

# William Shakespeare

## The Life and Death of King John

### Dramatis Personae

**King John.**

**Prince Henry**, *son to the King.*

**Arthur**, Duke of Bretagne, *nephew to the King.*

**Earl of Pembroke.**

**Earl of Essex.**

**Earl of Salisbury.**

**Lord Bigot.**

**Hubert de Burgh.**

**Robert Faulconbridge**, *son to Sir Robert Faulconbridge.*

**Philip the Bastard**, *his half-brother.*

**James Gurney**, *servant to Lady Faulconbridge.*

**Peter of Pomfret**, *a prophet.*

**Philip**, *King of France.*

**Lewis**, *the Dauphin.*

**Lymoges**, *Duke of Austria.*

**Cardinal Pandulph**, *the Pope's legate.*

**Melun**, *a French Lord.*

**Chatillon**, *ambassador from France to King John.*

**Queen Elinor**, *mother to King John.*

**Constance**, *mother to Arthur.*

**Blanch of Spain**, *niece to King John*.

**Lady Faulconbridge**.

Lords, Citizens of Angiers, Sheriff, Heralds,  
Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, and other Attendants.

**Scene:** *England and France*.

## **Act I**

### **Scene I**

King John's palace.

*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**

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  
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,  
Thy nephew and right royal sovereign.

### **King John**

What follows if we disallow of this?

### **Chatillon**

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

### **King John**

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

### **Chatillon**

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

### **King John**

Bear mine to him, and so depart in peace:

Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France;  
For ere thou canst report I will be there,  
The thunder of my cannon shall be heard:  
So hence! Be thou the trumpet of our wrath  
And sullen presage of your own decay.  
An honourable conduct let him have:  
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,  
Upon the right and party of her son?  
This might have been prevented and made whole  
With very easy arguments of love,  
Which now the manage of two kingdoms must  
With fearful bloody issue arbitrate.

### **King John**

Our strong possession and our right for us.

### **Queen Elinor**

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  
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.

*Enter Robert and the Bastard.*

What men are you?

**Bastard**

Your faithful subject I, a gentleman  
Born in Northamptonshire and eldest son,  
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**

Is that the elder, and art thou the heir?

You came not of one mother then, it seems.

## **Bastard**

Most certain of one mother, mighty king;

That is well known; and, as I think, one father:

But for the certain knowledge of that truth

I put you o'er to heaven and to my mother:

Of that I doubt, as all men's children may.

## **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;

That is my brother's plea and none of mine;

The which if he can prove, a' pops me out

At least from fair five hundred pound a year:

Heaven guard my mother's honour and my land!

## **King John**

A good blunt fellow. Why, being younger born,

Doth he lay claim to thine inheritance?

### **Bastard**

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

### **King John**

Why, what a madcap hath heaven lent us here!

### **Queen Elinor**

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

### **King John**

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

land?

**Bastard**

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

**Robert**

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

**Bastard**

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.  
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,  
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;  
And if he were, he came into the world  
Full fourteen weeks before the course of time.  
Then, good my liege, let me have what is mine,  
My father's land, as was my father's will.

### **King John**

Sirrah, your brother is legitimate;  
Your father's wife did after wedlock bear him,  
And if she did play false, the fault was hers;  
Which fault lies on the hazards of all husbands  
That marry wives. Tell me, how if my brother,  
Who, as you say, took pains to get this son,  
Had of your father 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,  
Being none of his, refuse him: this concludes;  
My mother's son did get your father's heir;  
Your father's heir must have your father's land.

### **Robert**

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

### **Bastard**

Of no more force to dispossess me, sir,

Than was his will to get me, as I think.

### **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,  
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  
That in mine ear I durst not stick a rose  
Lest men should say 'Look, where three-farthings  
goes!'

And, to his shape, were heir to all this land,  
Would I might never stir from off this place,  
I would give it every foot to have this face;  
I would not be sir Nob in any case.

### **Queen 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.

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**

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,  
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 by the hour, by night or day,  
When I was got, sir Robert was away!

## **Queen Elinor**

The very spirit of Plantagenet!

I am thy grandam, Richard; call me so.

## **Bastard**

Madam, by chance but not by truth; what though?

Something about, a little from the right,

In at the window, or else o'er the hatch:

Who dares not stir by day must walk by night,

And have is have, however men do catch:

Near or far off, well won is still well shot,

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

## **King John**

Go, Faulconbridge: now hast thou thy desire;

A landless knight makes thee a landed squire.

Come, madam, and come, Richard, we must

speed

For France, for France, for it is more than need.

## **Bastard**

Brother, adieu: good fortune come to thee!

For thou wast got i' the way of honesty.

*Exeunt all but Bastard.*

A foot of honour better than I was;

But many a many foot of land the worse.

Well, now can I make any Joan a lady.

'Good den, sir Richard!'-'God-a-mercy,  
fellow!' —

And if his name be George, I'll call him Peter;  
For new-made honour doth forget men's names;  
'Tis too respectful and too sociable  
For your conversion. Now your traveller,  
He and his toothpick at my worship's mess,  
And when my knightly stomach is sufficed,  
Why then I suck my teeth and catechise  
My picked man of countries: 'My dear sir,'  
Thus, leaning on mine elbow, I begin,  
'I shall beseech you'-that is question now;  
And then comes answer like an Absey book:  
'O sir,' says answer, 'at your best command;  
At your employment; at your service, sir;'  
'No, sir,' says question, 'I, sweet sir, at yours:'  
And so, ere answer knows what question would,  
Saving in dialogue of compliment,  
And talking of the Alps and Apennines,  
The Pyrenean and the river Po,  
It draws toward supper in conclusion so.  
But this is worshipful society  
And fits the mounting spirit like myself,  
For he is but a bastard to the time  
That doth not smack of observation;  
And so am I, whether I smack or no;  
And not alone in habit and device,

Exterior form, outward accoutrement,  
But from the inward motion to deliver  
Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth:  
Which, though I will not practise to deceive,  
Yet, to avoid deceit, I mean to learn;  
For it shall strew the footsteps of my rising.  
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.*

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**

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?  
He is sir Robert's son, and so art thou.

**Bastard**

James Gurney, wilt thou give us leave awhile?

**Gurney**

Good leave, good Philip.

**Bastard**

Philip! sparrow: James,  
There's toys abroad: anon I'll tell thee more.

*Exit Gurney.*

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

**Lady Faulconbridge**

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

## **Bastard**

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

## **Lady Faulconbridge**

Hast thou denied thyself a Faulconbridge?

## **Bastard**

As faithfully as I deny the devil.

## **Lady Faulconbridge**

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

## **Bastard**

Now, by this light, were I to get again,  
Madam, I would not wish a better father.  
Some sins do bear their privilege on earth,  
And so doth yours; your fault was not your folly:



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

*Exeunt.*

## Act II

### Scene I

France. Before Angiers.

*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,  
By this brave duke came early to his grave:  
And for amends to his posterity,  
At our importance hither is he come,  
To spread his colours, boy, in thy behalf,  
And to rebuke the usurpation  
Of thy unnatural uncle, English John:  
Embrace him, love him, give him welcome  
hither.

#### Arthur

God shall forgive you Coeur-de-lion's death  
The rather that you give his offspring life,  
Shadowing their right under your wings of war:  
I give you welcome with a powerless hand,



## **Austria**

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

## **King Philip**

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

## **Constance**

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

*Enter Chatillon.*

## **King Philip**

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

## Chatillon

Then turn your forces from this paltry siege  
And stir them up against a mightier task.  
England, impatient of your just demands,  
Hath put himself in arms: the adverse winds,  
Whose leisure I have stay'd, have given him time  
To land his legions all as soon as I;  
His marches are expedient to this town,  
His forces strong, his soldiers confident.  
With him along is come the mother-queen,  
An Ate, stirring him to blood and strife;  
With her her niece, the Lady Blanch of Spain;  
With them a bastard of the king's deceased,  
And all the unsettled humours of the land,  
Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,  
With ladies' faces and fierce dragons' spleens,  
Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,  
Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs,  
To make 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,  
To do offence and scath in Christendom.

*Drum beats.*

The interruption of their churlish drums  
Cuts off more circumstance: they are at hand,

To parley or to fight; therefore prepare.

### **King Philip**

How much 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**

Peace be to France, if France in peace permit  
Our just and lineal entrance to our own;  
If not, bleed France, and peace ascend to heaven,  
Whiles we, God's wrathful agent, do correct  
Their proud contempt that beats His peace to  
heaven.

### **King Philip**

Peace be to England, if that war return  
From France to England, there to live in peace.  
England we love; and for that England's sake  
With burden of our armour here we sweat.  
This toil of ours should be a work of thine;

But thou from loving England art so far,  
That thou hast 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.  
Look here upon thy brother Geffrey's face;  
These eyes, these brows, were moulded out of  
his:

This little abstract doth contain that large  
Which died in Geffrey, and the hand of time  
Shall draw this brief into as huge a volume.  
That Geffrey was thy elder brother born,  
And this his son; England was Geffrey's right  
And this is Geffrey'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,  
Which owe the crown that thou o'ermasterest?

### **King John**

From whom hast thou this great commission,  
France,  
To draw my answer from thy articles?

### **King Philip**

From that supernal judge, that stirs good thoughts  
In any breast of strong authority,  
To look into the blots and stains of right:  
That judge hath made me guardian to this boy:

Under whose warrant I impeach thy wrong  
And by whose help I mean to chastise it.

**King John**

Alack, thou dost usurp authority.

**King Philip**

Excuse; it is to beat usurping down.

**Queen 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**

My bed was ever to thy son as true  
As thine was to thy husband; and this boy  
Liker in feature to his father Geoffrey  
Than thou and John in manners; being as like  
As rain to water, or devil to his dam.  
My boy a bastard! By my soul, I think  
His father never was so true begot:



It cannot be, an if thou wert his mother.

### **Queen Elinor**

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

### **Constance**

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

### **Austria**

Peace!

### **Bastard**

Hear the crier.

### **Austria**

What the devil art thou?

### **Bastard**

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

### **Blanch**

O, well did he become that lion's robe

That did disrobe the lion of that robe!

### **Bastard**

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

### **Austria**

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;  
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;  
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:  
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:  
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,  
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!  
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;  
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.

## **Constance**

I have but this to say,  
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,  
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:  
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  
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.

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  
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:  
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,  
By the compulsion of their ordinance  
By this time from their fixed beds of lime  
Had been dishabited, and wide havoc made  
For bloody power to rush upon your peace.  
But on the sight of us your lawful king,  
Who painfully with much expedient march  
Have brought a 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,  
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,  
Forwearied in this action of swift speed,  
Crave harbourage within your city walls.

### **King Philip**

When I have said, make answer to us both.  
Lo, in this right hand, whose protection  
Is most divinely vow'd upon the right  
Of him it holds, stands young Plantagenet,  
Son to the elder brother of this man,  
And king o'er him and all that he enjoys:  
For this down-trodden equity, we tread  
In warlike march these greens before your town,  
Being no further enemy to you  
Than the constraint of hospitable zeal  
In the relief of this oppressed child  
Religiously provokes. Be pleased then  
To pay that duty which you truly owe  
To 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;  
And with a blessed and unvex'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.  
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.  
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:  
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**

Doth not the crown of England prove the king?  
And if not that, I bring you witnesses,



Twice fifteen thousand hearts of England's  
breed, —

**Bastard**

Bastards, and else.

**King John**

To verify our title with their lives.

**King Philip**

As many and as 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 John**

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