



Hyperion



"Here is my throne,  
bid kings come *bow* to it."

## director's note

I have agonized for quite some time over what to place in this note, and now that I have sat down to write it, I'm still not entirely sure precisely what I am going to say. I understand beginning a letter with an apology is bad taste, but, if I may steal a phrase from a writer I love: "forgive me if my speech is unclear or absurd." And, I request that you read this after watching the production. There are no spoilers here, but still.

King John is not a particularly beloved play; it is not often performed and for perhaps good reason. It lacks the clean coherence of many of Shakespeare's best plays as well as the icon status of his most famous ones. It does, however, speak uniquely to our time. It is a pragmatic work, lacking the moral throughline of many of Shakespeare's other histories, and yet it is initially joyful in the face of conflict.

Our cast and crew, being our age, has grown up in a profoundly confused and conflict-heavy world. We have grown up in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, and, in particular for the Americans in the cast, have never truly known a nation not in some way in armed conflict. In truth, I began to question my insistence on staging this material when, at the beginning of the rehearsal process, we received news of the Russian military's invasion of Ukraine.

And yet, throughout our lives, we have learned to laugh.

If King John is an underappreciated masterpiece (and I do profoundly believe it is), part of that mastery is in this. John, both the play and the character, asks us to laugh and smile in the face of conflict and then, while smiling and laughing, ask ourselves why. It does so many other things, too, but as I fix these last scenes, this particular theme sticks out to me. And I hope it sticks with you as well.

More than anything, this production of King John is a labour of love. This play, even in this rearranged, reconfigured version, asks so much (especially of its actors) and, initially, promises so little. And yet we put it on and, if I may speak for my team, we have found it provides much, just beneath the surface. And we hope you, more than anything, take much from it too.

With love (and haggard breath),

C.J.

## dramaturg's note

King John is probably the least king-centered of all of Shakespeare's histories. Every character has something to lose, something to gain, something to sacrifice, and the politics of their faults and desires are highlighted, underlined, and bolded throughout the play. Each for their own, they tug worriedly at John like a disorganized set of puppeteers all in charge of sharing one doll: in every direction but the right one. They're left to navigate their individual failings and temptings on their own, amongst each other, in the miserable shadows of war and death and desperation. And therein lies the classic Shakespearean question: what do you do when things go wrong? This play is about getting cornered and having your deepest fears realized—that you have nowhere to run.

As Sir Ian McKellen once said, Shakespeare is a party. I did eight years of Shakespeare before I took a break for college, and I cannot be more grateful to our unbelievably talented cast and crew for being the best spirits and teammates, helping me return to learning and loving Shakespeare, and showing me how the Hyperion likes to party. And you, reader, I am grateful to you, too—as this story divides the air upon the stage as it walks across, and you are the air that moves in to fill and feel the spaces where the play has been. Enjoy.

With love, Angie

## synopsis

Named characters in BOLD

**King Richard the Lionheart**, beloved by the people of England, has died, killed by the **Duke of Austria**.

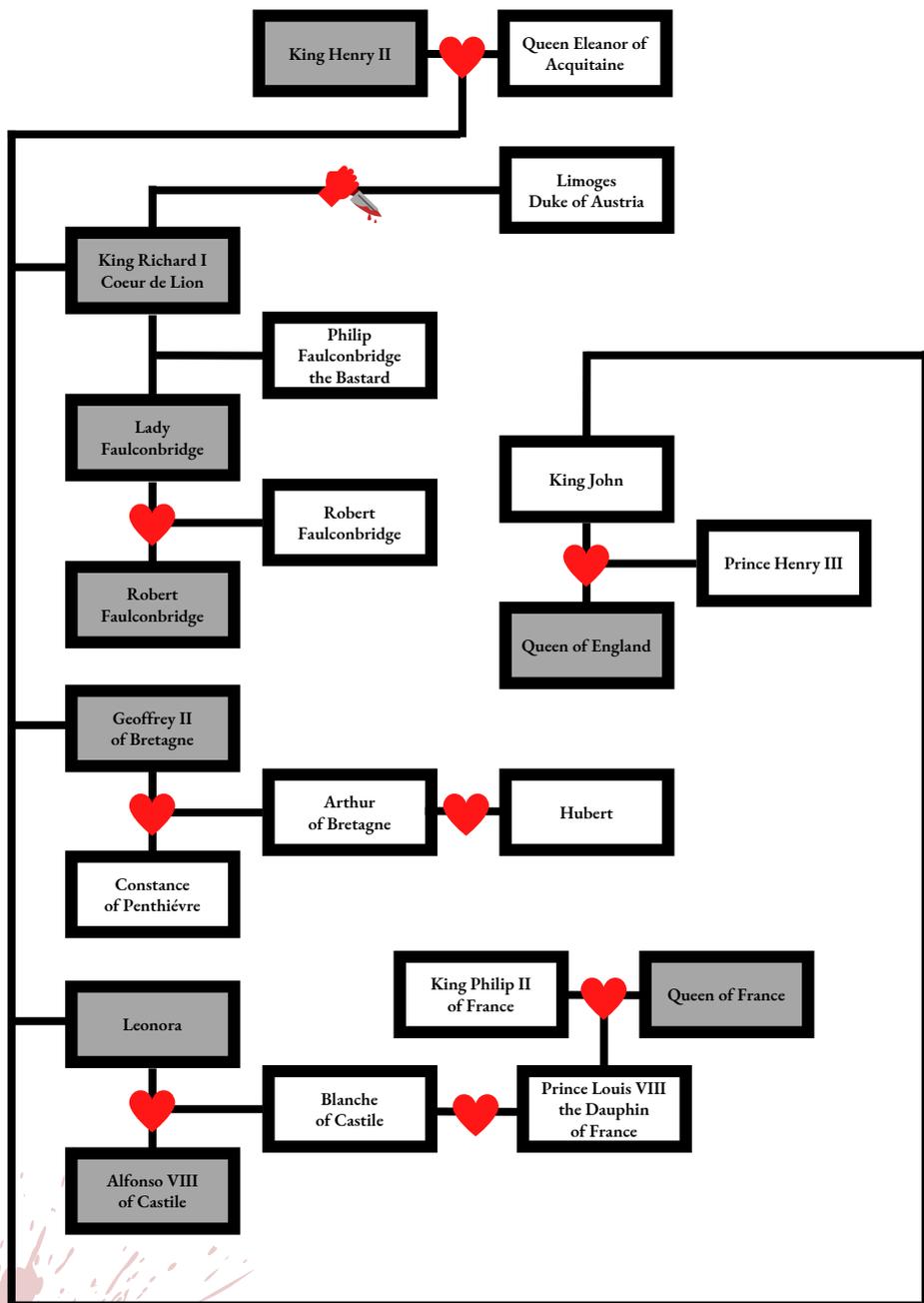
He leaves no legitimate children (only a **Bastard** son), and confusion reigns over who should replace him. Should it be his younger brother, **John**, the Lord of Ireland, or his nephew, **Arthur**, the Duke of Bretagne?

**John**, raised in England and supported by the Queen Mother **Eleanor**, takes the throne first, while **Arthur**, raised in France, receives the support of his mother, the duchess **Constance**, as well as the **King of France** and the **Dauphin**.

The two make shaky alliances. **John** accepts the cautious assistance of his extended family (**Blanche of Spain**) and his brother's earls, those of **Salisbury**, **Pembroke**, **Essex**, **Bigot**, and **Kent** (named **Hubert de Burgh**), while **Arthur** accepts that of the **Duke of Austria**, the very man who killed his uncle.

War is brewing. No one is secure. And so begins the play.

# character tree



## the cast of england (and spain).

Felipe Albors '25

*King John*

Felipe, a first-year in Straus from Puerto Rico, learned this entire play in less than a week as a result of back-to-back residencies with *Into the Woods*, bless his soul—if he howls about golden slippers or a girl in a red riding hood instead of speaking in Shakespearean English, do forgive him.

Caren Koh '24

*Bastard*

Caren, a sophomore in Pfoho from Texas, can confidently assert that if she had a nickel for every time she's yelled at people onstage while a king played by Felipe Albors writhed on the floor, she'd have two nickels, which isn't a lot but it's funny that it's happened twice, right?

Proof Schubert-Reed '25

*Eleanor, Executioner, Melun*

Proof, a first-year in Weld, needs no proof for her incredible acting talent. Bow down, peasant.

Sophia Parker '23

*Blanche, Messenger*

Sophia, a junior in Pfoho from Ohio, has never had coffee before, which immediately makes her better than all of us who were drowning in coffee putting this show together.

Tia Kwonbock '25

*Salisbury, English Herald*

Tia, a first-year in the Inn from Washington, has a lot of allergies but good theater is not one of them. She's excited to be in her first Shakespeare show with such a talented and fun team!

James Farr '25

*King Richard, Hubert, Citizen (Mayor) of Angiers*

James, a first-year in Matthews from the UK, was named after James Bond, but in no way uses his covert spy skills in this play.

# the cast of france, austria, & god knows who else

Isabella Madrigal '24

*Constance, Messenger, Peter of Pomfret*

Isabella, a sophomore in Adams from California, normally doesn't like to crash weddings without her pet Holland Lop bunny, but she'll make an exception solo mission for this play.

Evan Howard '24

*Robert Faulconbridge, Dauphin*

Evan, a sophomore in Dunster from Virginia, is not French but will be proudly demonstrating French supremacy all over the stage.

Samantha Jackson '25

*Essex, King Philip, Executioner, Bigot*

Sam, a first-year in Hollis from New Jersey, plays the violin in her spare time, but plays the King of France even better. She's looking forward to seeing all the hard work come together for the show!

Andrew Spielmann '25

*Arthur, Prince Henry*

Andrew, a first-year in Wigglesworth from not France, is an avid mayonnaise lover who directed, produced and starred in every role of Les Miserables in his shower last Tuesday. The thing in the show he's most excited for is Stephen Langton, chosen Archbishop of Canterbury (cue organ music).

James GaNun '25

*Pembroke, Austria*

James, a first-year in Stoughton from Georgia, swears he has nothing but undying love for this new community of stellar and inspiring actors, directors and managers, and he's definitely not saying this while held at English knifepoint.

Orion Vigil '22

*Chatillon, Pandulph, French Herald*

Orion, a senior in Cabot from New Mexico, is excited for you to witness the dramatic highs and lows of this wacky world we've created.

## the staff

Chinyere J. (C.J.) Obasi '24

*Stage Director*

C.J., a sophomore in Leverett from Nebraska, is excited to help birth this wacky, weird, messy Shakespeare play. He can also literally see the future—go ahead, ask him, it's happened before—so if you don't like the show, he'll probably predict a messed up Jefe's order in your future.

Matthew Given '25

*Assistant Director*

Matt, a first-year in Holworthy from the UK, will make England simultaneously proud by laughing at the French all throughout the show, and disappointed by mimicking ex-Brit Thomas Jefferson in being able to write with both hands at the same time.

Jordan Woods '24

*Stage Manager*

Jordan, a sophomore in Eliot from New York, did so well stage managing this show that he will never stage manage again (love you very much, Jordan).

Angie Shin '23

*General Producer, Dramaturg*

Angie, a junior in Eliot from California, has used her goblin powers to time travel back to Shakespeare's time and curse him to make almost every character in this play call Arthur some variant of "this oppressed boy," and she's damn proud she did it.

Josh Caven '24

*Tech Producer*

Josh, if you're reading this, your family is worried about you, and please come back soon.

Camtastic Parsons Muniz '25 (?)

*Tech Director*

Cam, a first-year in Dudley, just ate a chip off the floor and plans to go to bed tonight in his lover's arms. It's a good day to be a tech director.

## the staff

Madi Fabber '22

*Production Adviser, Choreographer*

Madi, a senior in Winthrop from Tennessee, worked a Renaissance festival in high school and can attest this is nothing like a #renfair.

Azra Haseki '22

*Production Adviser, Hyperion Bench Liaison*

Azra, a sophomore in Cabot from Turkey, is for a fact a fun person, so trust her when she says this show is fun :)

Abe Joyner-Meyers '22

*Production Adviser*

Abe, a senior in Dunster from Maryland, is here to cheer on the French, and thereby make Matt sad.

Nina Ijomanta '24

*Costume Design*

Nina, a sophomore in Lowell from Indiana, is excited to see show-week stress turn into energetic performances!

Alessandro Barbiellini

*Assistant Stage Manager*

Brayden Orpello-McCoy

*Publicity Producer*

Taia Cheng

*Finance Producer*

Eileen Tucci

*Lighting Design*

Katie Catulle

*Assistant Lighting Design*

David Peters

*Sound Design*

Kasia Zarzycka

*Set Design*

Emi Cummings

*Costume Design*

Jeremy Rasmussen

*Props Design*

Ava Baldassari

*Props Design*



## thank you to

William Shakespeare; CJ and Josh for believing in Jordan from the start and for creating this whole through sheer force of talent and will, Matt and Angie for being terrific, the incredible cast for bearing with him, and Cam and Alessandro for being troopers and lifesavers; Josh for his dastardly deeds (it had to be done but... the cost); Jillian and Sebastian for being the best roommates, everyone involved in *The Milk Made*; Sam's family for their support and for making the trip to come see the show; Sophia's mother, father, baby sister, and all her wonderful friends <3; eliott i51 <3 the veritones <3 aawa board <3; Chinyere, Matt, Jordan, Josh, Cam, Angie, and Alessandro, for breathing life into this show and pushing us to tell this story in the fullest way we are capable, my castmates for making me laugh and inspiring me with their energy and focus, Jacob Barandes for creating a physics class that attracts the likes of Chinyere and I, my friends and roommates for supporting me and listening to me while I ran around frantically learning lines and speed-running assignments over the past few weeks; the entire Hyperion bench, for their help with making this show a reality, and a special shout-out to Madi Fabber for being a choreographer/make-up-designer extraordinaire; the cast and staff of *Disonia*, *The Milk Made*, and *King John*; Isabella's friends, family, and holland lop bunny; Ahma & Yeh Yeh, Mama & Henry, Tia's wonderful friends, and everyone who worked so hard to make this show happen; CJ's suitemates for putting up with them, Azra Haseki, and Sage Barnes for getting them into Hyperion, Abe J-M and Madi Fabber for making them stay, Angie Shin, Matt Given, Jordan Woods, Josh Caven, and the entire production team; CJ and the rest of the amazing production team; James Farr's grandma Lela; Felipe's mother and grandmother for coming to see the show, they are fantastic people; Jamie for keeping Hyperion going during covid and making it first home at Harvard; Hyperion Shakespeare Company, for being a home for Abe at Harvard.

Stephen Langton, the Magna Carta, Jada Pinkett Smith, the not-so-citywide mask mandate; the Mother Pheasant Plucker's Wife, those recreant limbs; the King of England (when we know the king), EMS Roombook, Google Calendar, the scary levels of competence of Josh Caven; the Loeb, for being there when my dad wasn't; Matt for always bringing donuts to rehearsal <3; the painter's stretch; Aritzia for creating the SuperPuff and keeping Angie nice and warm on their way to and from the Ex, and also all of her professors whose classes she wholly and completely disregarded during the making of this production, and also Arthur's gay panic; the balcony, El Jefe's Taqueria, GCal, Eleanor of Aquitaine (for making this all possible); Yebba for writing "Louie Bag"; Shakespeare's perfectly-aged unintentional race-based humor; Passio Go for being as functional as Shakespeare's geography; The Bear, Trader Joe's Chianti, Ice Made on Wednesday, Roman-Catholic Julius Caesar.