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William Shakespeare

Excerpt

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KING HENRY THE EIGHTH

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The scene: London, Westminster, Kimbolton

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

KING HENRY *the Eighth*
CARDINAL WOLSEY
CARDINAL CAMPEIUS
CAPUCIUS, *Ambassador from the Emperor Charles V*
CRANMER, *Archbishop of Canterbury*
DUKE OF NORFOLK
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM
DUKE OF SUFFOLK
EARL OF SURREY
Lord Chamberlain
Lord Chancellor
GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester*
Bishop of Lincoln
LORD ABERGAVENNY
LORD SANDS
SIR HENRY GUILDFORD
SIR THOMAS LOVELL
SIR ANTHONY DENNY
SIR NICHOLAS VAUX
Secretaries to Wolsey
CROMWELL, *Servant to Wolsey*
GRIFFITH, *Gentleman-usher to Queen Katharine*
Three Gentlemen
DOCTOR BUTTS, *Physician to the King*
Garret King-at-Arms
Surveyor to the Duke of Buckingham
BRANDON, *and a Sergeant-at-Arms*
Door-keeper of the Council-chamber
Page to Gardiner. A Crier
Porter and his Man at the gate of the Palace
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, Scribes, Officers, Guards, and other Attendants, Spirits

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[More information](#)

THE FAMOUS HISTORY OF
THE LIFE OF
KING HENRY THE
EIGHTH

The 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 10
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 20
To make that only true we now intend,
Will leave us never an understanding friend.
Therefore, for goodness' sake, and as you are known

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 Excerpt
[More information](#)

4

HENRY VIII

Prol. 24

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 followed with the general throng and sweat
 Of thousand friends; then, in a moment, see
 30 How soon this mightiness meets misery.
 And if you can be merry then, I'll say
 A man may weep upon his wedding-day.

[1. 1.] *London. An ante-chamber in the palace*

'Enter the DUKE OF NORFOLK at one door; at the other
 the DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM and the LORD ABERGA-
 VENNY'

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
 Stayed 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
 10 In their embracement, as they grew together;
 Which had they, what four throned ones could
 have weighed
 Such a compounded one?

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

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[More information](#)

I. I. 13

HENRY VIII

5

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 20
 Made Britain India: every man that stood
 Showed like a mine. Their dwarfish pages were
 As cherubins, all gilt; 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 th'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 30
 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 40
 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.

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[More information](#)

6

HENRY VIII

I. I. 45

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?

50 *Norfolk.* All this was ord'ed 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'th'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 propped by ancestry, whose grace
60 Chalks successors their way, nor called upon
For high feats done to th'crown, neither allied
To eminent assistants, but spider-like,
Out of his self-drawing web, 'a 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?

70 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,

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[More information](#)

I. I. 73

HENRY VIII

7

Upon this French going out, took he upon him,
 Without the privity o'th'king, t'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 he papers.

Abergavenny. I do know 80
 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, 90
 After the hideous storm that followed, 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 flawed the league, and hath attached
 Our merchants' goods at Bordeaux.

Abergavenny. Is it therefore
 Th'ambassador is silenced?

Norfolk. Marry, is't.

Abergavenny. A proper title of a peace, and purchased
 At a superfluous rate!

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[More information](#)

8

HENRY VIII

I. I. 99

Buckingham. Why, all this business
100 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
110 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. The CARDINAL in his passage fixeth his eye on BUCKINGHAM, and BUCKINGHAM on him, both full of disdain'

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

First Secretary. Here, so please you.

Wolsey. Is he in person ready?

First Secretary. Ay, please your grace.

Wolsey. Well, we shall then know more;
and Buckingham

Shall lessen this big look. [*Wolsey 'and his Train' go*

120 *Buckingham.* This butcher's cur is venom'd-mouthed,
and I

Have not the power to muzzle him; therefore best
Not wake him in his slumber. A beggar's book

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I. I. 123

HENRY VIII

9

Outworths a noble's blood.

Norfolk. What, are you chafed?
Ask God for temperance; that's th'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 th'king;
I'll follow and outstare him.

Norfolk. Stay, my lord,
And let your reason with your choler question 130
What 'tis you go about. To climb steep hills
Requires slow pace at first. Anger is like
A full hot horse, who being allowed 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 140
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 till't 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 150

H. VIII - 4

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[More information](#)

10

HENRY VIII

I. I. 151

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 th'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

160 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, th'interview,
That swallowed so much treasure, and like a glass
Did break i'th'wrenching.

Norfolk. Faith, and so it did.

Buckingham. Pray give me favour, sir. This
cunning cardinal

The articles o'th'combination drew

170 As himself pleased; and they were ratified
As he cried 'Thus let be', to as much end
As give a crutch to th'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 th'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;

180 His fears were that the interview betwixt