

King John abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 1

Proposal

Situation: With King John telling all that he will come in from the west and destroy the city of Angiers, and Austria (King Philip II's ally) saying he will attack the city from the north, and King Philip saying he will come in from the south, the citizen of Angiers, very worried about the possible destruction of his city, suggests that the "lovely Lady Blanche marry Louis, the Dauphin." The kings and the young prince and princess agree to the suggestion. The city is saved.

CITIZEN: Hear us, great kings. Persevere not, but hear me, mighty kings.

KING JOHN: Speak on with favor. We are bent to hear.

Citizen of Angiers to Kings

Since Spain's lovely Lady Blanche is quite near
To England and the blessed Dauphin here
Is left to be finished by such as she,
And she a fair excellence whose fullness
Of life lies in him, a union should be.
In search of beauty and virtue, witness
She. If you marry these silver currents
The bounding banks shall be you, kings. Events
Being what they are, this union shall do
More than bombarding our fast-closed gates. At
This match we'll open our gates, giving you
Fair entrance. But without this match, know that
Lions are not as confident as we,
Nor as determined, to keep this city.

King Philip and Louis the Dauphin walk aside and talk.

BASTARD ASIDE: Here's a stay that shakes the rotten carcass of old Death out of his rags! He speaks plain cannon fire, and smoke and bounce. He gives the beating with his tongue. Our ears are cudged. Zounds, I was never so bethumped with words since I first called my brother's father dad.

QUEEN ELEANOR ASIDE TO KING JOHN: Son, list to this proposal to unite the Dauphin and Lady Blanche; make the match. Give with our niece a dowry large enough, for by this knot thou shalt so surely tie thy now uncertain assurance to the crown that you green boy shall have no sun to ripe the bloom that promiseth a mighty fruit. I see a yielding in the looks of France. Mark how they whisper.