

**KING STEPHEN: AN
HISTORICAL DRAMA IN SEVEN
TABLEAUX COMPLETED FROM
JOHN KEATS' FRAGMENT**

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King Stephen: An Historical Drama in Seven Tableaux Completed from John Keats' Fragment
by Edward Fales Coward

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WILSON A. BURROWS

80 BROADWAY NEW YORK CITY

MCMXII

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING STEPHEN, son of Adela and the Count of Blois and nephew of the late King Henry I.

DE REDVERS, Earl of Baldwin
SIR RUFUS D'EVREUX
SIR GREGORY DE COURTENAY
GORSE, a soldier.
SHEPHERD, a soldier

} Followers of King Stephen

QUEEN MAUD, wife of Stephen.

ELFRIDA, an attendant.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

PRINCE HENRY, son of Queen Maude and the Duke of Angiers and afterwards King Henry II.

ROBERT, Earl of Gloucester, natural son of the late King Henry I.

EARL OF CHESTER
DE KAIMS
SIR ROLAND DE BURGH
SIR HILDEBRAND D'ARCY
HEATHE, a soldier

} Followers of Queen Maude.

QUEEN MAUDE, better known as Matilda, daughter of the late King Henry I. Twice married, her first husband was the Emperor of Germany. On his death she married the Duke of Angiers.

SCENE—ENGLAND. TIME—1141 TO 1159.

Tableaux I, II, III.	Near Lincoln.
Tableau IV.	Hall in the Castle.
Tableau V.	The Gates of Winchester.
Tableau VI.	Outside Oxford.
Tableau VII.	Hall in the Castle

TABLEAU I

King Stephen

But we must plague him in the flank,—hey, friends?
We are well breathed—follow!

Enter Earl Baldwin and Soldiers, as defeated.

Step. De Redvers!
What is the monstrous bugbear that can fright Baldwin?

Bald. No scarecrow, but the fortunate star
Of boisterous Chester, whose fell truncheon now
Points level to the goal of victory.
This way he comes, and if you would maintain
Your person unaffronted by vile odds,
Take horse, my Lord.

Step. And which way spur for life?
Now I thank heaven I am in the toils,
That soldiers may bear witness how my arm
Can burst the meshes. Not the eagle more
Loves to beat up against a tyrannous blast,
Than I to meet the torrent of my foes.
This is a brag—be 't so,—but if I fall,
Carve it upon my 'scutcheoned sepulchre.
On fellow soldiers! Earl of Redvers, back!
Not twenty Earls of Chester shall browbeat
The diadem. *[Exeunt. Alarum.*

TABLEAU II

Another part of the Field.

*Trumpets sounding a Victory. Enter Gloucester,
Knights, and Forces.*

Glou. Now may we lift our bruised visors up
And take the flattering freshness of the air,
While the wild din of battle dies away
Into times past, yet to be echoed sure
In the silent pages of our chroniclers.

Sir Rol. Will Stephen's death be marked there,
my good Lord,
Or that we give him lodging in yon towers?

Glou. Fain would I know the great usurper's fate.

Enter Sir Hildebrand and Heathe severally.

Sir Hil. My Lord!

Heathe. Most noble Earl!

Sir Hil. The King——

Heathe. The Empress greets——

Glou. What of the King?

Sir Hil. He sole and lone maintains
A hopeless bustle 'mid our swarming arms,
And with a nimble savageness attacks,
Escapes, makes fiercer onset, then anew
Eludes death, giving death to most that dare

TABLEAU II

King Stephen

Trespass within the circuit of his sword!
 He must by this have fallen. Baldwin is taken;
 And for the Duke of Bretagne, like a stag
 He flies, for the Welsh beagles to hunt down.
 God save the Empress!

Glou. Now our dreaded Queen:
 What message from her Highness?

Heathe. Royal Maude
 From the thronged towers of Lincoln hath looked
 down,
 Like Pallas from the walls of Ilion,
 And seen her enemies havocked at her feet.
 She greets most noble Gloucester from her heart,
 Entreating him, his captains, and brave knights,
 To grace a banquet. The high city gates
 Are envious which shall see your triumph pass;
 The streets are full of music.

Enter De Kaims.

Glou. Whence come you?

De K. From Stephen, my good Prince—
 Stephen! Stephen!

Glou. Why do you make such echoing of his name?

De K. Because I think, my Lord, he is no man,
 But a fierce demon, 'nointed safe from wounds,
 And misbaptizèd with a Christian name,

Glou. A mighty soldier!—Does he still hold out?

De K. He shames our victory. His valor still
 Keeps elbow-room amid our eager swords,

King Stephen

TABLEAU II

And holds our bladed falchions all aloof.
His gleaming battle-axe, being slaughter-sick,
Smote on the morion of a Flemish knight,
Broke short in his hand; upon the which he flung
The heft away with such a vengeful force
It paunched the Earl of Chester's horse, who then
Spleen-hearted came in full career at him.

Glow. Did no one take him at a vantage then?

De K. Three then with tiger leap upon him flew,
Whom with his sword, swift drawn and nimbly
held.

He stung away again, and stood to breathe,
Smiling. Anon upon him rushed once more
A throng of foes, and in this renewed strife,
My sword met his and snapped off at the hilt.

Glow. Come, lead me to this man—and let us move
In silence, not insulting his sad doom
With clamorous trumpets. To the Empress bear
My salutation as befits the time.

[Exeunt Gloucester and Forces.]