

William Shakespeare

The Life of King Henry the Eighth

Dramatis Personæ

KING HENRY THE EIGHTH.

CARDINAL WOLSEY.

CARDINAL CAMPEIUS.

CAPUCIUS , Ambassador from the Emperor
Charles the Fifth.

CRANMER , Archbishop of Canterbury.

DUKE OF NORFOLK.

DUKE OF SUFFOLK.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

EARL OF SURREY.

Lord Chancellor.

Lord Chamberlain.

GARDINER , Bishop of Winchester.

BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

LORD ABERGAVENNY.

LORD SANDS.

SIR THOMAS LOVELL.

SIR HENRY GUILDFORD.

SIR ANTHONY DENNY.

SIR NICHOLAS VAUX.

Secretaries to Wolsey.

CROMWELL , Servant to Wolsey.

GRIFFITH, Gentleman-Usher to Queen Katharine.

Three Gentlemen.

Garter King-at-Arms.

DOCTOR BUTTS, Physician to the King.

Surveyor to the Duke of Buckingham.

BRANDON, and a Sergeant-at-Arms.

Door-keeper of the Council Chamber.

Porter, and his Man.

Page to Gardiner.

A Crier.

QUEEN KATHARINE, Wife to King Henry; afterwards divorced.

ANNE BULLEN, her Maid of Honour; afterwards Queen.

An Old Lady, Friend to Anne Bullen.

PATIENCE, Woman to Queen Katharine.

Several Lords and Ladies in the Dumb Shows; Women attending upon the Queen; Spirits which appear to her; Scribes, Officers, Guards, and other Attendants.

SCENE.-Chiefly in London and Westminster; once, at Kimbolton.

PROLOGUE

I come no more to make you laugh: things now,
That bear a weighty and a serious brow,
Sad, high, and working, full of state and woe,
Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow,
We now present. Those that can pity, here
May, if they think it well, let fall a tear;
The subject will deserve it. Such as give
Their money out of hope they may believe,
May here find truth too. Those that come to see
Only a show or two, and so agree
The play may pass, if they be still and willing,
I'll undertake may see away their shilling
Richly in two short hours. Only they
That come to hear a merry bawdy play,
A noise of targets, or to see a fellow
In a long motley coat guarded with yellow,
Will be deceived; for, gentle hearers, know,
To rank our chosen truth with such a show
As fool and fight is, beside forfeiting
Our own brains, and the opinion that we bring,
To make that only true we now intend,
Will leave us never an understanding friend.
Therefore, for goodness' sake, and as you are known
The first and happiest hearers of the town,
Be sad, as we would make ye: think ye see

The very persons of our noble story
As they were living; think you see them great,
And follow'd with the general throng and sweat
Of thousand friends; then in a moment, see
How soon this mightiness meets misery:
And, if you can be merry then, I'll say
A man may weep upon his wedding-day.

ACT I

SCENE I

London. An ante-chamber in the palace.

*Enter NORFOLK at one door; at the other,
BUCKINGHAM and ABERGAVENNY*

BUCKINGHAM

Good morrow, and well met. How have ye done
Since last we saw in France?

NORFOLK

I thank your grace,
Healthful; and ever since a fresh admirer
Of what I saw there.

BUCKINGHAM

An untimely ague
Stay'd me a prisoner in my chamber when
Those suns of glory, those two lights of men,
Met in the vale of Andren.

NORFOLK

'Twixt Guynes and Arde:
I was then present, saw them salute on horseback;
Beheld them, when they lighted, how they clung
In their embracement, as they grew together;
Which had they, what four throned ones could have
weigh'd
Such a compounded one?

BUCKINGHAM

All the whole time
I was my chamber's prisoner.

NORFOLK

Then you lost
The view of earthly glory: men might say,
Till this time pomp was single, but now married
To one above itself. Each following day

Became the next day's master, till the last
Made former wonders its. To-day the French,
All clinquant, all in gold, like heathen gods,
Shone down the English; and, to-morrow, they
Made Britain India: every man that stood
Show'd like a mine. Their dwarfish pages were
As cherubins, all guilt: the madams too,
Not used to toil, did almost sweat to bear
The pride upon them, that their very labour
Was to them as a painting: now this masque
Was cried incomparable; and the ensuing night
Made it a fool and beggar. The two kings,
Equal in lustre, were now best, now worst,
As presence did present them; him in eye,
Still him in praise: and, being present both
'Twas said they saw but one; and no discerner
Durst wag his tongue in censure. When these suns —
For so they phrase 'em-by their heralds challenged
The noble spirits to arms, they did perform
Beyond thought's compass; that former fabulous
story,
Being now seen possible enough, got credit,
That Bevis was believed.

BUCKINGHAM

O, you go far.

NORFOLK

As I belong to worship and affect
In honour honesty, the tract of every thing
Would by a good discourser lose some life,
Which action's self was tongue to. All was royal;
To the disposing of it nought rebell'd.
Order gave each thing view; the office did
Distinctly his full function.

BUCKINGHAM

Who did guide,
I mean, who set the body and the limbs
Of this great sport together, as you guess?

NORFOLK

One, certes, that promises no element
In such a business.

BUCKINGHAM

I pray you, who, my lord?

NORFOLK

All this was order'd by the good discretion

Of the right reverend Cardinal of York.

BUCKINGHAM

The devil speed him! no man's pie is freed
From his ambitious finger. What had he
To do in these fierce vanities? I wonder
That such a keech can with his very bulk
Take up the rays o' the beneficial sun
And keep it from the earth.

NORFOLK

Surely, sir,
There's in him stuff that puts him to these ends;
For, being not propp'd by ancestry, whose grace
Chalks successors their way, nor call'd upon
For high feats done to the crown; neither allied
For eminent assistants; but, spider-like,
Out of his self-drawing web, he gives us note,
The force of his own merit makes his way
A gift that heaven gives for him, which buys
A place next to the king.

ABERGAVENNY

I cannot tell
What heaven hath given him, — let some graver eye

Pierce into that; but I can see his pride
Peep through each part of him: whence has he that,
If not from hell? the devil is a niggard,
Or has given all before, and he begins
A new hell in himself.

BUCKINGHAM

Why the devil,
Upon this French going out, took he upon him,
Without the privity o' the king, to appoint
Who should attend on him? He makes up the file
Of all the gentry; for the most part such
To whom as great a charge as little honour
He meant to lay upon: and his own letter,
The honourable board of council out,
Must fetch him in the papers.

ABERGAVENNY

I do know
Kinsmen of mine, three at the least, that have
By this so sickened their estates, that never
They shall abound as formerly.

BUCKINGHAM

O, many
Have broke their backs with laying manors on 'em

For this great journey. What did this vanity
But minister communication of
A most poor issue?

NORFOLK

Grievingly I think,
The peace between the French and us not values
The cost that did conclude it.

BUCKINGHAM

Every man,
After the hideous storm that follow'd, was
A thing inspired; and, not consulting, broke
Into a general prophecy; That this tempest,
Dashing the garment of this peace, aboded
The sudden breach on't.

NORFOLK

Which is budded out;
For France hath flaw'd the league, and hath attach'd
Our merchants' goods at Bourdeaux.

ABERGAVENNY

Is it therefore
The ambassador is silenced?

NORFOLK

Marry, is't.

ABERGAVENNY

A proper title of a peace; and purchased
At a superfluous rate!

BUCKINGHAM

Why, all this business
Our reverend cardinal carried.

NORFOLK

Like it your grace,
The state takes notice of the private difference
Betwixt you and the cardinal. I advise you —
And take it from a heart that wishes towards you
Honour and plenteous safety—that you read
The cardinal's malice and his potency
Together; to consider further that
What his high hatred would effect wants not
A minister in his power. You know his nature,
That he's revengeful, and I know his sword
Hath a sharp edge: it's long and, 't may be said,
It reaches far, and where 'twill not extend,

Thither he darts it. Bosom up my counsel,
You'll find it wholesome. Lo, where comes that rock
That I advise your shunning.

*Enter CARDINAL WOLSEY, the purse borne
before him, certain of the Guard, and two Secretaries
with papers. CARDINAL WOLSEY in his passage fixeth
his eye on BUCKINGHAM, and BUCKINGHAM on
him, both full of disdain*

CARDINAL WOLSEY

The Duke of Buckingham's surveyor, ha?
Where's his examination?

First Secretary

Here, so please you.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Is he in person ready?

First Secretary

Ay, please your grace.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Well, we shall then know more; and Buckingham
Shall lessen this big look.

Exeunt CARDINAL WOLSEY and his Train

BUCKINGHAM

This butcher's cur is venom-mouth'd, and I
Have not the power to muzzle him; therefore best
Not wake him in his slumber. A beggar's book
Outworths a noble's blood.

NORFOLK

What, are you chafed?
Ask God for temperance; that's the appliance only
Which your disease requires.

BUCKINGHAM

I read in's looks
Matter against me; and his eye reviled
Me, as his abject object: at this instant
He bores me with some trick: he's gone to the king;
I'll follow and outstare him.

NORFOLK

Stay, my lord,
And let your reason with your choler question
What 'tis you go about: to climb steep hills
Requires slow pace at first: anger is like
A full-hot horse, who being allow'd his way,

Self-mettle tires him. Not a man in England
Can advise me like you: be to yourself
As you would to your friend.

BUCKINGHAM

I'll to the king;
And from a mouth of honour quite cry down
This Ipswich fellow's insolence; or proclaim
There's difference in no persons.

NORFOLK

Be advised;
Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot
That it do singe yourself: we may outrun,
By violent swiftness, that which we run at,
And lose by over-running. Know you not,
The fire that mounts the liquor til run o'er,
In seeming to augment it wastes it? Be advised:
I say again, there is no English soul
More stronger to direct you than yourself,
If with the sap of reason you would quench,
Or but allay, the fire of passion.

BUCKINGHAM

Sir,
I am thankful to you; and I'll go along

By your prescription: but this top-proud fellow,
Whom from the flow of gall I name not but
From sincere motions, by intelligence,
And proofs as clear as founts in July when
We see each grain of gravel, I do know
To be corrupt and treasonous.

NORFOLK

Say not 'treasonous.'

BUCKINGHAM

To the king I'll say't; and make my vouch as strong
As shore of rock. Attend. This holy fox,
Or wolf, or both, — for he is equal ravenous
As he is subtle, and as prone to mischief
As able to perform't; his mind and place
Infecting one another, yea, reciprocally —
Only to show his pomp as well in France
As here at home, suggests the king our master
To this last costly treaty, the interview,
That swallow'd so much treasure, and like a glass
Did break i' the rinsing.

NORFOLK

Faith, and so it did.

BUCKINGHAM

Pray, give me favour, sir. This cunning cardinal
The articles o' the combination drew
As himself pleased; and they were ratified
As he cried 'Thus let be': to as much end
As give a crutch to the dead: but our count-cardinal
Has done this, and 'tis well; for worthy Wolsey,
Who cannot err, he did it. Now this follows, —
Which, as I take it, is a kind of puppy
To the old dam, treason, — Charles the emperor,
Under pretence to see the queen his aunt —
For 'twas indeed his colour, but he came
To whisper Wolsey, — here makes visitation:
His fears were, that the interview betwixt
England and France might, through their amity,
Breed him some prejudice; for from this league
Peep'd harms that menaced him: he privily
Deals with our cardinal; and, as I trow, —
Which I do well; for I am sure the emperor
Paid ere he promised; whereby his suit was granted
Ere it was ask'd; but when the way was made,
And paved with gold, the emperor thus desired,
That he would please to alter the king's course,
And break the foresaid peace. Let the king know,
As soon he shall by me, that thus the cardinal
Does buy and sell his honour as he pleases,
And for his own advantage.

NORFOLK

I am sorry
To hear this of him; and could wish he were
Something mistaken in't.

BUCKINGHAM

No, not a syllable:
I do pronounce him in that very shape
He shall appear in proof.

*Enter BRANDON, a Sergeant-at-arms before
him, and two or three of the Guard*

BRANDON

Your office, sergeant; execute it.

Sergeant

Sir,
My lord the Duke of Buckingham, and Earl
Of Hereford, Stafford, and Northampton, I
Arrest thee of high treason, in the name
Of our most sovereign king.

BUCKINGHAM

Lo, you, my lord,
The net has fall'n upon me! I shall perish
Under device and practise.

BRANDON

I am sorry
To see you ta'en from liberty, to look on
The business present: 'tis his highness' pleasure
You shall to the Tower.

BUCKINGHAM

It will help me nothing
To plead mine innocence; for that dye is on me
Which makes my whitest part black. The will of
heaven
Be done in this and all things! I obey.
O my Lord Abergavenny, fare you well!

BRANDON

Nay, he must bear you company. The king
To ABERGAVENNY
Is pleased you shall to the Tower, till you know
How he determines further.

ABERGAVENNY

As the duke said,
The will of heaven be done, and the king's pleasure
By me obey'd!

BRANDON

Here is a warrant from
The king to attach Lord Montacute; and the bodies
Of the duke's confessor, John de la Car,
One Gilbert Peck, his chancellor —

BUCKINGHAM

So, so;
These are the limbs o' the plot: no more, I hope.

BRANDON

A monk o' the Chartreux.

BUCKINGHAM

O, Nicholas Hopkins?

BRANDON

He.

BUCKINGHAM

My surveyor is false; the o'er-great cardinal
Hath show'd him gold; my life is spann'd already:
I am the shadow of poor Buckingham,

Whose figure even this instant cloud puts on,
By darkening my clear sun. My lord, farewell.

Exeunt

SCENE II

The same. The council-chamber.

*Cornets. Enter KING HENRY VIII, leaning on
CARDINAL WOLSEY's shoulder, the Nobles, and
LOVELL; CARDINAL WOLSEY places himself under
KING HENRY VIII's feet on his right side*

KING HENRY VIII

My life itself, and the best heart of it,
Thanks you for this great care: I stood i' the level
Of a full-charged confederacy, and give thanks
To you that choked it. Let be call'd before us
That gentleman of Buckingham's; in person
I'll hear him his confessions justify;
And point by point the treasons of his master
He shall again relate.

*A noise within, crying 'Room for the Queen!'
Enter QUEEN KATHARINE, ushered by NORFOLK,
and SUFFOLK: she kneels. KING HENRY VIII riseth
from his state, takes her up, kisses and placeth her by*

him

QUEEN KATHARINE

Nay, we must longer kneel: I am a suitor.

KING HENRY VIII

Arise, and take place by us: half your suit
Never name to us; you have half our power:
The other moiety, ere you ask, is given;
Repeat your will and take it.

QUEEN KATHARINE

Thank your majesty.
That you would love yourself, and in that love
Not unconsider'd leave your honour, nor
The dignity of your office, is the point
Of my petition.

KING HENRY VIII

Lady mine, proceed.

QUEEN KATHARINE

I am solicited, not by a few,

And those of true condition, that your subjects
Are in great grievance: there have been commissions
Sent down among 'em, which hath flaw'd the heart
Of all their loyalties: wherein, although,
My good lord cardinal, they vent reproaches
Most bitterly on you, as putter on
Of these exactions, yet the king our master —
Whose honour heaven shield from soil! — even he
escapes not
Language unmannerly, yea, such which breaks
The sides of loyalty, and almost appears
In loud rebellion.

NORFOLK

Not almost appears,
It doth appear; for, upon these taxations,
The clothiers all, not able to maintain
The many to them longing, have put off
The spinsters, carders, fullers, weavers, who,
Unfit for other life, compell'd by hunger
And lack of other means, in desperate manner
Daring the event to the teeth, are all in uproar,
And danger serves among then!

KING HENRY VIII

Taxation!
Wherein? and what taxation? My lord cardinal,

You that are blamed for it alike with us,
Know you of this taxation?

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Please you, sir,
I know but of a single part, in aught
Pertains to the state; and front but in that file
Where others tell steps with me.

QUEEN KATHARINE

No, my lord,
You know no more than others; but you frame
Things that are known alike; which are not
wholesome
To those which would not know them, and yet must
Perforce be their acquaintance. These exactions,
Whereof my sovereign would have note, they are
Most pestilent to the bearing; and, to bear 'em,
The back is sacrifice to the load. They say
They are devised by you; or else you suffer
Too hard an exclamation.

KING HENRY VIII

Still exaction!

The nature of it? in what kind, let's know,

Is this exaction?

QUEEN KATHARINE

I am much too venturous

In tempting of your patience; but am bolden'd

Under your promised pardon. The subjects' grief

Comes through commissions, which compel from
each

The sixth part of his substance, to be levied

Without delay; and the pretence for this

Is named, your wars in France: this makes bold
mouths:

Tongues spit their duties out, and cold hearts freeze

Allegiance in them; their curses now

Live where their prayers did: and it's come to pass,

This tractable obedience is a slave

To each incensed will. I would your highness

Would give it quick consideration, for

There is no primer business.

KING HENRY VIII

By my life,

This is against our pleasure.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

And for me,
I have no further gone in this than by
A single voice; and that not pass'd me but
By learned approbation of the judges. If I am
Traduced by ignorant tongues, which neither know
My faculties nor person, yet will be
The chronicles of my doing, let me say
'Tis but the fate of place, and the rough brake
That virtue must go through. We must not stint
Our necessary actions, in the fear
To cope malicious censurers; which ever,
As ravenous fishes, do a vessel follow
That is new-trimm'd, but benefit no further
Than vainly longing. What we oft do best,
By sick interpreters, once weak ones, is
Not ours, or not allow'd; what worst, as oft,
Hitting a grosser quality, is cried up
For our best act. If we shall stand still,
In fear our motion will be mock'd or carp'd at,
We should take root here where we sit, or sit
State-statues only.

KING HENRY VIII

Things done well,
And with a care, exempt themselves from fear;

Things done without example, in their issue
Are to be fear'd. Have you a precedent
Of this commission? I believe, not any.
We must not rend our subjects from our laws,
And stick them in our will. Sixth part of each?
A trembling contribution! Why, we take
From every tree lop, bark, and part o' the timber;
And, though we leave it with a root, thus hack'd,
The air will drink the sap. To every county
Where this is question'd send our letters, with
Free pardon to each man that has denied
The force of this commission: pray, look to't;
I put it to your care.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

A word with you.

To the Secretary

Let there be letters writ to every shire,
Of the king's grace and pardon. The griev'd commons
Hardly conceive of me; let it be noised
That through our intercession this revokement
And pardon comes: I shall anon advise you
Further in the proceeding.

Exit Secretary

Enter Surveyor

QUEEN KATHARINE

I am sorry that the Duke of Buckingham
Is run in your displeasure.

KING HENRY VIII

It grieves many:
The gentleman is learn'd, and a most rare speaker;
To nature none more bound; his training such,
That he may furnish and instruct great teachers,
And never seek for aid out of himself. Yet see,
When these so noble benefits shall prove
Not well disposed, the mind growing once corrupt,
They turn to vicious forms, ten times more ugly
Than ever they were fair. This man so complete,
Who was enroll'd 'mongst wonders, and when we,
Almost with ravish'd listening, could not find
His hour of speech a minute; he, my lady,
Hath into monstrous habits put the graces
That once were his, and is become as black
As if besmear'd in hell. Sit by us; you shall hear —
This was his gentleman in trust-of him
Things to strike honour sad. Bid him recount
The fore-recited practises; whereof
We cannot feel too little, hear too much.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Stand forth, and with bold spirit relate what you,
Most like a careful subject, have collected
Out of the Duke of Buckingham.

KING HENRY VIII

Speak freely.

Surveyor

First, it was usual with him, every day
It would infect his speech, that if the king
Should without issue die, he'll carry it so
To make the sceptre his: these very words
I've heard him utter to his son-in-law,
Lord Abergavenny; to whom by oath he menaced
Revenge upon the cardinal.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Please your highness, note
This dangerous conception in this point.
Not friended by his wish, to your high person
His will is most malignant; and it stretches
Beyond you, to your friends.

QUEEN KATHARINE

My learn'd lord cardinal,
Deliver all with charity.

KING HENRY VIII

Speak on:
How grounded he his title to the crown,
Upon our fail? to this point hast thou heard him
At any time speak aught?

Surveyor

He was brought to this
By a vain prophecy of Nicholas Hopkins.

KING HENRY VIII

What was that Hopkins?

Surveyor

Sir, a Chartreux friar,
His confessor, who fed him every minute
With words of sovereignty.