

All Is True

5.2

*Enter [pursuivants, pages, footboys, and grooms.
Then enter] Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury*

CRANMER

I hope I am not too late, and yet the gentleman
That was sent to me from the council prayed me
To make great haste. All fast? What means this?
(Calling at the door) Ho!
Who waits there?

Enter a Doorkeeper

Sure you know me?

DOORKEEPER

Yes, my lord,

But yet I cannot help you.

CRANMER

Why?

5

[Enter Doctor Butts, passing over the stage]

DOORKEEPER

Your grace must wait till you be called for.

CRANMER

So.

BUTTS *(aside)*

This is a piece of malice. I am glad
I came this way so happily. The King
Shall understand it presently.

Exit

CRANMER *(aside)* 'Tis Butts,

The King's physician. As he passed along 10

How earnestly he cast his eyes upon me!

Pray heaven he found not my disgrace. For certain

This is of purpose laid by some that hate me±±

God turn their hearts, I never sought their malice±±

To quench mine honour. They would shame to make me 15

Wait else at door, a fellow Councillor,

'Mong boys, grooms, and lackeys. But their pleasures

Must be fulfilled, and I attend with patience.

*Enter King Henry and Doctor Butts at a window,
above*

BUTTS

I'll show your grace the strangest sight±±

KING HENRY

What's that, Butts?

BUTTS

I think your highness saw this many a day. 20

KING HENRY

Body o'me, where is it?

BUTTS (*pointing at Cranmer, below*) There, my lord.

The high promotion of his grace of Canterbury,
Who holds his state at door, 'mongst pursuivants,
Pages, and footboys.

KING HENRY Ha? 'Tis he indeed.

Is this the honour they do one another? 25

'Tis well there's one above 'em yet. I had thought

They had parted so much honesty among 'em±±

At least good manners±±as not thus to suffer

A man of his place and so near our favour

To dance attendance on their lordships' pleasures, 30

And at the door, too, like a post with packets!

By holy Mary, Butts, there's knavery!

Let 'em alone, and draw the curtain close.

We shall hear more anon.

[Cranmer and the doorkeeper stand to one side.

Exeunt the lackeys]

Above, Butts [partly] draws the curtain close.

*Below, a council table is brought in along with
chairs and stools, and placed under the cloth of state.*

*Enter the Lord Chancellor, who places himself at the
upper end of the table, on the left hand, leaving a
seat void above him at the table's head as for
Canterbury's seat. The Duke of Suffolk, the Duke of
Norfolk, the Earl of Surrey, the Lord Chamberlain,
and Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester, seat themselves
in order on each side of the table. Cromwell sits at the
lower end, and acts as secretary*

LORD CHANCELLOR (*to Cromwell*)

Speak to the business, master secretary. 35

Why are we met in council?

CROMWELL

Please your honours,

The chief cause concerns his grace of Canterbury.

GARDINER

Has he had knowledge of it?

CROMWELL

Yes.

NORFOLK *(to the Doorkeeper)*

Who waits there?

DOORKEEPER *[coming forward]*

Without, my noble lords?

GARDINER

Yes.

DOORKEEPER

My lord Archbishop;

And has done half an hour, to know your pleasures. 40

LORD CHANCELLOR

Let him come in.

DOORKEEPER *(to Cranmer)*

Your grace may enter now.

Cranmer approaches the Council table

LORD CHANCELLOR

My good lord Archbishop, I'm very sorry

To sit here at this present and behold

That chair stand empty, but we all are men

In our own natures frail, and capable

45

Of our flesh; few are angels; out of which frailty

And want of wisdom, you, that best should teach us,

Have misdemeaned yourself, and not a little,

Toward the King first, then his laws, in filling

The whole realm, by your teaching and your chaplains'±± 50

For so we are informed±±with new opinions,

Diverse and dangerous, which are heresies,

And, not reformed, may prove pernicious.

GARDINER

Which reformation must be sudden too,

My noble lords; for those that tame wild horses

55

Pace 'em not in their hands to make 'em gentle,

But stop their mouths with stubborn bits and spur 'em

Till they obey the mane. Age. If we suffer,

Out of our easiness and childish pity

To one man's honour, this contagious sickness,

60

Farewell all physic±±and what follows then?

Commotions, uproars±±with a general taint

Of the whole state, as of late days our neighbours,

The upper Germany, can dearly witness,

Yet freshly pitied in our memories.

65

CRANMER

My good lords, hitherto in all the progress
Both of my life and office, I have laboured,
And with no little study, that my teaching
And the strong course of my authority
Might go one way, and safely; and the end 70
Was ever to do well. Nor is there living±±
I speak it with a single heart, my lords±±
A man that more detests, more stirs against,
Both in his private conscience and his place,
Defacers of a public peace than I do. 75
Pray heaven the King may never find a heart
With less allegiance in it. Men that make
Envy and crooked malice nourishment
Dare bite the best. I do beseech your lordships
That, in this case of justice, my accusers, 80
Be what they will, may stand forth face to face,
And freely urge against me.

SUFFOLK Nay, my lord,
That cannot be. You are a Councillor,
And by that virtue no man dare accuse you.

GARDINER *(to Cranmer)*
My lord, because we have business of more moment, 85
We will be short with you. 'Tis his highness' pleasure
And our consent, for better trial of you,
From hence you be committed to the Tower
Where, being but a private man again,
You shall know many dare accuse you boldly, 90
More than, I fear, you are provided for.

CRANMER
Ah, my good lord of Winchester, I thank you.
You are always my good friend. If your will pass,
I shall both find your lordship judge and juror,
You are so merciful. I see your end±± 95
'Tis my undoing. Love and meekness, lord,
Become a churchman better than ambition.
Win straying souls with modesty again;
Cast none away. That I shall clear myself,
Lay all the weight ye can upon my patience, 100
I make as little doubt as you do conscience
In doing daily wrongs. I could say more,

But reverence to your calling makes me modest.

GARDINER

My lord, my lord±±you are a sectary,
That's the plain truth. Your painted gloss discovers, 105
To men that understand you, words and weakness.

CROMWELL (to Gardiner)

My lord of Winchester, you're a little,
By your good favour, too sharp. Men so noble,
However faulty, yet should find respect
For what they have been. 'Tis a cruelty 110
To load a falling man.

GARDINER Good master secretary,
I cry your honour mercy. You may worst
Of all this table say so.

CROMWELL Why, my lord?

GARDINER

Do not I know you for a favourer
Of this new sect? Ye are not sound.

CROMWELL

Not sound?

115

GARDINER

Not sound, I say.

CROMWELL Would you were half so honest!
Men's prayers then would seek you, not their fears.

GARDINER

I shall remember this bold language.

CROMWELL

Do.

Remember your bold life, too.

LORD CHANCELLOR

This is too much.

Forbear, for shame, my lords.

GARDINER

I have done.

CROMWELL

And I.

120

LORD CHANCELLOR (to Cranmer)

Then thus for you, my lord. It stands agreed,
I take it, by all voices, that forthwith
You be conveyed to th' Tower a prisoner,
There to remain till the King's further pleasure
Be known unto us. Are you all agreed, lords? 125

ALL THE COUNCIL

We are.

CRANMER Is there no other way of mercy,
But I must needs to th' Tower, my lords?

GARDINER What other
Would you expect? You are strangely troublesome.
Let some o'th' guard be ready there.
Enter the guard

CRANMER For me?
Must I go like a traitor thither?

GARDINER *(to the guard)* Receive him, 130
And see him safe i'th' Tower.

CRANMER Stay, good my lords.
I have a little yet to say. Look there, my lords±±
He shows the King's ring

By virtue of that ring I take my cause
Out of the grips of cruel men, and give it
To a most noble judge, the King my master. 135

LORD CHAMBERLAIN
This is the King's ring.

SURREY 'Tis no counterfeit.

SUFFOLK
'Tis the right ring, by heav'n. I told ye all
When we first put this dangerous stone a-rolling
'Twould fall upon ourselves.

NORFOLK Do you think, my lords,
The King will suffer but the little finger 140
Of this man to be vexed?

LORD CHAMBERLAIN 'Tis now too certain.
How much more is his life in value with him!
Would I were fairly out on't.

[Exit King with Butts above]

CROMWELL My mind gave me,
In seeking tales and informations
Against this man, whose honesty the devil 145
And his disciples only envy at,
Ye blew the fire that burns ye. Now have at ye!
*Enter, below, King Henry frowning on them. He
takes his seat*

GARDINER
Dread sovereign, how much are we bound to heaven

In daily thanks, that gave us such a prince,
Not only good and wise, but most religious. 150
One that in all obedience makes the church
The chief aim of his honour, and, to strengthen
That holy duty, out of dear respect,
His royal self in judgement comes to hear
The cause betwixt her and this great offender. 155

KING HENRY

You were ever good at sudden commendations,
Bishop of Winchester. But know I come not
To hear such flattery now; and in my presence
They are too thin and base to hide offences.
To me you cannot reach. You play the spaniel, 160
And think with wagging of your tongue to win me.
But whatsoe'er thou tak'st me for, I'm sure
Thou hast a cruel nature and a bloody.
(*To Cranmer*) Good man, sit down.

Cranmer takes his seat at the head of the Council table

Now let me see the proudest,
He that dares most, but wag his finger at thee. 165
By all that's holy, he had better starve
Than but once think this place becomes thee not.

SURREY

May it please your grace±±

KING HENRY

No, sir, it does not please me!

I had thought I had had men of some understanding
And wisdom of my Council, but I find none. 170
Was it discretion, lords, to let this man,
This good man±±few of you deserve that title±±
This honest man, wait like a lousy footboy
At chamber door? And one as great as you are?
Why, what a shame was this! Did my commission 175
Bid ye so far forget yourselves? I gave ye
Power as he was a Councillor to try him,
Not as a groom. There's some of ye, I see,
More out of malice than integrity,
Would try him to the utmost, had ye mean; 180
Which ye shall never have while I live.

LORD CHANCELLOR

Thus far,

My most dread sovereign, may it like your grace
To let my tongue excuse all. What was purposed
Concerning his imprisonment was rather±±
If there be faith in men±±meant for his trial 185
And fair purgation to the world than malice,
I'm sure, in me.

KING HENRY Well, well, my lords±±respect him.
Take him and use him well, he's worthy of it.
I will say thus much for him±±if a prince
May be beholden to a subject, I 190
Am for his love and service so to him.
Make me no more ado, but all embrace him.
Be friends, for shame, my lords. (*To Cranmer*) My lord
of Canterbury,
I have a suit which you must not deny me:
That is a fair young maid that yet wants baptism±± 195
You must be godfather, and answer for her.

CRANMER
The greatest monarch now alive may glory
In such an honour; how may I deserve it,
That am a poor and humble subject to you?

KING HENRY Come, come, my lord±±you'd spare your 200
spoons. You shall have two noble partners with you±±
the old Duchess of Norfolk and Lady Marquis Dorset.
Will these please you?
(*To Gardiner*) Once more, my lord of Winchester, I
charge you
Embrace and love this man.

GARDINER With a true heart 205
And brother-love I do it.

[*Gardiner and Cranmer embrace*]

CRANMER (*weeping*) And let heaven
Witness how dear I hold this confirmation.

KING HENRY
Good man, those joyful tears show thy true heart.
The common voice, I see, is verified
Of thee which says thus, 'Do my lord of Canterbury 210
A shrewd turn, and he's your friend for ever.'
Come, lords, we trifle time away. I long
To have this young one made a Christian.

As I have made ye one, lords, one remain±±
So I grow stronger, you more honour gain.

Exeunt

215