

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

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## SCENE II. Kimbolton.

*Enter KATHARINE, Dowager, sick; led between GRIFFITH, her gentleman usher, and PATIENCE, her woman*

### GRIFFITH

How does your grace?

### KATHARINE

O Griffith, sick to death!  
My legs, like loaden branches, bow to the earth,  
Willing to leave their burthen. Reach a chair:  
So; now, methinks, I feel a little ease.  
Didst thou not tell me, Griffith, as thou led'st me,  
That the great child of honour, Cardinal Wolsey, Was dead?

### GRIFFITH

Yes, madam; but I think your grace,  
Out of the pain you suffer'd, gave no ear to't.

### KATHARINE

Prithee, good Griffith, tell me how he died:  
If well, he stepp'd before me, happily  
For my example.

### GRIFFITH

Well, the voice goes, madam:  
For after the stout Earl Northumberland  
Arrested him at York, and brought him forward,  
As a man sorely tainted, to his answer,  
He fell sick suddenly, and grew so ill  
He could not sit his mule.

### KATHARINE

Alas, poor man!

### GRIFFITH

At last, with easy roads, he came to Leicester,  
Lodged in the abbey; where the reverend abbot,  
With all his covent, honourably received him;

To whom he gave these words, 'O, father abbot,  
An old man, broken with the storms of state,  
Is come to lay his weary bones among ye;  
Give him a little earth for charity!"  
So went to bed; where eagerly his sickness  
Pursued him still: and, three nights after this,  
About the hour of eight, which he himself  
Foretold should be his last, full of repentance,  
Continual meditations, tears, and sorrows,  
He gave his honours to the world again,  
His blessed part to heaven, and slept in peace.

## **KATHARINE**

So may he rest; his faults lie gently on him!  
Yet thus far, Griffith, give me leave to speak him,  
And yet with charity. He was a man  
Of an unbounded stomach, ever ranking  
Himself with princes; one that, by suggestion,  
Tied all the kingdom: simony was fair-play;  
His own opinion was his law: i' the presence  
He would say untruths; and be ever double  
Both in his words and meaning: he was never,  
But where he meant to ruin, pitiful:  
His promises were, as he then was, mighty;  
But his performance, as he is now, nothing:  
Of his own body he was ill, and gave  
The clergy in example.

## **GRIFFITH**

Noble madam,  
Men's evil manners live in brass; their virtues  
We write in water. May it please your highness  
To hear me speak his good now?

## **KATHARINE**

Yes, good Griffith;  
I were malicious else.

## **GRIFFITH**

This cardinal,  
Though from an humble stock, undoubtedly  
Was fashion'd to much honour from his cradle.  
He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one;  
Exceeding wise, fair-spoken, and persuading:  
Lofty and sour to them that loved him not;  
But to those men that sought him sweet as summer.  
And though he were unsatisfied in getting,  
Which was a sin, yet in bestowing, madam,  
He was most princely: ever witness for him

Those twins Of learning that he raised in you,  
Ipswich and Oxford! one of which fell with him,  
Unwilling to outlive the good that did it;  
The other, though unfinish'd, yet so famous,  
So excellent in art, and still so rising,  
That Christendom shall ever speak his virtue.  
His overthrow heap'd happiness upon him;  
For then, and not till then, he felt himself,  
And found the blessedness of being little:  
And, to add greater honours to his age  
Than man could give him, he died fearing God.

## **KATHARINE**

After my death I wish no other herald,  
No other speaker of my living actions,  
To keep mine honour from corruption,  
But such an honest chronicler as Griffith.  
Whom I most hated living, thou hast made me,  
With thy religious truth and modesty,  
Now in his ashes honour: peace be with him!  
Patience, be near me still; and set me lower:  
I have not long to trouble thee. Good Griffith,  
Cause the musicians play me that sad note  
I named my knell, whilst I sit meditating  
On that celestial harmony I go to.

*Sad and solemn music*

## **GRIFFITH**

She is asleep: good wench, let's sit down quiet,  
For fear we wake her: softly, gentle Patience.

*The vision. Enter, solemnly tripping one after another, six personages, clad in white robes, wearing on their heads garlands of bays, and golden vizards on their faces; branches of bays or palm in their hands. They first congee unto her, then dance; and, at certain changes, the first two hold a spare garland over her head; at which the other four make reverent curtsies; then the two that held the garland deliver the same to the other next two, who observe the same order in their changes, and holding the garland over her head: which done, they deliver the same garland to the last two, who likewise observe the same order: at which, as it were by inspiration, she makes in her sleep signs of rejoicing, and holdeth up her hands to heaven: and so in their dancing vanish, carrying the garland with them. The music continues*

## **KATHARINE**

Spirits of peace, where are ye? are ye all gone,  
And leave me here in wretchedness behind ye?

## **GRIFFITH**

Madam, we are here.

## **KATHARINE**

It is not you I call for:  
Saw ye none enter since I slept?

**GRIFFITH**

None, madam.

**KATHARINE**

No? Saw you not, even now, a blessed troop  
Invite me to a banquet; whose bright faces  
Cast thousand beams upon me, like the sun?  
They promised me eternal happiness;  
And brought me garlands, Griffith, which I feel  
I am not worthy yet to wear: I shall, assuredly.

**GRIFFITH**

I am most joyful, madam, such good dreams  
Possess your fancy.

**KATHARINE**

Bid the music leave,  
They are harsh and heavy to me.

*Music ceases*

**PATIENCE**

Do you note  
How much her grace is alter'd on the sudden?  
How long her face is drawn? how pale she looks,  
And of an earthy cold? Mark her eyes!

**GRIFFITH**

She is going, wench: pray, pray.

**PATIENCE**

Heaven comfort her!

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

An't like your grace,--

**KATHARINE**

You are a saucy fellow:  
Deserve we no more reverence?

## **GRIFFITH**

You are to blame,  
Knowing she will not lose her wonted greatness,  
To use so rude behavior; go to, kneel.

## **Messenger**

I humbly do entreat your highness' pardon;  
My haste made me unmannerly. There is staying  
A gentleman, sent from the king, to see you.

## **KATHARINE**

Admit him entrance, Griffith: but this fellow  
Let me ne'er see again.

*Exeunt GRIFFITH and Messenger*

*Re-enter GRIFFITH, with CAPUCIUS*

If my sight fail not,  
You should be lord ambassador from the emperor,  
My royal nephew, and your name Capucius.

## **CAPUCIUS**

Madam, the same; your servant.

## **KATHARINE**

O, my lord,  
The times and titles now are alter'd strangely  
With me since first you knew me. But, I pray you,  
What is your pleasure with me?

## **CAPUCIUS**

Noble lady,  
First mine own service to your grace; the next,  
The king's request that I would visit you;  
Who grieves much for your weakness, and by me  
Sends you his princely commendations,  
And heartily entreats you take good comfort.

## **KATHARINE**

O my good lord, that comfort comes too late;  
'Tis like a pardon after execution:  
That gentle physic, given in time, had cured me;  
But now I am past an comforts here, but prayers.  
How does his highness?

## CAPUCIUS

Madam, in good health.

## KATHARINE

So may he ever do! and ever flourish,  
When I shal I dwell with worms, and my poor name  
Banish'd the kingdom! Patience, is that letter,  
I caused you write, yet sent away?

## PATIENCE

No, madam.

*Giving it to KATHARINE*

## KATHARINE

Sir, I most humbly pray you to deliver  
This to my lord the king.

## CAPUCIUS

Most willing, madam.

## KATHARINE

In which I have commended to his goodness  
The model of our chaste loves, his young daughter;  
The dews of heaven fall thick in blessings on her!  
Beseeching him to give her virtuous breeding--  
She is young, and of a noble modest nature,  
I hope she will deserve well,--and a little  
To love her for her mother's sake, that loved him,  
Heaven knows how dearly. My next poor petition  
Is, that his noble grace would have some pity  
Upon my wretched women, that so long  
Have follow'd both my fortunes faithfully:  
Of which there is not one, I dare avow,  
And now I should not lie, but will deserve  
For virtue and true beauty of the soul,  
For honesty and decent carriage,  
A right good husband, let him be a noble  
And, sure, those men are happy that shall have 'em.  
The last is, for my men; they are the poorest,  
But poverty could never draw 'em from me;  
That they may have their wages duly paid 'em,  
And something over to remember me by:  
If heaven had pleased to have given me longer life  
And able means, we had not parted thus.  
These are the whole contents: and, good my lord,

By that you love the dearest in this world,  
As you wish Christian peace to souls departed,  
Stand these poor people's friend, and urge the king  
To do me this last right.

## **CAPUCIUS**

By heaven, I will,  
Or let me lose the fashion of a man!

## **KATHARINE**

I thank you, honest lord. Remember me  
In all humility unto his highness:  
Say his long trouble now is passing  
Out of this world; tell him, in death I bless'd him,  
For so I will. Mine eyes grow dim. Farewell,  
My lord. Griffith, farewell. Nay, Patience,  
You must not leave me yet: I must to bed;  
Call in more women. When I am dead, good wench,  
Let me be used with honour: strew me over  
With maiden flowers, that all the world may know  
I was a chaste wife to my grave: embalm me,  
Then lay me forth: although unqueen'd, yet like  
A queen, and daughter to a king, inter me.  
I can no more.

*Exeunt, leading KATHARINE*

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