

King John abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 1

Warning

Situation: The French King Philip, young Arthur, the son of King John's older, deceased brother, Geoffrey, and Arthur's mother, Constance, are together near the gates of Angiers. Chatillion, the French ambassador to England, enters and announces that King John and his entourage are about to arrive. Each king's plan is to attempt to convince the people of Angiers that he is their rightful king.

KING PHILIP: A wonder, lady! Our messenger Chatillion is arrived. What England says say briefly, gentle lord. We coldly pause for thee. Chatillion, speak.

CHATILLION: Turn your forces from this paltry siege and stir them up against a mightier task. England hath put himself in arms. His marches are expedient to this town, his forces strong, his soldiers confident. With him along is come the Mother Queen; with her niece, the Lady Blanche of Spain; with them a bastard of the King's deceased.

Drums sound.

CHATILLION: They are at hand, to parley or to fight, therefore prepare.

KING PHILIP: How much unlooked-for is this expedition.

AUSTRIA: Let them be welcome, then. We are prepared.

King John and his entourage enter.

KING JOHN: Peace be to France, if France in peace permit our just and lineal entrance to our own.

King Philip to King John

Peace be to you, if you return from France
To loving England, there to live by chance
In peace. We love England, but thou hast sought
To place yourself as king, having severed
The sequence of royal succession and brought
Us to this, having openly labored
To deny Arthur. This little abstract,
As the sure hand of time shall draw, doth lack
None of his father's greatness. Since England
Was Geoffrey's right, and this his son, Geoffrey
Being thy elder brother born, which hand
Of God hath anointed thee a king? We
Hear blood beat in these temples we behold
That own the crown that thou doth falsely hold.

KING JOHN: From whom hast thou this great commission, France, to draw my answer from thy articles?

KING PHILIP: That supernal judge hath made me guardian to this boy.

