so you could prepare yourself better for this
sudden occurrence than if you learned about it later.

BASTARD

How was he given the poison? Who was tasting his food?

 Kings sometimes had a taster, a
servant whose job it was to taste their
food to check for poison.

HUBERT

A monk, I tell you. A resolved criminal whose guts suddenly
burst out. The king is still speaking and may get better.

BASTARD

Who did you leave to take care of him?

HUBERT

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


BASTARD


Withhold thine indignation, mighty heaven,
And tempt us not to bear above our power!
I'll tell thee, Hubert, half my power this night,
Passing these flats, are taken by the tide;
45 These Lincoln Washes have devoured them;
Myself, well mounted, hardly have escaped.
Away before: conduct me to the king;
I doubt he will be dead or ere I come.

*Exeunt***HUBERT**

Don't you know? The lords have all come back and they
brought Prince Henry with them. At his request the king
pardoned them and they are all with him.

BASTARD

Hold back your anger, great heaven, and don't tempt me to
act beyond my power! I'll tell you, Hubert, half my army
was shipwrecked passing these rocks tonight. These
Lincoln marshes  have swallowed them. I was on a good
horse and barely escaped. Go in front of me: take me to the
king. I'm worried he'll be dead before I arrive.

 Lincolnshire is an area in the
northeast of England which contains
areas of sand marshes.

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 7

Shakespeare

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

It is too late: the life of all his blood
Is touch'd corruptibly, and his pure brain,
Which some suppose the soul's frail dwelling-house,
Doth by the idle comments that it makes
5 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

10 Let him be brought into the orchard here.
Doth he still rage?

*Exit BIGOT***PEMBROKE**

He is more patient
Than when you left him; even now he sung.

PRINCE HENRY

15 O vanity of sickness! fierce extremes
In their continuance will not feel themselves.
Death, having prey'd upon the outward parts,
Leaves them invisible, and his siege is now
Against the mind, the which he pricks and wounds
20 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,
25 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
30 Which he hath left so shapeless and so rude.

Shakesclare Translation

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

It's too late. His blood is too infected and his pure brain,
which is where some people think the soul lives, shows that
he's going to die by the meaningless comments it makes.

*PEMBROKE enters.***PEMBROKE**

The king still speaks and believes that if he were brought
outside, the open air would calm the burning of the deadly
poison that attacks him.



PRINCE HENRY


Have him brought into the orchard here. Is he still talking
crazily?


*BIGOT enters.***PEMBROKE**

He's calmer than when you left him. He was singing just
now.

PRINCE HENRY

Oh, that's the nonsense of sickness! Fierce extremes come
one after the other, without him realizing it. Death, having
preyed on the outer parts of the body, invisibly leaves them
and now attacks the mind, which he stabs and wounds with
many troops of strange delusions that, as they crowd and
push towards that last fortress, confuse each other. It's
strange that death would sing. I am the cygnet  of this
pale weak swan  that chants a sad hymn about his own
death and, using his weakness as an instrument to
accompany him, sings his body and soul to eternal sleep.

 A cygnet is a young swan.

 It was believed that swans only
sang once in their lives, when they
were dying. Weakness is imagined as
an instrument that the king uses to
accompany himself with as he sings.

SALISBURY

Take comfort, prince. You were born to give shape to the
shapeless and rough mess he's left behind.

Enter Attendants, and BIGOT, carrying KING JOHN in a chair

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,
35 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

40 Poison'd,--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 burn'd bosom, nor entreat the north
45 To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips
And comfort me with cold. I do not ask you much,
I beg cold comfort; and you are so strait
And so ingrateful, you deny me that.

PRINCE HENRY

O that there were some virtue in my tears,
50 That might relieve you!

KING JOHN

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

Enter the BASTARD

BASTARD

55 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 crack'd and burn'd,
And all the shrouds wherewith my life should sail
60 Are turned to one thread, one little hair:
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by,
Which holds but till thy news be uttered;
And then all this thou seest is but a clod
And module of confounded royalty.

BASTARD

65 The Dauphin is preparing hitherward,
Where heaven 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
70 Devoured by the unexpected flood.

KING JOHN dies

SALISBURY

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

PRINCE HENRY

Even so must I run on, and even so stop.
What surety of the world, what hope, what stay,
75 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,

BIGOT enters with servants carrying KING JOHN in a chair.

KING JOHN

Oh good, now my soul has elbow-room. It wouldn't leave
from windows or doors. There's so hot a summer in my
chest that all my intestines crumble into dust. I am a
scribbled shape drawn with a pen on parchment and I
shrivel up in the fire.

PRINCE HENRY

How are you, your majesty?

KING JOHN

Poisoned—bad food—dead, abandoned, thrown away.
None of you is willing to ask the winter to come shove his
icy fingers in my mouth or let my kingdom's rivers run
through my burned chest or beg the north to make his cold
winds kiss my dry lips and comfort me with cold. I don't ask
you much, I beg for cold comfort. And yet you're so greedy
and ungrateful that you deny me that.

PRINCE HENRY

Oh, I wish my tears were medicine that could help you!

KING JOHN

The salt in them is hot. There's a hell inside me. The poison
is like a devil locked up in there. It's torturing my blood as if
the blood were sinners in Hell who would never be forgiven
by God, condemned to suffer forever.

The BASTARD enters.

BASTARD

Oh, I'm sweating after rushing here to see you, your
majesty!

KING JOHN

Oh cousin, you've come to shut my eye. The rope of my
heart is cracked and burned, and all the sails of my life's
boat now hang by one thread, one little hair. My heart has
one poor string to set its course with, which will only hold
until you tell your news. Then all you see here will just be a
lump and a mess of disordered royalty.

BASTARD

The Dauphin is preparing to come here, where God knows
we'll fight him. Tonight I moved most of my army to a more
strategic position and they were all drowned unexpectedly
in the marshes.

KING JOHN dies.

SALISBURY

You say this dead news in an ear that's just as dead. My
king! My lord! Just now he was a king, now he's this.

PRINCE HENRY

I too must run on like this and stop like this. What certainty
is there in the world, what hope, what security, when this
was a king until just before now, and now is clay?

BASTARD

[To KING JOHN's body] Are you gone? I only stay behind to
take revenge for you; then my soul will accompany you to

And then my soul shall wait on thee to heaven,
As it on earth hath been thy servant still.
80 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.
85 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,
90 And brings from him such offers of our peace
As we with honour and respect may take,
With purpose presently to leave this wa r.

BASTARD

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

SALISBURY

95 Nay, it is in a manner done already;
For many carriages he hath dispatch'd
To the sea-side, and put his cause and quarrel
To the disposing of the cardinal:
With whom yourself, myself and other lords,
100 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

105 At Worcester must his body be interr'd;
For so he will'd it.

BASTARD

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

SALISBURY

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

PRINCE HENRY

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

BASTARD

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

Exeunt

heaven just as it was always your servant on earth. Now,
now, you nobles like stars that now move in your proper
trajectories, where is your army? Show your new loyalty
and come back with me now to push destruction and
eternal shame out of the weak door of our fainting country.
Let's attack immediately, or we will be attacked
immediately. The Dauphin is biting at our heels.

SALISBURY

It seems you don't know as much as we do, then. The
Cardinal Pandulph is inside sleeping. Half an hour ago he
came from the Dauphin and brings from him offers of peace
that we can accept with honor and respect. He wants to
stop fighting at once.

BASTARD

He will do it more willingly when he sees us well-prepared
to defend ourselves.

SALISBURY

No, in a way it's already done because he's sent most of his
army to the seashore, and given his cause and demands to
the cardinal to negotiate for him. If you think it right, you
and me and other lords will hurry to the cardinal this
afternoon to end this business well.

BASTARD

Very well. And you, my noble prince, will attend your
father's funeral along with the other noblemen we can
spare most easily.

PRINCE HENRY

His body must be buried at Windsor; that's what he wanted.

BASTARD

It will be taken there then. And may you yourself happily
take on your inherited power over this country! *[Kneels]* I
promise you on my knee to serve you obediently and
always to be a faithful subject.

SALISBURY

And I make the same promise of pure love that will go on
forever.

PRINCE HENRY

My soul thanks you, and I'm the sort of person who doesn't
know how to thank you except by crying.

BASTARD

Oh, let's be as sad as we need to at this time, since it has
given us a lot to be sad about. This England never did and
never will lie at the foot of a proud conqueror, except when
it has first helped him by wounding itself. Now that its
nobles have come home again, let the three corners of the
world come to fight us, and we'll destroy them. Nothing will
hurt us if England just stays faithful to itself.

They exit.

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