

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Ante-chamber to KING HENRY VIII's apartment.

*Enter NORFOLK, SUFFOLK, SURREY, and Chamberlain*

### NORFOLK

If you will now unite in your complaints,  
And force them with a constancy, the cardinal  
Cannot stand under them: if you omit  
The offer of this time, I cannot promise  
But that you shall sustain moe new disgraces,  
With these you bear already.

### SURREY

I am joyful  
To meet the least occasion that may give me  
Remembrance of my father-in-law, the duke,  
To be revenged on him.

### SUFFOLK

Which of the peers  
Have unctem'd gone by him, or at least  
Strangely neglected? when did he regard  
The stamp of nobleness in any person  
Out of himself?

### Chamberlain

My lords, you speak your pleasures:  
What he deserves of you and me I know;  
What we can do to him, though now the time  
Gives way to us, I much fear. If you cannot  
Bar his access to the king, never attempt  
Any thing on him; for he hath a witchcraft  
Over the king in's tongue.

### NORFOLK

O, fear him not;  
His spell in that is out: the king hath found  
Matter against him that for ever mars  
The honey of his language. No, he's settled,  
Not to come off, in his displeasure.

### SURREY

Sir,  
I should be glad to hear such news as this  
Once every hour.

## **NORFOLK**

Believe it, this is true:  
In the divorce his contrary proceedings  
Are all unfolded wherein he appears  
As I would wish mine enemy.

## **SURREY**

How came  
His practises to light?

## **SUFFOLK**

Most strangely.

## **SURREY**

O, how, how?

## **SUFFOLK**

The cardinal's letters to the pope miscarried,  
And came to the eye o' the king: wherein was read,  
How that the cardinal did entreat his holiness  
To stay the judgment o' the divorce; for if  
It did take place, 'I do,' quoth he, 'perceive  
My king is tangled in affection to  
A creature of the queen's, Lady Anne Bullen.'

## **SURREY**

Has the king this?

## **SUFFOLK**

Believe it.

## **SURREY**

Will this work?

## **Chamberlain**

The king in this perceives him, how he coasts  
And hedges his own way. But in this point  
All his tricks founder, and he brings his physic  
After his patient's death: the king already  
Hath married the fair lady.

**SURREY**

Would he had!

**SUFFOLK**

May you be happy in your wish, my lord  
For, I profess, you have it.

**SURREY**

Now, all my joy  
Trace the conjunction!

**SUFFOLK**

My amen to't!

**NORFOLK**

All men's!

**SUFFOLK**

There's order given for her coronation:  
Marry, this is yet but young, and may be left  
To some ears unrecounted. But, my lords,  
She is a gallant creature, and complete  
In mind and feature: I persuade me, from her  
Will fall some blessing to this land, which shall  
In it be memorised.

**SURREY**

But, will the king  
Digest this letter of the cardinal's?  
The Lord forbid!

**NORFOLK**

Marry, amen!

**SUFFOLK**

No, no;  
There be moe wasps that buzz about his nose  
Will make this sting the sooner. Cardinal Campeius  
Is stol'n away to Rome; hath ta'en no leave;  
Has left the cause o' the king unhandled; and  
Is posted, as the agent of our cardinal,  
To second all his plot. I do assure you  
The king cried Ha! at this.

## **Chamberlain**

Now, God incense him,  
And let him cry Ha! louder!

## **NORFOLK**

But, my lord,  
When returns Cranmer?

## **SUFFOLK**

He is return'd in his opinions; which  
Have satisfied the king for his divorce,  
Together with all famous colleges  
Almost in Christendom: shortly, I believe,  
His second marriage shall be publish'd, and  
Her coronation. Katharine no more  
Shall be call'd queen, but princess dowager  
And widow to Prince Arthur.

## **NORFOLK**

This same Cranmer's  
A worthy fellow, and hath ta'en much pain  
In the king's business.

## **SUFFOLK**

He has; and we shall see him  
For it an archbishop.

## **NORFOLK**

So I hear.

## **SUFFOLK**

'Tis so.  
The cardinal!

*Enter CARDINAL WOLSEY and CROMWELL*

## **NORFOLK**

Observe, observe, he's moody.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

The packet, Cromwell.  
Gave't you the king?

## **CROMWELL**

To his own hand, in's bedchamber.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Look'd he o' the inside of the paper?

## **CROMWELL**

Presently  
He did unseal them: and the first he view'd,  
He did it with a serious mind; a heed  
Was in his countenance. You he bade  
Attend him here this morning.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Is he ready  
To come abroad?

## **CROMWELL**

I think, by this he is.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Leave me awhile.

*Exit CROMWELL*

*Aside*

It shall be to the Duchess of Alencon,  
The French king's sister: he shall marry her.  
Anne Bullen! No; I'll no Anne Bullens for him:  
There's more in't than fair visage. Bullen!  
No, we'll no Bullens. Speedily I wish  
To hear from Rome. The Marchioness of Pembroke!

## **NORFOLK**

He's discontented.

## **SUFFOLK**

May be, he hears the king  
Does whet his anger to him.

## **SURREY**

Sharp enough,  
Lord, for thy justice!

## CARDINAL WOLSEY

[Aside] The late queen's gentlewoman,  
a knight's daughter,  
To be her mistress' mistress! the queen's queen!  
This candle burns not clear: 'tis I must snuff it;  
Then out it goes. What though I know her virtuous  
And well deserving? yet I know her for  
A spleeny Lutheran; and not wholesome to  
Our cause, that she should lie i' the bosom of  
Our hard-ruled king. Again, there is sprung up  
An heretic, an arch one, Cranmer; one  
Hath crawl'd into the favour of the king,  
And is his oracle.

## NORFOLK

He is vex'd at something.

## SURREY

I would 'twere something that would fret the string,  
The master-cord on's heart!

*Enter KING HENRY VIII, reading of a schedule, and LOVELL*

## SUFFOLK

The king, the king!

## KING HENRY VIII

What piles of wealth hath he accumulated  
To his own portion! and what expense by the hour  
Seems to flow from him! How, i' the name of thrift,  
Does he rake this together! Now, my lords,  
Saw you the cardinal?

## NORFOLK

My lord, we have  
Stood here observing him: some strange commotion  
Is in his brain: he bites his lip, and starts;  
Stops on a sudden, looks upon the ground,  
Then lays his finger on his temple, straight  
Springs out into fast gait; then stops again,  
Strikes his breast hard, and anon he casts  
His eye against the moon: in most strange postures  
We have seen him set himself.

## KING HENRY VIII

It may well be;

There is a mutiny in's mind. This morning  
Papers of state he sent me to peruse,  
As I required: and wot you what I found  
There,--on my conscience, put unwittingly?  
Forsooth, an inventory, thus importing;  
The several parcels of his plate, his treasure,  
Rich stuffs, and ornaments of household; which  
I find at such proud rate, that it out-speaks  
Possession of a subject.

## **NORFOLK**

It's heaven's will:  
Some spirit put this paper in the packet,  
To bless your eye withal.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

If we did think  
His contemplation were above the earth,  
And fix'd on spiritual object, he should still  
Dwell in his musings: but I am afraid  
His thinkings are below the moon, not worth  
His serious considering.

*King HENRY VIII takes his seat; whispers LOVELL, who goes to CARDINAL WOLSEY*

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Heaven forgive me!  
Ever God bless your highness!

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Good my lord,  
You are full of heavenly stuff, and bear the inventory  
Of your best graces in your mind; the which  
You were now running o'er: you have scarce time  
To steal from spiritual leisure a brief span  
To keep your earthly audit: sure, in that  
I deem you an ill husband, and am glad  
To have you therein my companion.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Sir,  
For holy offices I have a time; a time  
To think upon the part of business which  
I bear i' the state; and nature does require  
Her times of preservation, which perforce  
I, her frail son, amongst my brethren mortal,  
Must give my tendence to.

**KING HENRY VIII**

You have said well.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

And ever may your highness yoke together,  
As I will lend you cause, my doing well  
With my well saying!

**KING HENRY VIII**

'Tis well said again;  
And 'tis a kind of good deed to say well:  
And yet words are no deeds. My father loved you:  
His said he did; and with his deed did crown  
His word upon you. Since I had my office,  
I have kept you next my heart; have not alone  
Employ'd you where high profits might come home,  
But pared my present havings, to bestow  
My bounties upon you.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

[Aside] What should this mean?

**SURREY**

[Aside] The Lord increase this business!

**KING HENRY VIII**

Have I not made you,  
The prime man of the state? I pray you, tell me,  
If what I now pronounce you have found true:  
And, if you may confess it, say withal,  
If you are bound to us or no. What say you?

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

My sovereign, I confess your royal graces,  
Shower'd on me daily, have been more than could  
My studied purposes requite; which went  
Beyond all man's endeavours: my endeavours  
Have ever come too short of my desires,  
Yet filed with my abilities: mine own ends  
Have been mine so that evermore they pointed  
To the good of your most sacred person and  
The profit of the state. For your great graces  
Heap'd upon me, poor undeserver, I  
Can nothing render but allegiant thanks,  
My prayers to heaven for you, my loyalty,  
Which ever has and ever shall be growing,



Till death, that winter, kill it.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Fairly answer'd;  
A loyal and obedient subject is  
Therein illustrated: the honour of it  
Does pay the act of it; as, i' the contrary,  
The foulness is the punishment. I presume  
That, as my hand has open'd bounty to you,  
My heart dropp'd love, my power rain'd honour, more  
On you than any; so your hand and heart,  
Your brain, and every function of your power,  
Should, notwithstanding that your bond of duty,  
As 'twere in love's particular, be more  
To me, your friend, than any.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

I do profess  
That for your highness' good I ever labour'd  
More than mine own; that am, have, and will be--  
Though all the world should crack their duty to you,  
And throw it from their soul; though perils did  
Abound, as thick as thought could make 'em, and  
Appear in forms more horrid,--yet my duty,  
As doth a rock against the chiding flood,  
Should the approach of this wild river break,  
And stand unshaken yours.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

'Tis nobly spoken:  
Take notice, lords, he has a loyal breast,  
For you have seen him open't. Read o'er this;

*Giving him papers*

And after, this: and then to breakfast with  
What appetite you have.

*Exit KING HENRY VIII, frowning upon CARDINAL WOLSEY: the Nobles throng after him, smiling and whispering*

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

What should this mean?  
What sudden anger's this? how have I reap'd it?  
He parted frowning from me, as if ruin  
Leap'd from his eyes: so looks the chafed lion  
Upon the daring huntsman that has gall'd him;  
Then makes him nothing. I must read this paper;  
I fear, the story of his anger. 'Tis so;

This paper has undone me: 'tis the account  
Of all that world of wealth I have drawn together  
For mine own ends; indeed, to gain the popedom,  
And fee my friends in Rome. O negligence!  
Fit for a fool to fall by: what cross devil  
Made me put this main secret in the packet  
I sent the king? Is there no way to cure this?  
No new device to beat this from his brains?  
I know 'twill stir him strongly; yet I know  
A way, if it take right, in spite of fortune  
Will bring me off again. What's this? 'To the Pope!  
The letter, as I live, with all the business  
I writ to's holiness. Nay then, farewell!  
I have touch'd the highest point of all my greatness;  
And, from that full meridian of my glory,  
I haste now to my setting: I shall fall  
Like a bright exhalation in the evening,  
And no man see me more.

*Re-enter to CARDINAL WOLSEY, NORFOLK and SUFFOLK, SURREY, and the Chamberlain*

## **NORFOLK**

Hear the king's pleasure, cardinal: who commands you  
To render up the great seal presently  
Into our hands; and to confine yourself  
To Asher House, my Lord of Winchester's,  
Till you hear further from his highness.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Stay:  
Where's your commission, lords? words cannot carry  
Authority so weighty.

## **SUFFOLK**

Who dare cross 'em,  
Bearing the king's will from his mouth expressly?

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Till I find more than will or words to do it,  
I mean your malice, know, officious lords,  
I dare and must deny it. Now I feel  
Of what coarse metal ye are moulded, envy:  
How eagerly ye follow my disgraces,  
As if it fed ye! and how sleek and wanton  
Ye appear in every thing may bring my ruin!  
Follow your envious courses, men of malice;  
You have Christian warrant for 'em, and, no doubt,  
In time will find their fit rewards. That seal,  
You ask with such a violence, the king,

Mine and your master, with his own hand gave me;  
Bade me enjoy it, with the place and honours,  
During my life; and, to confirm his goodness,  
Tied it by letters-patents: now, who'll take it?

**SURREY**

The king, that gave it.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

It must be himself, then.

**SURREY**

Thou art a proud traitor, priest.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Proud lord, thou liest:  
Within these forty hours Surrey durst better  
Have burnt that tongue than said so.

**SURREY**

Thy ambition,  
Thou scarlet sin, robb'd this bewailing land  
Of noble Buckingham, my father-in-law:  
The heads of all thy brother cardinals,  
With thee and all thy best parts bound together,  
Weigh'd not a hair of his. Plague of your policy!  
You sent me deputy for Ireland;  
Far from his succor, from the king, from all  
That might have mercy on the fault thou gavest him;  
Whilst your great goodness, out of holy pity,  
Absolved him with an axe.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

This, and all else  
This talking lord can lay upon my credit,  
I answer is most false. The duke by law  
Found his deserts: how innocent I was  
From any private malice in his end,  
His noble jury and foul cause can witness.  
If I loved many words, lord, I should tell you  
You have as little honesty as honour,  
That in the way of loyalty and truth  
Toward the king, my ever royal master,  
Dare mate a sounder man than Surrey can be,  
And all that love his follies.

**SURREY**

By my soul,  
Your long coat, priest, protects you; thou  
shouldst feel  
My sword i' the life-blood of thee else. My lords,  
Can ye endure to hear this arrogance?  
And from this fellow? if we live thus tamely,  
To be thus jaded by a piece of scarlet,  
Farewell nobility; let his grace go forward,  
And dare us with his cap like larks.

### **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

All goodness  
Is poison to thy stomach.

### **SURREY**

Yes, that goodness  
Of gleaning all the land's wealth into one,  
Into your own hands, cardinal, by extortion;  
The goodness of your intercepted packets  
You writ to the pope against the king: your goodness,  
Since you provoke me, shall be most notorious.  
My Lord of Norfolk, as you are truly noble,  
As you respect the common good, the state  
Of our despised nobility, our issues,  
Who, if he live, will scarce be gentlemen,  
Produce the grand sum of his sins, the articles  
Collected from his life. I'll startle you  
Worse than the scaring bell, when the brown wench  
Lay kissing in your arms, lord cardinal.

### **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

How much, methinks, I could despise this man,  
But that I am bound in charity against it!

### **NORFOLK**

Those articles, my lord, are in the king's hand:  
But, thus much, they are foul ones.

### **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

So much fairer  
And spotless shall mine innocence arise,  
When the king knows my truth.

### **SURREY**

This cannot save you:  
I thank my memory, I yet remember  
Some of these articles; and out they shall.

Now, if you can blush and cry 'guilty,' cardinal,  
You'll show a little honesty.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Speak on, sir;  
I dare your worst objections: if I blush,  
It is to see a nobleman want manners.

## **SURREY**

I had rather want those than my head. Have at you!  
First, that, without the king's assent or knowledge,  
You wrought to be a legate; by which power  
You maim'd the jurisdiction of all bishops.

## **NORFOLK**

Then, that in all you writ to Rome, or else  
To foreign princes, 'Ego et Rex meus'  
Was still inscribed; in which you brought the king  
To be your servant.

## **SUFFOLK**

Then that, without the knowledge  
Either of king or council, when you went  
Ambassador to the emperor, you made bold  
To carry into Flanders the great seal.

## **SURREY**

Item, you sent a large commission  
To Gregory de Cassado, to conclude,  
Without the king's will or the state's allowance,  
A league between his highness and Ferrara.

## **SUFFOLK**

That, out of mere ambition, you have caused  
Your holy hat to be stamp'd on the king's coin.

## **SURREY**

Then that you have sent innumerable substance--  
By what means got, I leave to your own conscience--  
To furnish Rome, and to prepare the ways  
You have for dignities; to the mere undoing  
Of all the kingdom. Many more there are;  
Which, since they are of you, and odious,  
I will not taint my mouth with.

## **Chamberlain**

O my lord,  
Press not a falling man too far! 'tis virtue:  
His faults lie open to the laws; let them,  
Not you, correct him. My heart weeps to see him  
So little of his great self.

## **SURREY**

I forgive him.

## **SUFFOLK**

Lord cardinal, the king's further pleasure is,  
Because all those things you have done of late,  
By your power legatine, within this kingdom,  
Fall into the compass of a praemunire,  
That therefore such a writ be sued against you;  
To forfeit all your goods, lands, tenements,  
Chattels, and whatsoever, and to be  
Out of the king's protection. This is my charge.

## **NORFOLK**

And so we'll leave you to your meditations  
How to live better. For your stubborn answer  
About the giving back the great seal to us,  
The king shall know it, and, no doubt, shall thank you.  
So fare you well, my little good lord cardinal.

*Exeunt all but CARDINAL WOLSEY*

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

So farewell to the little good you bear me.  
Farewell! a long farewell, to all my greatness!  
This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hopes; to-morrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;  
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,  
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,  
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventured,  
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,  
This many summers in a sea of glory,  
But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride  
At length broke under me and now has left me,  
Weary and old with service, to the mercy  
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.  
Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye:  
I feel my heart new open'd. O, how wretched  
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours!  
There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,

That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,  
More pangs and fears than wars or women have:  
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,  
Never to hope again.

*Enter CROMWELL, and stands amazed*

Why, how now, Cromwell!

**CROMWELL**

I have no power to speak, sir.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

What, amazed  
At my misfortunes? can thy spirit wonder  
A great man should decline? Nay, an you weep,  
I am fall'n indeed.

**CROMWELL**

How does your grace?

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Why, well;  
Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell.  
I know myself now; and I feel within me  
A peace above all earthly dignities,  
A still and quiet conscience. The king has cured me,  
I humbly thank his grace; and from these shoulders,  
These ruin'd pillars, out of pity, taken  
A load would sink a navy, too much honour:  
O, 'tis a burthen, Cromwell, 'tis a burthen  
Too heavy for a man that hopes for heaven!

**CROMWELL**

I am glad your grace has made that right use of it.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

I hope I have: I am able now, methinks,  
Out of a fortitude of soul I feel,  
To endure more miseries and greater far  
Than my weak-hearted enemies dare offer.  
What news abroad?

**CROMWELL**

The heaviest and the worst  
Is your displeasure with the king.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

God bless him!

## **CROMWELL**

The next is, that Sir Thomas More is chosen  
Lord chancellor in your place.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

That's somewhat sudden:  
But he's a learned man. May he continue  
Long in his highness' favour, and do justice  
For truth's sake and his conscience; that his bones,  
When he has run his course and sleeps in blessings,  
May have a tomb of orphans' tears wept on em! What more?

## **CROMWELL**

That Cranmer is return'd with welcome,  
Install'd lord archbishop of Canterbury.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

That's news indeed.

## **CROMWELL**

Last, that the Lady Anne,  
Whom the king hath in secrecy long married,  
This day was view'd in open as his queen,  
Going to chapel; and the voice is now  
Only about her coronation.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

There was the weight that pull'd me down. O Cromwell,  
The king has gone beyond me: all my glories  
In that one woman I have lost for ever:  
No sun shall ever usher forth mine honours,  
Or gild again the noble troops that waited  
Upon my smiles. Go, get thee from me, Cromwell;  
I am a poor fall'n man, unworthy now  
To be thy lord and master: seek the king;  
That sun, I pray, may never set! I have told him  
What and how true thou art: he will advance thee;  
Some little memory of me will stir him--  
I know his noble nature--not to let  
Thy hopeful service perish too: good Cromwell,  
Neglect him not; make use now, and provide  
For thine own future safety.



## **CROMWELL**

O my lord,  
Must I, then, leave you? must I needs forego  
So good, so noble and so true a master?  
Bear witness, all that have not hearts of iron,  
With what a sorrow Cromwell leaves his lord.  
The king shall have my service: but my prayers  
For ever and for ever shall be yours.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Cromwell, I did not think to shed a tear  
In all my miseries; but thou hast forced me,  
Out of thy honest truth, to play the woman.  
Let's dry our eyes: and thus far hear me, Cromwell;  
And, when I am forgotten, as I shall be,  
And sleep in dull cold marble, where no mention  
Of me more must be heard of, say, I taught thee,  
Say, Wolsey, that once trod the ways of glory,  
And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour,  
Found thee a way, out of his wreck, to rise in;  
A sure and safe one, though thy master miss'd it.  
Mark but my fall, and that that ruin'd me.  
Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition:  
By that sin fell the angels; how can man, then,  
The image of his Maker, hope to win by it?  
Love thyself last: cherish those hearts that hate thee;  
Corruption wins not more than honesty.  
Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,  
To silence envious tongues. Be just, and fear not:  
Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,  
Thy God's, and truth's; then if thou fall'st,  
O Cromwell,  
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr! Serve the king;  
And,--prithce, lead me in:  
There take an inventory of all I have,  
To the last penny; 'tis the king's: my robe,  
And my integrity to heaven, is all  
I dare now call mine own. O Cromwell, Cromwell!  
Had I but served my God with half the zeal  
I served my king, he would not in mine age  
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

## **CROMWELL**

Good sir, have patience.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

So I have. Farewell  
The hopes of court! my hopes in heaven do dwell.

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)