

Henry VIII abbreviated

Act 3, Scene 2

Pleading

Situation: Wolsey is now aware that the king has seen his “packet,” the letter he had sent to the pope. Cardinal Wolsey knows his future has dimmed. He says to himself “the late queen’s gentlewoman, a knight’s daughter, to be her mistress’ mistress,” and “there’s more in ‘t than a beautiful face.” Knowing the end is near, Cardinal Wolsey greets the king, saying “Heaven forgive me.”

WOLSEY: I will lend you cause, my doing well with my well saying.

KING: ‘Tis well said again, and yet words are no deeds. My father loved you. Since I had my office I have kept you next my heart.

WOLSEY ASIDE: What should this mean?

KING: Have I not made you the prime man of the state? I pray you tell me if you are bound to us or no. What say you?

Wolsey to Henry VIII, No. 2

**My sovereign, your royal graces that you would
Shower on me have been more than I could
Return, my efforts ever short of my
Desires, yet lined with my abilities,
Evermore pointed to th’ good of thy
Sacred person and the profit of these
Lands. For your great graces heaped upon me,
I can only render thanks, and shall be
Most allegiant; one whose loyalty should
Grow evermore till death doth kill it. I
Do profess that for your Highness’ good
I have labored more than for my own. My
Duty, as doth a defending rock when
A chiding river floods, stands unshaken.**

KING: Fairly answered. A loyal and obedient subject is therein illustrated. I pressure that, as my hand has opened bounty to you, my heart dropped love, my power rained honor, more on you than any, so your hand and heart, your brain, and every function of your power should be more to me, your friend, than any.

He hands Wolsey papers.

KING: Read o’er this, and then to breakfast with what appetite you have.