

King John abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 4

Persuasion

Situation: A discouraged Dauphin says “Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale.” Pandulph takes him aside and gives him a pep talk, suggesting he attack King John in England.

PANDULPH: Now hear me speak with a prophetic spirit. 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. A scepter snatched with an unruly hand must be as boisterously maintained as gained.

DAUPHIN: Maybe he will not touch young Arthur's life, but hold himself safe in his prisonment.

PANDULPH: How green you are and fresh in this old world! You, in the right of Lady Blanche your wife, may then make all the claim that Arthur did.

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

Pandulph to Dauphin

As John lays plots for you, the times conspire
With you, for he who steeps his peace in fire
And blood finds his peace bloody. The fall of
Arthur, so that John may stand, shall so cool
The hearts of the people that they will love
All steps taken and support any rule
To shorten his reign. Any natural
Occurrence of nature shall portend ill
Upon John. With the bastard offending
The church and charities, his people will
Soon revolt and rush to him offering
Change, no longer willing to remain still.
O, 'tis wonderful what Fortune hath sent;
It's a gift formed out of their discontent.

PANDULPH: For England, go. I will urge on the king.

DAUPHIN: Strong reasons make strange actions. Let us go. If you say ay, the king will not say no.