The problem presented by this text and the discussion it has given rise to are summarised in 

King John concedesthat he will not take a man without judgment, nor accept anything for doing justice and will not do injustice. 

And if my baron or my man should happen to die and his heir is of age, I ought to give him his land at a just relief without taking more. 

And if it be that the heir is under age, I ought to put the land in charge of four knights from among the more lawful men of the fief, and they with my official ought to render to me the revenues of the land without sale of woods and without destroying men be redeemed and without destruction of park and preserve; and then when the heir comes of age I will let him have the land without payment. 

If a woman is heir to the land, I ought to give her in marriage on the advice of her relatives so that she is not disparaged; and if I give her once in marriage I cannot give her again, but she can marry as she pleases, though not to my enemies. 

If my baron or man should happen to die, I grant that his money be divided as he himself willed; and if he dies unexpectedly through arms or unforeseen illness, his wife or children or relatives and close friends shall divide it for the good of his soul. 

And his wife shall not leave the house within forty days and until she has had her proper dower, and she shall have her marriage portion. 

If a woman is heir to the land, I ought to give her in marriage on the advice of her relatives so that she is not disparaged; and if I give her once in marriage I cannot give her again, but she can marry as she pleases, though not to my enemies. 

If my baron or man should happen to die, I grant that his money be divided as he himself willed; and if he dies unexpectedly through arms or unforeseen illness, his wife or children or relatives and close friends shall divide it for the good of his soul. 

And his wife shall not leave the house within forty days and until she has had her proper dower, and she shall have her marriage portion. 

That a widow shall not pay anything to have her dower or marriage portion of herbage and for burning; 

And if any of my men dies in debt to the Jews, the debt shall not bear interest as long as his heir is under age. 

And I grant that a man is not to lose life or limb for a beast. 

1. The articles of the barons, 15 June 1215 

This document "the preliminary draft terms not yet put into charter form. . . the true original of Magna Carta which must have been seen and handled by both parties [at Runnymede]", has been called "the most momentous single document in our history" and its survival, "a miracle" (V. G. Galbraith, Studies in the Public Records, p. 124).

These are the articles which the barons ask for and the lord king grants 

[A]fter the death of their predecessors, heirs who are of full age shall have their inheritance on payment of the old relief, which is to be stated in the charter. 

[B]eauty, and the lord king grants 

[1] King John concedes that he will not take a man without judgment, nor accept anything for doing justice and will not do injustice. 

[2] If a woman is heir to the land, I ought to give her in marriage on the advice of her relatives so that she is not disparaged; and if I give her once in marriage I cannot give her again, but she can marry as she pleases, though not to my enemies. 

[3] If my baron or man should happen to die, I grant that his money be divided as he himself willed; and if he dies unexpectedly through arms or unforeseen illness, his wife or children or relatives and close friends shall divide it for the good of his soul. 

[4] And his wife shall not leave the house within forty days and until she has had her proper dower, and she shall have her marriage portion. 

[5] That a widow shall not pay anything to have her dower or marriage portion after the death of her husband, but shall remain in his house for forty days after his death, and within that term the dower shall be assigned to her; the marriage portion and her inheritance she shall have forthwith. 

[6] If any of my men dies in debt to the Jews, the debt shall not bear interest as long as his heir is under age. 

[7] And I grant that a man is not to lose life or limb for a beast. 

1. private forest, i.e. woodland