

All Is True

4.2

[Three chairs.] Enter Katherine Dowager, sick, led between Griffith her gentleman usher, and Patience her woman

GRIFFITH

How does your grace?

KATHERINE O Griffith, sick to death.

My legs, like loaden branches, bow to th' earth,
Willing to leave their burden. Reach a chair.

A chair is brought to her. She sits

So now, methinks, I feel a little ease.

Didst thou not tell me, Griffith, as thou led'st me, 5
That the great child of honour, Cardinal Wolsey,
Was dead?

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

KATHERINE

Prithee, good Griffith, tell me how he died. 10
If well, he stepped 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 15
He could not sit his mule.

KATHERINE Alas, poor man.

GRIFFITH

At last, with easy roads, he came to Leicester,
Lodged in the abbey, where the reverend abbot,
With all his convent, honourably received him,
To whom he gave these words: 'O father abbot, 20
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, 25

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 blesse^d part to heaven, and slept in peace. 30

KATHERINE

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 35
Tied all the kingdom. Simony was fair play.
His own opinion was his law. I'th' 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. 40
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 ill example.

GRIFFITH

Noble madam,
Men's evil manners live in brass, their virtues 45
We write in water. May it please your highness
To hear me speak his good now?

KATHERINE

Yes, good Griffith,
I were malicious else.

GRIFFITH

This cardinal,
Though from an humble stock, undoubtedly
Was fashioned to much honour. From his cradle 50
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^{±±} 55
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; 60
The other, though unfinished, yet so famous,

So excellent in art, and still so rising,
That Christendom shall ever speak his virtue.
His overthrow heaped happiness upon him,
For then, and not till then, he felt himself, 65
And found the blessedness of being little.
And to add greater honours to his age
Than man could give him, he died fearing God.

KATHERINE

After my death I wish no other herald,
No other speaker of my living actions 70
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. 75
(To her woman) 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. 80

Sad and solemn music. Katherine sleeps

GRIFFITH (to the woman)

She is asleep. Good wench, let's sit down quiet
For fear we wake her. Softly, gentle Patience.

*They sit
the vision*

*Enter, solemnly tripping one after another, six
personages clad in white robes, wearing on their
heads garlands of bays, and golden visors on their
faces. They carry branches of bays or palm in their
hands. They first congregate unto Katherine, 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

KATHERINE *(waking)*

Spirits of peace, where are ye? Are ye all gone,
And leave me here in wretchedness behind ye?
Griffith and Patience rise and come forward

GRIFFITH

Madam, we are here.

KATHERINE It is not you I call for. 85

Saw ye none enter since I slept?

GRIFFITH None, madam.

KATHERINE

No? Saw you not even now a blesseÁd troop
Invite me to a banquet, whose bright faces
Cast thousand beams upon me, like the sun?
They promised me eternal happiness, 90
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.

KATHERINE Bid the music leave. 95

They are harsh and heavy to me.

Music ceases

PATIENCE *(to Griffith)* Do you note
How much her grace is altered on the sudden?
How long her face is drawn? How pale she looks,
And of an earthy colour? Mark her eyes?

GRIFFITH

She is going, wench. Pray, pray.

PATIENCE Heaven comfort her. 100

Enter a Messenger

MESSENGER *(to Katherine)*

An't like your grace±±

KATHERINE You are a saucy fellow±±

Deserve we no more reverence?

GRIFFITH *(to the Messenger)* You are to blame,

Knowing she will not lose her wonted greatness,
To use so rude behaviour. Go to, kneel.

MESSENGER (*kneeling before Katherine*)

I humbly do entreat your highness' pardon. 105
My haste made me unmannerly. There is staying
A gentleman sent from the King to see you.

KATHERINE

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

Exit Messenger

Enter Lord Caputius [ushered by Griffith]

If my sight fail not,

You should be lord ambassador from the Emperor, 110
My royal nephew, and your name Caputius.

CAPUTIUS

Madam, the same, [*bowing*] your servant.

KATHERINE

O, my lord,

The times and titles now are altered strangely
With me since first you knew me. But I pray you,
What is your pleasure with me?

CAPUTIUS

Noble lady, 115

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. 120

KATHERINE

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 all comforts here but prayers.
How does his highness?

CAPUTIUS

Madam, in good health. 125

KATHERINE

So may he ever do, and ever flourish
When I shall dwell with worms, and my poor name
Banished the kingdom. (*To her woman*) Patience, is
that letter
I caused you write yet sent away?

PATIENCE

No, madam.

KATHERINE (to Caputius)

Sir, I most humbly pray you to deliver
This to my lord the King. 130

The letter is given to Caputius

CAPUTIUS

Most willing, madam.

KATHERINE

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. 135
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 140
Upon my wretched women, that so long
Have followed 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, 145
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±± 150
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, 155
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 rite.

CAPUTIUS

By heaven I will,

Or let me lose the fashion of a man. 160

KATHERINE

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 blessed him,
For so I will. Mine eyes grow dim. Farewell, 165
My lord. Griffith, farewell.

(To her woman) 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 170
I was a chaste wife to my grave. Embalm me,
Then lay me forth. Although unqueened, yet like
A queen and daughter to a king inter me.
I can no more.

*Exeunt [Caputius and Griffith at one door;
Patience] leading Katherine [at another]*