

Monologue

History of King John

William Shakespeare (Act 5, Scene 2)

Lewis the Dauphin

Your grace shall pardon me, I will not back.

I am too high-born to be propertied,
To be a secondary at control,
Or useful serving-man and instrument,
To any sovereign state throughout the world.

Your breath first kindled the dead coal of wars
Between this chastised kingdom and myself,
And brought in matter that should feed this fire;
And now 'tis far too huge to be blown out
With that same weak wind which enkindled it.

You taught me how to know the face of right,
Acquainted me with interest to this land,
Yea, thrust this enterprise into my heart;
And come ye now to tell me John
hath made His peace with Rome?

What is that peace to me?

I, by the honour of my marriage-bed,
After young Arthur, claim this land for mine;
And, now it is half-conquer'd, must I back
Because that John hath made his peace with Rome?

Am I Rome's slave? What penny hath Rome borne,
What men provided, what munitions sent,
To underprop this action?

Is't not I That undergo this charge? Who else but I,
And such as to my claim are liable,
Sweat in this business and maintain this war?

Have I not heard these islanders shout out 'Vive le roi!'
as I have bank'd their towns?

Have I not here the best cards for the game,
To win this easy match play'd for a crown?

And shall I now give o'er the yielded set?
No, no, on my soul, it never shall be said.