King John abbreviated

Act 2, Scene 1

Compromise

Situation: With neither king able to convince the people of Angiers with his position, a citizen on the walls of the city proclaims "till you agree whose right is worthiest, we for the worthiest hold the right from both." The Bastard then suggests that the two forces fight it out and let the last man standing, so to speak, win.

BASTARD ASIDE: Ha, majesty! How high thy glory towers when the rich blood of kings is set on fire! Why stand these royal fronts amazed thus? Cry havoc, kings! Back to the stained field. You equal potentates, 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: Who's your king?
CITIZEN: The King of England, when we know the king. A greater power than we denies all this. We do lock our strong-barred gates, until our fears resolved be by some certain king purged and deposed.

Bastard to Kings John and Philip

**By heaven, these wretches of Angiers flout
You, kings, as on their walls they stand about
As in a theater, gaping and pointing
At your scenes and acts of death. For awhile
Be friends, as conjointly you sharply wring
These scoundrels for their contemptuous guile.
That done, dissever your united strengths
And part your mingled flags at distant lengths;
Then turn on each other face to face. In
A moment Lady Fortune shall give us
Her darling, giving him the day and win
Along with the kiss of a glorious
Victory. How sounds this counsel, mighty
Kings? Does it not smack of good policy?**

KING JOHN: I like it well. France, shall we knit our powers and lay this Angiers even with the ground, then after fight who shall be king of it?
BASTARD TO KING PHILIP: An if thou hast the mettle of a king, turn thou the mouth of thy artillery, as we will ours, against these saucy walls. And when that we have dashed them to the ground, why, then, defy each other and pell-mell wreak havoc upon ourselves, for heaven or hell.
KING PHILIP: Let it be so. Say, where will you assault?