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A Man for All Seasons

By Robert Bolt

CREDITS OVER:

1 CLOSE UP INSERT

A massive white hand with a bishop's ring on it, extending from a scarlet satin sleeve, scribbles ferociously the last line of a letter; signs: "Wolsey. Ebor."

The quill is thrown down, the letter shoved away.

2 INT WOLSEY'S STUDY

The red satin figure of WOLSEY, seated. A huge man of say sixty, the heavy face contemptuous, intellectual, corrupt. He broods at CROMWELL, his Secretary, a younger man with a subtle, serious, very vital face whose movements express energy perfectly controlled as he folds the letter, carefully drips melted wax on it, offers it to WOLSEY who seizes a heavy seal and:

3 CLOSE UP INT.

Smashes it onto the wax, leaving there the Cardinal's coat-of-arms.

4 INT. HAMPTON DOOR & LONG GALLERY

Letter changes hands from CROMWELL to GENTLEMAN USHER at door of long gallery. USHER walks down gallery. PETITIONERS of every rank rise expectantly, fall back resignedly when they see who it is. He hands letter to MESSENGER in outdoor clothes.

5 INT. HAMPTON STAIRS

MESSENGER descending stairs encounters no-one.

6 EXT. HAMPTON COURTYARD

MESSENGER emerges from door to a courtyard of Hampton. Sunset; the brick walls crimson, the windows flashing bloodily. PANNING, we follow him towards black archway of main entrance. He passes through beneath the massive Royal Coat of Arms.

7 EXT. RIVERSIDE WITH GATE

At the riverside, wrought iron gate in foreground, we see him descend. steps to six-oared longboat. A litter.. of hire boats. nearby. He sits, letter prominent, nods. The rowers heave, longboat moves.

8 EXT. RIVER

LONG SHOT Longboat on the flaming river.

9 EXT. RIVER

LONG SHOT Longboat approaching, the riverbank different, the river silvery, the sky drained of light.

10 EXT. RIVER

MESSENGER looks up, checks his letter, grunts to STROKE ROWER who glances over shoulder at:

11 EXT. LONG SHOT RIVER

MORE's Chelsea House approaching, a few lights, faint music mingled with the lapping water.

12 EXT. MORE'S HOUSE

STEWARD comes to garden door of MORE's house to meet MESSENGER approaching. Doesn't budge when they meet. MESSENGER relinquishes letter to STEWARD who turns on his heel and importantly enters house.

13 INT. MORE'S HOUSE CORRIDOR

Inside, enters corridor, approaching door from behind which, laughter.

FINAL CREDIT 14 INT MORE'S HOUSE CORRIDOR

CLOSE SHOT STEWARD glances up and down the corridor, attempts to see what may be in the letter. His manner shows this to be mere impertinent curiosity, not espionage. He can make nothing of it so:

15 INT. MORE'S GREAT HALL

Enters. Clears his throat and signals to someone off scene. With him we see:

15a THE MORE FAMILY, RELATIVES and GUESTS, mostly young. Some are scholars, some are courtiers. ALICE, florid, coarse, splendidly strong and MARGARET, graceful, fine-faced, ardent and another GIRL sew at a half-completed tapestry spread across their knees, baskets of coloured silk at their feet. A pot of crystallized ginger is next to ALICE. YOUNG MEN sit in chairs, on the floor, some drinking wine.

NORFOLK, hard-faced aristocratic, brutal and frank, leans against the fireplace with one foot rested on the belly of an ancient dog. Another old dog is in evidence. On a table, four or five lutes and viols carelessly put down after familiar use—also books. In the background one YOUNG MAN is playing chess with a GIRL, while another GIRL is looking on. They are oblivious of the group at the fireplace A SERVANT is taking the leavings of a meal from the dining table. MORE, in the centre of the group, sees STEWARD. He rises quietly and approaches, his attention still on the conversation.

SCHOLAR:

NORFOLK:

SCHOLAR:

COURTIER:

MORE smiles, approaching into TWO SHOT with STEWARD. Behind him, a burst of laughter MORE takes the letter. Registers that it has been tampered with and murmurs:

MORE:

STEWARD flickers but recovers.

STEWARD:

MORE:

He opens letter and turns away, reading

15b MEDIUM SHOT The group, laughter petering out. looks up with mild enquiry as MORE rejoins them, but doesn't sit. The opened letter is in his hand.

MORE:

NORFOLK:

MORE:

NORFOLK:

MORE:

ALICE:

MORE:

Saying which, he folds the letter and carefully puts it in the fire.

MARGARET, watching:

MARGARET:

ALICE:

MORE, straightening from the fire.

MORE:

NORFOLK grunts.

NORFOLK:

you all come running, day or night. What is the man? A butcher's son!

MORE:

MARGARET:

RICH's voice is heard interrupting on SOUND.

RICH:

RICH, a poorly dressed scholar with a head of golden hair, sensitive features and an expression of habitual strain has half-risen, overeager, from the embrasure where he sits apart.

RICH:

NORFOLK stares, then turns away without response. RICH falters vaguely
Into the silence:

RICH:

NORFOLK:

which we hear on SOUND over) A butcher's son, and looks it.

MORE:

Appreciative snort from young Courtier.

MORE:

Richard?

RICH, crouched in his embrasure looks up with flashing smile of gratitude.

RICH:

ALICE:

a member of the King's High Council, not an errand boy!

MORE:

called.

NORFOLK looks affronted for a second, then grunts.

NORFOLK:

Laughter. ALICE has risen. MORE kisses her.

MORE:

Kisses MARGARET, says:

MORE:

As a matter of routine, as cleaning their teeth, they put their hands
together, shut their eyes, their GUESTS rising as a matter of everyday
politeness, and:

MORE FAMILY:

wakeful, cheerful, careful only for our soul's salvation. For Christ's
sake, Amen.

ALICE and MARGARET have done, but:

MORE:

ALICE AND MARGARET, hastily:

ALICE AND:

MARGARET:

NORFOLK:

MORE:

But NORFOLK takes him by the elbow, escorting him to the door, held wide by STEWARD. Confidential warning:

NORFOLK:

MORE looks at him gravely but impassively. NORFOLK looks over his shoulder and sees: RICH, following, arrested by NORFOLK's glance, stops, stranded, hovering ridiculously. NORFOLK, frowning:

NORFOLK:

MORE:

NORFOLK:

MORE:

you give him a position?

NORFOLK:

MORE thinks, hesitates, thinks again, and:

MORE:

He passes from frame. NORFOLK stares after:

RICH gives him an ingratiating nervous bob and hurries after:

16 EXT. MORE'S GARDEN AND STEPS DUSK

MORE emerging from house into the now almost dark garden where STEWARD passes him on to waiting MESSENGER. RICH emerges, TRACKING SHOT, RICH at MORE's elbow.

RICH:

MORE:

RICH:

MORE:

RICH stops, MORE turns. RICH not only indignant but sincerely hurt.

MORE:

RICH:

MORE, gently, but with a saving impatience; indicating the letter he still carries:

MORE:

RICH watches him follow the MESSENGER to the river steps.

17 EXT. RIVER

LONG SHOT, MORE in the longboat on the dusky river.

CUT:

18 EXT. RIVER-STEPS HAMPTON NIGHT

The six-oared longboat. MORE and MESSENGER in stern, arrives at the Hampton River steps. But it is night now. By each of the litter of waiting boats, a naked torch flares in a bracket, the flames reflected in the water. As they stop, MORE is counting coins from a purse. As he alights STROKE ROWER rises, cap in hand. MORE stoops from steps and throws chinking coins into the cap. MORE For you all, Boatman.

And vanishes into dark, STROKE calling:

STROKE:

19 EXT. HAMPTON COURTYARD NIGHT

MORE passes under the portcullis, the glimmering "Henricus VHF", glances up at:

A single lighted window in the cliff-like side of Hampton.

20 EXT. HAMPTON RIVER-STEPS NIGHT

STROKE places last coin on thwart.

CLOSE SHOT, five hands whip away five coins. Two remain. STROKE takes them. Looks after MORE. Says.

STROKE:

CUT:

21 INT WOLSEY'S STUDY

CROMWELL pushes aside heavy curtain of ante-chamber, says quietly:

CROMWELL:

Thomas ...

He stands back deferentially as MORE comes swiftly through; his manner is relaxed, his gaze frank, but MORE's eyes flicker upon his for a minute, warily. There is something between them.

MORE:

22 INT. CROMWELL'S ANTE-ROOM

CROMWELL draws the heavy curtain, stands back. He is alone in the ante-room. He carefully leaves the door ajar, stands listening.

23 INT. WOLSEY'S STUDY

MORE is standing beside WOLSEY's chair. WOLSEY gives no sign he knows that he is there. But MORE will not lose dignity by speaking or fidgetting. WOLSEY's pen scratches. In mid-sentence:

WOLSEY:

MORE:

WOLSEY:

MORE:

WOLSEY:

MORE:

WOLSEY grunts. Stops writing. Looks up at MORE.

WOLSEY:

MORE:

WOLSEY:

wearily) You're a constant regret to me, Thomas. If you could just see facts flat on, without that horrible moral squint ... with just a little common sense, you could have been a statesman.

A single trumpet calls, distant frosty and clear. WOLSEY's face changes. All indolence gone he rises and goes to the window. Looks down:

24 EXT. HAMPTON SECOND COURTYARD NIGHT

His POV, the glinting roofs and shadowed courtyard of Hampton. From the blackness of the archway, preceded by a torch-bearer, followed at a distance by two cloaked men on drab horses, a golden figure on a white horse, looking at this distance like some glittering insect. The clippety-clop of the hooves and a repeated cough float up to us faintly.

25 INT. WOLSEY'S STUDY

WOLSEY and MORE look down. WOLSEY very tense.

WOLSEY The King.

MORE Yes.

WOLSEY:

MORE:

WOLSEY:

again. (brutally) He's been to Miss Boleyn.

26 EXT. HAMPTON SECOND COURTYARD NIGHT

MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT The KING rides under the further archway. His face is satiated, softened, his body moves passively to the motion of his horse. He lifts from his chest a locket miniature and looks at it.

CLOSE SHOT the miniature. A young woman.

The KING smiles a smile of tender sensuality, satisfied satyr, softly letting the locket fall back on his broad chest. As he passes under the further arch, another trumpet sounds.

27 INT. WOLSEY'S STUDY

WOLSEY leaves the window and sinks into his chair. Fear has made him dangerous.

WOLSEY:

MORE:

WOLSEY:

a son. What are you going to do about it?

MORE:

about it.

WOLSEY:

no-one here.

MORE:

Grace.

WOLSEY:

dynasty, Sir Thomas? D'you think two Tudors are sufficient?

MORE's pose deserts him. He starts up, looking about almost wildly.

MORE:

2t INT. CROMWELL'S ANTE-ROOM

CROMWELL, listening at the door jamb, hands behind his back, head bowed in thought, smiles to himself, a smile of simple amusement. We hear:

WOLSEY:

about it?

29 INT. WOLSEY'S OFFICE

MORE has recovered. Is now gravely straightforward. Steadily:

MORE:

WOLSEY:

there—at least. she's fertile, Thomas.

MORE:

WOLSEY:

going to pray for a miracle?

MORE:

WOLSEY:

Good. Pray. Pray by all means. But in addition to Prayer there is effort. My effort's to secure a divorce. Have I your support or have I not?

MORE:

marry his brother's widow, for state reasons. Now we are to ask the Pope to— dispense with his dispensation, also for state reasons?

WOLSEY:

MORE:

him.

WOLSEY:

MORE:

WOLSEY:

MORE:

property.

WOLSEY:

MORE:

WOLSEY:

MORE rises, watched by WOLSEY. Neither man wants this.

WOLSEY:

dynastic wars again! Blood-witted barons like your mindless friend the Duke

of Norfolk ramping the country from end to end—is that what you want? (He controls himself.) Very well, then England needs an heir. Certain measures, perhaps regrettable, perhaps not—there is much in the Church which needs Reformation, Thomas—

MORE smiles at the transparently "responsible" tone.

WOLSEY:

... explain how you, as a Councillor of England, can obstruct these measures for the sake of your own, private, conscience.

MORE:

conscience for the sake of their public duties... they lead their country by a short route to chaos. (to take the curse of priggishness from what he's said) And we shall have my prayers to fall back on.

WOLSEY:

govern the country by prayers?

MORE:

WOLSEY:

wear this—

CLOSE SHOT, the Chancellor's chain.

WOLSEY:

Suffolk?

MORE:

WOLSEY:

Cromwell?

MORE:

He looks Involuntarily towards the curtained doorway. Recovers. 15

MORE:

WOLSEY:

30 INT. CROMWELL'S ANTE-ROOM

CROMWELL, still listening, does not change his expression.

MORE:

31 INT. WOLSEY'S STUDY

WOLSEY:

attention to the papers) You and I are enemies.

MORE:

WOLSEY:

MORE:

He has reached the door when:

WOLSEY:

MORE turns at the curtain.

WOLSEY:

MORE:

WOLSEY's pen falters, he turns; but MORE has gone, into:

32 INT. CROMWELL'S ANTE-ROOM

CROMWELL is innocently absorbed in papers at his table. He rises, respectfully and smiles as MORE goes through into:

33 INT. LONG GALLERY

MACHIN:

MORE:

MACHIN:

MORE:

MACHIN:

MORE would enquire further but she has backed and curtseyed and a pathetic little OLD MAN claims his attention. Thrusts at him a paper and a basket with a cloth.

OLD MAN:

causes.

MORE looks at him, with sympathy, but steadily. He lifts the cloth.

OLD MAN:

MORE:

OLD MAN's wit doesn't travel this fast. He simply stares, anxiously.

MORE:

mine, A fair one, quickly.

OTHER POOR SUITORS hustle round him, whispering and susurrating. MORE takes their petitions. "Thank you, I will read it". "Thank you." "I understand." Then a raffish looking COURTIER with a neatly ribboned scroll steps forward with an elegant smile, the hoipoloi dealt with, expecting preferential treatment, but before he can open his mouth MORE gently takes the petition from him, says gently.

MORE:

And goes, but COURTIER follows, drawling

COURTIER:

MORE:

COURTIER drops back. MORE relaxes, walks on, going home.

CUT:

34 EXT. HAMPTON RIVER-STEPS NIGHT

The river steps of Hampton as before. Torches glittering. From the darkness.

MORE (on SOUND) Boat!

BOATMAN at foot of steps looking up.

BOATMAN:

MORE descending. the cup glinting in his hand.

MORE:

MORE sits the, cup prominent. BOATMAN, settling to his oars, sighs.

BOATMAN:

MORE looks at him, with speculative and affectionate interest.

MORE:

BOATMAN:

He shows the metal plaque attached to his sleeve.

MORE:

BOATMAN:

He heaves at the oars.

BOATMAN:

to Hampton, upstream, a penny halfpenny—
He heaves at the oars.

BOATMAN:

MORE:

BOATMAN:

35 EXT. MORE'S HOUSE RIVER-STEPS AS FOR SCENE 11 DAWN

RICH is asleep at the head of the Chelsea river steps, his fair head
cradled against the damp stones, wild flowers growing in the mortar there.

36 EXT. RIVER DAWN

BOATMAN in the boat glances over his shoulder.

37 EXT. LONG SHOT MORE'S HOUSE RIVER-STEPS His POV the distant steps, RICH
crouched there.

38 EXT. RIVER DAWN

MORE is asleep, the cup in his lap.

BOATMAN turns back again. Coughs.

MORE starts awake, drops goblet, retrieves it.

BOATMAN:

MORE is reminded of a puzzle.

MORE:

He examines it curiously. Finds something engraved on the base. Examines
it. Looks up, his face changed, cold, disgusted. Puts cup carefully aside
on the thwart' as something unclean. Suddenly changes his mind. Quick and
dexterous flips it into the river. BOATMAN, horrified, with a movement of
instinctive swiftness retrieves it, dripping. Shocked.

BOATMAN:

MORE, ashamed of the hystrionic gesture, takes it, but holds it as
something unclean again.

39 EXT. MORE'S HOUSE RIVER-STEPS DAWN

RICH starts awake, runs down steps to receive boat, but:

BOATMAN, expertly guiding boat to steps, standing, balanced, curtly:

BOATMAN:

RICH, rejected again, scuttles up steps, turns as MORE alights. He is
tired, incipiently impatient.

MORE:

RICH:

MORE:

RICH:

MORE:

He rubs the fatigue from his face, addressing himself to this untimely problem. Looking towards the sleeping facade of his house beyond the dew-bright garden.

MORE:

pounds a year.

RICH:

MORE:

RICH:

He is bitterly disappointed and affronted.

MORE:

RICH:

MORE:

help.

RICH seizes his arm and with passionate sincerity:

RICH:

help-than his!

MORE:

RICH's chin comes up.

RICH:

MORE:

He thrusts the cup at RICH.

RICH:

MORE:

am the gift of Averil Machin ...” An Averil Machin has a lawsuit in the

Court of Requests. ... Italian silver.

RICH stares at it greedily.

MORE:

RICH:

MORE:

RICH (sharply) Sell it.

MORE And buy what?

RICH (fierce)

A decent gown!

MORE nods, sympathetic.

MORE:

sorts of things. Whole Manors, Manor houses, coats of arms. A man should go where he won't be tempted. Why not be a teacher? You'd be a fine teacher, perhaps a great one.

RICH:

And if I was who would know it?

MORE:

You. Your friends, your pupils, God. Not a great public, that ... Oh, and a quiet life ..

RICH:

(a short laugh) You say that—

MORE is looking over the sweetly flowing river, doesn't seem to hear. You come from talking with the Cardinal—

MORE:

Ah yes, talking with the Cardinal ... It's eating your heart out, isn't it? (bitter) The high affairs of State.

RICH knows what this refers to, knows he shouldn't but can't resist.

Unconsciously edges closer.

RICH The Divorce?

The shutters come down behind MORE's eyes.

MORE:

Boatman, take this gentleman to the New Inn.

And turns away; but behind him:

RICH Sir Thomas!

MORE turns. RICH half way down the steps has turned to him and looking up,

holding up the cup:

Thank you!

His eyes shine with excitement. MORE says dryly:

MORE Be a teacher ...

RICH looks after him, a thought forming behind his eyes, but BOATMAN coughs. RICH embarks ..

CUT:

40 MORE'S HOUSE GARDEN DOOR DANN

STEWARD opens garden door of house for MORE. MORE nods.

MORE Matthew ...

STEWARD Sir ...

41 INT. MORE'S HOUSE CORRIDOR MORE precedes him along the corridor.

MORE Lady Alice in bed?

Yes sir. STEWARD

Lady Margaret?

MORE:

No sir. STEWARD

MORE stops.

Master Roper's here, sir.

MORE:

STEWARD:

42 INT. MORE'S HOUSE GREAT HALL

MORE throws open door to hall where:

MARGARET and ROPER a finely severe young man with a face full of rectitude—rise guiltily away from one another looking towards. MORE in the doorway, looking stern.

MARGARET:

father.

MORE comes towards them.

MORE:

ROPER:

MORE is disarmed.

MORE:

ROPER:

MORE:

wrong with you.—(sinking wearily into a chair) except you seem to need a clock—

ROPER:

MORE:

heretic.

ROPER:

MORE:

MARGARET, alarmed, from behind MORE tries to silence him.

ROPER:

satisfaction!

MORE:

ROPER:

shilling! —And divorces!

MARGARET signals frantically. He says straight at her, over MORE.

ROPER:

MARGARET:

MORE:

ago you were a passionate Churchman. Now you're a passionate—Lutheran. We must just pray that when your head's finished turning, your face is to the front again. Is your horse here?

ROPER:

MORE:

hesitates) Go along.

ROPER turns, turns back.

ROPER:

MORE indicates MARGARET.

MARGARET Yes, soon.

ROPER goes.

MARGARET watches him, sadly. MORE watches her, guiltily. We hear door shut.

MARGARET

Is that final, father?

MORE:

As long as he's a heretic, Meg, that's absolute. Because it pains it to deny her what she wants he says it with special severity. MARGARET accepts it. MARGARET What did Wolsey want? MORE goes dead pan.

MORE:

Nice boy, young Will. Terribly strong principles, though.

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He winces as the outer door bangs, looks up at gallery apprehensively and adds: 27

MORE Clumsy, too.

He looks to MARGARET for a smile; gets instead a thoughtful stare. MORE You're very pensive.

MARGARET:

You're very gay. Was it the Divorce?

.MORE To bed.

43 INT. MORE'S GREAT HALL STAIRS AND GALLERY He propels her up the stairs, chatting: MORE

A cantankerous lot, the Ropers. Old Roper was /list the same. If heresy came into fashion, now, Young Will would want to be a Bishop. MARGARET turns, says:

MARGARET You don't want to talk about it.

MORE No.

Both look up and off as a door clicks.

ALICE in gown and nightcap at door of bedroom on the gallery. Genuinely remorseful MORE hurries past MARGARET and joins her. MORE

Oh I'm sorry you were wakened, chick.

ALICE:

I wasn't sleeping very deeply. What did Wolsey want?

MORE flickers. MARGARET pauses to see what he will do
eft

28

MORE WM Roper's been.

The sleepiness flies from ALICE's face.

ALICE Will Roper—!

MORE adds fuel to the flames.

MORE:

Yes. He's been here all night. He wants to marry Meg.

ALICE looks really dangerous.

ALICE:

Oh why you don't beat that girl—!

MORE:

No she's full of education and it's a delicate commodity.

With which he trundles her back into the bedroom, following, but turning back to say: MORE Good-night, Meg.

His tone is quiet and perfectly grave—NOT sharing a joke at ALICE's expense. But MARGARET at her own door smiles a smile of loving appreciation to herself as she answers. MARGARET Good-night.

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44 INT. MORE'S BED-CHAMBER

Inside their room, ALICE is still mottled.

ALICE:

Marry Meg—a lawyer's son?

MORE is surprised and tickled.

MORE:

Well she's a lawyer's daughter.

29

ft' ALICE Pouf!

She straddles happily, impressive and touching in her night attire. ALICE

NORFOLK:

MORE, seated on the bed, pulling at his shoes, leaves off. MORE

He's a dangerous friend then. Wolsey's Chancellor, God help him. ALICE

But Norfolk said if Wolsey fell—

MORE:

If Wolsey fell, the splash would swamp a few small boats like ours. Tugging at his shoes again, comfortable, ruefully admiring: Oh no. There'll-be no new Chancellors while Wolsey lives.

CUT:

45 EXT. LONG SHOT ABBEY DAY

Beneath a flying Winter sky, two HORSEMEN ride the horizon of a snow flecked moorland landscape. CAMERA PANS to bring on frame an isolated little Abbey. Wind on SOUND continuous: 46 INT. ABBEY CELL

WOLSEY's great chain on the same red silk. But now we find the gown is thrown at the foot of a bed. And WOLSEY in the bed is a changed man, at death's very door. The room is small and plainly whitewashed, having one

small gothic window. Two MONKS in cassocks and the dying man himself look apprehensively towards the door at the sound of heavy footsteps. It crashes open. A young officer in sodden travelling clothes announces: OFFICER The Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of England!

30

NORFOLK:

like his present job; he doesn't like WOLSEY. He takes two steps towards the bed, his face set. WOLSEY gestures feebly to the chain. NORFOLK slings it over one arm. Clears his throat, not looking at WOLSEY. NORFOLK Have you any message for His Majesty? WOLSEY shakes his head. NORFOLK turns, but at the door. WOLSEY If-

NORFOLK:

If I had served my God one half so well as I have served my King, God would: not have left me, to die in this place. NORFOLK hates it.

NORFOLK:

Thank God that you're dying here Your Grace. The King would have you to die in the Tower. NORFOLK turns.

MONKS horrified. WOLSEY falls back. On SOUND door shuts, footsteps recede.

CUT 47 INT. WESTMINSTER HALL

Fanfare. CLOSE SHOT The chain held by NORFOLK, .in ceremonial dress.

Continuous pull-away reveals MORE in his best gown, surrounding courtiers and officials. MORE turns, formally to face the assembly. PULL-AWAY draws up and up, SHOOTING down the tall columns of a State Hall (Westminster) upon the little group, the important flock of witnesses while NORFOLK:

NORFOLK

(reading)

I am straightly charged by the King Himself here openly to declare how much all England 31

NORFOLK:

is beholden to this man and how worthy he is to have the highest room in the realm, and how dearly the King's Grace doth love and trust him! Not only for much good council delivered in council, but for better council yet, the which is privy to the King's person, and this same Sir Thomas More, here made before you all to be-Lord Chancellor of the realm! Fanfare and CLOSE SHOT. The chain descends on MORE's shoulders. DISSOLVE 48 EXT.

RIVER

Fanfare modulating to gay, light, frivolous music. The screen a blaze of golden light, the sun on water. Out of this effulgence swims the Royal Barge. In the stern, the King in holiday mood, dressed in cloth-of-gold,

surrounded by COURTIERS. The MUSICIANS in an escorting barge. A third barge with quietly dressed OFFICIALS. 49 EXT. MORE'S GARDEN & STEPS MORE, wearing the Chancellor's chain, waits in his garden, the music reaching us faintly. STEWARD jumps down from river wall, nodding and gulping, too overcome to speak. MORE
Calm yourself, Matthew; fetch Lady Alice.
The music nearer. An anonymous shout: "God Save His Majesty'!" STEWARD Oh Jesus!

And runs.

50 EXT. RIVER MUD FLAT

The Royal Barge has grounded, the KING already standing, the other barges gliding in on either side. The KING alights. His golden feet sink in the mud. A moment of surprise. COURTIERS pause, hesitant. Then the KING laughs. They alight after him, laughing. The sun flashes round them, turning the mud to gold. 32

eb' 51 INT. MORE'S HOUSE GREAT HALL

In the Hall of MORE's house, ALICE anxiously watches the face of NORFOLK who is inspecting a long table set with the excessive creations of a Tudor banquet, the SERVANTS, tense and nervous, who line the walls. MARGARET too is anxious. NORFOLK grunts. NORFOLK That's very well.
STEWARD arrives breathless in the door and calls without ceremony: STEWARD My lady! The King!

NORFOLK:

52 EXT. RIVER MUD-FLAT

The golden feet of the KING stride athletically up the hardway, the black mud glinting. COURTIERS follow. 53 EXT. MORE'S GARDEN & STEPS

NORFOLK:

takes his wife's arm, pats it reassuringly. MARGARET stands by NORFOLK.
MORE

(lets go her arm)

Now remember, the visit's a surprise.

ALICE nods, but then common sense bursting through:

ALICE:

But he'll know we're expecting him when he sees all that—! MORE

Oh Kings can absorb a little inconsistency.

Then seeing that she is genuinely puzzled how to behave, seriously and revealing his own deep pleasure in it: It's a very great honour. One friend calling on another you see. MARGARET and NORFOLK, side by side like soldiers on parade, looking ahead (the KING must be near now, though hidden below the wall). 33

MARGARET What is he really coming for?

NORFOLK:

To talk about the Divorce. He wants an answer.

MARGARET looks at him.

MARGARET He's had his answer!

NORFOLK:

ON SOUND:

KING (on SOUND) Thomas!

MORE squints. With him we see:

The KING on the wall by chance or design stands in the eye of the sun and seems transparent like a flame. Th&y all sink down.

MORE:

Your Majesty does my house more honour than I fear my household will bear. The KING steps down and becomes visible.

KING:

No ceremony Thomas, no ceremony! A passing fancy—

(he raises him)

I happened to be on the river.

(holds out shoe, proudly)

Look, mud ... By Heaven, what an evening!

Lady Alice, I fear we came upon you unexpectedly.

ALICE:

(shocked)

Oh no Your Grace—that is yes, Your Grace but we are ready to entertain Your Grace. She is flustered. The KING doesn't like people to be flustered when he's feeling informal. He grunts, nods, fiddling at the locket round his neck, MORE comes in expertly. 34

MORE:

This is my daughter Margaret, sire, she has not had the honour to meet Your Grace. MARGARET curtsseys low. He looks her over, approves.

KING:

Why Margaret; they told me you were a scholar.

She looks confusedly to her father.

MORE Answer, Margaret.

MARGARET:

Among women I pass for one Your Grace.
ALICE and NORFOLK exchange satisfied glances.

KING:

Antiquone modo Latina loqueris an Oxoniensi?
MARGARET e Quem me docuit pater, Domine.

KING:

Bene. Optimus est. Graecamne linguam quoque to docuit?

MARGARET:

Graecam me docuit non pater meus sed mei patris amicus, Johannes Coletus, Sancti Pauli Decanus. In literis Graecis tamen, non minus quam Latinis, ars magistri minuitur discipuli stultitia. During this last, CLOSE SHOT the KING. Her Latin is better than his; he is not altogether pleased. KING Ho ...

He walks away. Unseen by any, MARGARET mistakenly begins to rise from her curtsey. MORE puts his hand on her head and gently presses her down again, so that she is ready again when. KING Can you dance too?

MARGARET Not well, Your Grace.

35

KING:

Well I dance superlatively!

He.:

codpiece prominent. That's a dancer's leg, Margaret!

She has the wit to look straight up and smile at him. He pulls her to her feet. On SOUND, sycophantic chuckles. KING turns to:

His party has followed and stands against the wall, all smiling and chuckling. MORE bows and smiles, the host. His expression changes. He has seen: CROMWELL in a modest position among the Officials, bows to MORE. KING Lady Alice, the river's given me an appetite.

ALICE:

If Your Grace would share a very simple supper.

KING:

It would please me to. Take them in, Thomas and I will follow. He throws an arm about MORE s neck, the good friend.

ALICE Matthew.

STEWARD My lords and gentlemen!

He stalks majestically away along the path. The COURTIERS and OFFICIALS follow, MUSICIANS now hop over the wall with ribboned strings and polished

brasses. KING

(calls after)

Do you like music, Margaret?

36

MARGARET Yes, Your Grace.

KING They'll play to you.

CUT:

MUSIC floats from an open window of MORE'S house. HENRY and MORE come on frame. The KING is very pastoral, raising his hand to trail it through the leaves of the apple trees, picking a flower, almost skipping. MORE plods behind him. The music changes. . ' KING

Ah. Now listen to this, Thomas.

54 EXT. MORE'S ORCHARD & HOUSE

CLOSE SHOT They come to rest beneath a big tree. A rotten garden bench beneath it. The KING is very much the connoisseur, head tilted, beating time with one finger. He smiles at MORE. KING Sit down.

MORE hesitates.

ò

KING:

Be seated ... No courtship Thomas; you are my friend are you not? MORE Your Majesty.

KING:

And thank God I have a friend for my Chancellor. Readier to be friend I trust than he was to be Chancellor. MORE
My own knowledge of my poor abilities—

KING:

I will judge of your abilities, Thomas ... Did you know that Wolsey named you for Chancellor': MORE Wolsey!

37

KING:

Aye; before he died. Wolsey named you and Wolsey was no fool. MORE
He was a statesman of incomparable ability, Your Grace.

KING:

Was he? Was he so? Then why did he fail me? It was villainy then! He is shouting, his eyes blaze with indignation. MORE rises. CUT 55 INT. MORE'S HOUSE GREAT HALL

In the hall, the MUSICIANS are silent. So too the SERVANTS and the COURTIERS, scattered about, seated and standing. All are listening uneasily

to the all-too-familiar voice whose roaring comes in distantly at the open window. NORFOLK and ALICE exchange worried glances. STEWARD looks frightened. MARGARET looks cautiously at CROMWELL. He seems to be lost in contemplation of a tapestry. But all the while the furious voice comes unintelligibly to us. It ceases.: All relax. CUT

56 EXT. MORE'S ORCHARD & HOUSE

The KING relaxes too. Confidential:

KING:

Wolsey was a proud man, Thomas, pride sight through. And he failed me!—He failed me in the one thing that matters Thomas, then as now. He looks keenly at MORE, who lowers his eyes. The KING affects to chide himself. But look Be seated... Both sit.

38

KING (Cont) What an evening.

MORE smiles. The KING fills his splendid chest. A man could fight a lion, eh?—MORE (with genuine affection and ò admiration)

Some men could, Your Grace.

KING:

Touching this matter of my divorce, Thomas, have you thought of it since we last talked? MORE

Of little else, Your Grace.

KING:

Then you see your way clear to me?

MORE:

That you should put away Queen

Catherine, sire? Oh alas, as I think

of it I see so clearly that I can not come With Your Grace that my endeavour is not to think of it at all. KING

Then you haven't thought enough!

His eyes blaze again. Then the fire goes out. He pats MORE's knee

reassuringly. His gaze wanders, focusses with pleasure. That's a lilac.

Their POV, a beautiful lilac alone in the sunshine. KING comes on frame, calling back to MORE: We have them at Hampton ... Not so fine as this though.

01"

He breaks off a blossom and strolls back with it to MORE.

KING:

Ha. I'm in an excellent frame of mind.

He puts the blossom to his nose.

Beautiful

(now his tone
becomes serious,
thoughtful)

You must consider, Thomas, that I stand in peril of my soul. It was no marriage; I have lived in incest with my brother's widow. Leviticus—"Thou shalt not uncover 'the nakedness of thy brother's wife." Leviticus. Chapter 18, Verse 16. MORE Yes, Your Grace.

(he hesitates) But Deuteronomy—

KING:

(triumphantly)
Deuteronomy's ambiguous!

MORE:

Your Grace, I'm not fitted to meddle in these matters—to me it seems a matter .for the Holy See—KING

(reproving)

Thomas, Thomas, does a man need a Pope to tell him when he's sinned? It was a sin, Thomas ...And God has punished me. I have no son. Son after son she's borne me Thomas, all dead at birth or dead within the month; I never saw the hand of God so clear in anything. 39

40

His face is clouded and fearful, full of superstitious dread. Dully: KING
It is my bounden duty to put away the Queen ...

(flaring)

And all the Popes back to Peter shall not come between me and my duty!

(with real but irritable curiosity)

How is that you cannot see? Everyone else does.

MORE:

(eagerly persuasive)

Then why does Your Grace need my poor support?

KING:

Because you are honest.

(he looks at him,
hard, shrewd and
frank)

What's more to the purpose you'te known.. to be honest ... There are those like Norfolk who follow me because I wear the crown, and there are those like Master Cromwell who follow me because they are jackals with sharp teeth and I am their tiger, and there is a mass that follows me because it follows anything that moves. And there is you. MORE

I am sick to think how much I must displease Your Grace.

KING:

No, Thomas, I respect your sincerity. Respect? Oh man, it's water in the desert ... He looks gloomy, abstracted. Looking up, he finds MORE's anxious, paternal regard upon him and smiles. 41

YONG:

How did you like our music? That air they played, it had a certain—well, tell me what you thought MORE
Could it have been Your Grace's own?

KING:

Discovered! . Now I'll never know your true opinion. And that's irksome, Thomas, for we artists, though we love praise, yet we love truth better.
MORE

Then I will tell Your Grace my true opinion.

But he pauses.

KING Well?

MORE To:

He pauses as though_for the exact critical word. KING makes a little involuntary gesture, like a dog eager for a bone. ... Delightful.

KING:

Thomas, I chose the right man for Chancellor.

MORE:

I should in fairness add that my taste in music is reputedly deplorable.

KING

Your taste in music is excellent. It exactly coincides .With my own .

Ah! Music! Send them back without me Thomas; I will live here in Chelsea and make music. MORE

My house is at Your Grace's disposal.

42

KING:

Thomas you understand me ...

But his attention wanders. He looks gloomily at:

The lilac. A cloud shadow passes over it and it bends to the wind. The KING lays aside the blossom.

KING:

Touching this other business, mark you, Thomas, I'll have no opposition.
MORE Your Grace?

KING:

No opposition I say! No opposition!

He leaps up. MORE rises.

Be seated! ... I'll leave you out of it—but you are my Chancellor—I don't take it kindly Thomas, and I'll have no opposition! I see how it will be. The Bishops will oppose me! The full-fed, "Princes of the Church"! Hypocrites! They're all hypocrites! Mind, they do not take you in Thomas!

MORE:

(agitated and indignant)

Your Grace is unjust. If I cannot serve Your Grace in this great matter of the Queen—KING

I—have—no—queen! Catherine is not my wife and no priest can make her so. And they that say she is my wife are not only liars .. but Traitors! CUT 57
INT. MORE'S HOUSE GREAT HALL

In the hall the raging voice reaches us as before. All the KING's PARTY has drawn together. looking inimically at: ALICE and MARGARET, standing close together, the KING's disfavour. on them like a sickness. NORFOLK uneasily standing a few feet away from them. ALICE looks at him. He silently jerks his bead. She goes. CUT

43

58 EXT. MORE'S ORCHARD & HOUSE

MORE is aghast and white, the KING shaking, breathing hard, leaning against the tree trunk. He holds out a hand and :says almost piteously: KING
If you could come with me, there is no man I would sooner raise, yes with my own hand. MORE's hand moves; he would like to take the KING's, but shakily: MORE

Oh, Your Grace overwhelms me.

He hall-turns away, covers his face. The KING looks sulkily ashamed and at a loss. A bell strikes sweetly. Grumpy: KING What's that?

MORE Eight o'clock Your Grace.

He is still turned away.

KING:

Oh lift yourself up man. Have I not . promised? I'll leave you out of it ... Shall we eat? MORE If Your Grace pleases.

He turns c manages a smile. But the KING's gaze won't meet his. KING Mm... He moves away. Suddenly, with transparent falsehood:

Eight o'clock you said? Thomas, the tide will be turning. I was forgetting the tide. I must go. MORE (steadily)—

I'm sorry, Your Grace.

44 Still the-ICING avoids his eye, chattering on, walking swiftly. KING
I must take the tide or not get back to Richmond. No don't come ... CUT
ALICE hurries anxiously round the corner of the house, almost collides with
the KING. He is embarrassed. KING

Oh. Lady Alice. I must go. I want to catch the tide:

(recovering his poise)

Affairs call me to Court. So I give you my thanks—and say good-night. ALICE
sinks into a curtsey. Looks up unhappily, seeing: The KING striding swiftly
away through the garden. 59 EXT. MORE'S HOUSE GARDEN DOOR

The COURTIERS and OFFICIALS pour out of the house, furtively excited,
chattering to one another softly and follow him, higgledy-piggledy.
MUSICIANS come last, and then the STEWARD who looks after them. 60 EXT.

MORE'S GARDEN & STEPS

The KING descends steps to the hardway. Looks with vague anger at: 61 EXT.
RIVER MUD-FLAT

A litter of miscellaneous boats and gawping onlookers, who falls back as he
strides towards his barge. Among them we discover RICH. CUT

62 EXT. ORCHARD AND HOUSE

ALICE strides angrily up to where MORE sits still beneath the tree. ALICE
You crossed him:

MORE Somewhat.

45

ALICE Why?

MORE:

I couldn't find the other way.

ALICE:

You're too nice altogether, Thomas!

MORE Woman, mind your house!

ALICE:

I am minding my house!

Her eyes fill and her strong mouth trembles on this. She turns in her
absurd finery and trudges away through the grass, MORE following, looking at
her. 63 RIVER MUD FLAT

The KING .crashes into his seat in the Barge, nods curtly at BARGE" MASTER,
the Barge leaves. Latecoming COURTIERS are stranded, one with his feet in
the water. Behind them the MUSICIANS, OFFICIALS, stream hastily over MORE's
garden wall and down the foreshore, in confusion, mixed in with SIGHTSEERS.
Among them we find CROMWELL. He is standing calmly, looking off at: RICH.
He stares back at CROMWELL.

CROMWELL beckons him.

RICH hesitates.

CROMWELL beckons again.

RICH comes along the muddy gravel of the foreshore towards him. CROMWELL advances a step or two and meets him. Politely: CROMWELL Are you coming my way, Rich?

RICH, rabbit to CROMWELL's snake, stares, fascinated, but shakes his head, and manages: 46

RICH No.

CROMWELL I think you should, you know.

RICH:

I can't tell you anything!

CROMWELL shrugs, turns, turns back and holds out his hand. RICH is tempted, shakes his head, turns sharply about as though to run up the foreshore towards More's garden wall, slips and falls full length in the mud. ò He looks up, furious, frightened, confused, to find:

CROMWELL, eyebrows raised, the boatload of comfortably gowned OFFICIALS behind him, regarding RICH with mild interest. CUT 64 MORE'S HOUSE GREAT HALL

CLOSE TRACKING SHOT, in the hall, empty of servants now, ALICE patrols the table so that we see the parade of fantastic comestibles at which she glowers, MORE following. MORE

Well what would you want me to do?

ALICE:

Be ruled! If you won't rule him, be ruled!

MORE:

There's a small area where I must rule myself—it's very small, less to the King than a tennis court. ALICE Look at that!

She jabs her finger at the silver platter which bears some kind of jelly in the form of a castle, which cost her a morning's work. 47

MORE Yes ... Have some.

He picks up the platter with its absurd wobbling burden but she jerks away and continues on so that he follows with it. MORE

Look. It was eight o'clock. At eight o'clock Lady Anne likes to dance.

ALICE

Oh... And you stand between them!

ò MORE

I? What stands between them is a Sacrament of the Church. I'm less important than you think, Alice. She has come to the chair where the King would have sat.

ALICE:

Stay friends with him, Thomas.

MORE:

Whatever may be done by smiling, you may rely on me to do. Come. They sit, by the King's empty chair. But she is still full of sullen misgiving. Alice Alice ...Set your mind at rest. This-

He taps himself.

Is not the stuff of which martyrs are made.

He looks up. So does she. His expression changes, his back stiffens, very much the father. ROPER and MARGARET approach. They look like a bride and groom. He has her arm possessively beneath his own, holds her hand in his. What's more, her face is happy and hopeful, his is set and serious. They fetch up by MORE whose glance stays on their linked hands 48

ROPER Good-day, sir ... Lady Alice ...

MORE's cold glance travels up to ROPER's face. No reply.

MARGARET:

Will wants to talk to you, father ...

MORE's glance fastens on the hands again.

MARGARET:

I told him it wouldn't be convenient-

ò MORE

Yowwere right .. You're very free with my daughter's hand, Roper! ROPER would slip..his hand from hers but MARGARET. keeps possession. ROPER It's of that I wish to speak. Sir, you've hada. disagreement with His Majesty. MORE Have I?

ROPER:

So Meg tells me. I offer my congratulations.

MORE:

If it's true, is it a matter for congratulation ?

ROPER Yes.

He lets go MARGARET's hand, clasps his own. She quickly sits and looks at her father with the proper compound of fear, appeal and gratitude; she realizes that he is straightforwardly jealous. ROPER's youthful struggle for dignity makes him very appealing as: ROPER

Sir, when latt"I asked you for your daughter's hand you objected to my (he struggles for the right word)

... unorthodox, opinions.

MORE I did.

e**

49

ROPER:

Since then my views my views have,
er, somewhat modified.

MARGARET and MORE exchange glance.of delightful amusement. MORE
Well that's good hearing, Will.

ROPER has seen their interchange. Hotly:

ROPER:

I modify nothing concerning various corruptions in the Church—MORE Quite
right.

ROPER:

But an attack on the Church Herself. No, I see behind that an attack on
God—MORE, alarmed, with a forkful of jelly poised.

MORE Er, Roper—

ROPER The Devil's work!

MORE Roper—!

ROPER:

To be done by the Devil's Ministers!.

MORE:

For Heaven's sake Will, remember my office!

ROPER:

Oh, if you stand on your office—!

MORE:

I don't stand on it, but there are certain things I may not hear! ON SOUND:
STEWARD coughs, discreet and disapproving.

50

All look up, alarmed. RICH is entering, past STEWARD. He halts and looks at
them, smiling, awkward, distraught. He is still muddy. MORE glances at
ALICE, rises. MORE Richard?

RICH:

I fell ... Lady Alice ...

ALICE nods, non-committal, Lady Margaret.

MARGARET Good evening, Master Rich.

MORE:

Oh. Do you know—William Roper the younger?

RICH comes forward, ingratiating.

RICH By reputation of course.

ROPER Good evening, Master ... ?

RICH Rich.

ROPER:

Oh.

(recollecting something) Oh.

RICH:

(defensively) You have heard of me?

ROPER Yes.

RICH:

In what connection? I don't know what you can have heard—He looks at them, hostile. Suddenly blurts, shrill.

51

RICH:

I sense that I'm not welcome there.

MORE:

Why Richard, have you done something to make you not welcome? RICH
(emotional, impulsive)

Cromwell is asking questions. About you He is continually asking questions
about you and your opinions! MORE looks thoughtful. ò

MORE Of whom?

STEWARD commences discreet Exit. The movement attracts their attention.

RICH points, excitedly: RICH

Of him for one! That's one of his sources!

ALICE, MARGARET, ROPER in turn, staring at STEWARD, angry, disgusted,
hostile, each according to his nature. STEWARD, cautiously "innocent".

But MORE, still looking at RICH, says quietly:

MORE:

Of course; that's one of my servants. All right, Matthew.

STEWARD makes his exit, just a little too hastily. MORE goes on looking
gravely and searchingly. at RICH who .can't stand it: RICH

You look at me as though I were an enemy!

MORE puts out a hand.

MORE:

Why, Rich, you're shaking.

52

RICH:

MORE:

RICH:

MORE:

RICH:

Help me.

How?

Employ me.

No.

Employ me.

No.

RICH goes, turns back.

MORE:

RICH I would be faithful!

MORE:

Richard, you couldn't answer for yourself even so far as tonight. RICH goes.

ALICE on her feet, excited. SHORT CLOSE UPS: ALICE

Arrest him! MORE

For what? ALICE

He's dangerous!

ROPER For libel—he's a spy!

TWO SHOT MORE and MARGARET

MARGARET Father that man's bad.

53

MORE There's no law against that.

ROPER There is! God's law!

MORE Then God can arrest him.

ALICE While you talk, he's gone!

MORE:

And go he should if he were the Devil himself, until he broke the law.

ROPER

(amazed)

So—Now we'd give the Devil benefit of law!

MORE:

Yes what would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the

Devil? ROPER

I'd cut down every law in England to do that !

MORE really stung at this-

MORE:

Oh. And when the last law was down and the Devil turned round on you, where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat?—This country's planted thick with laws from coast to coast—Man's laws, not God's, and if you cut them down—and you're just the man to do it—Do you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then? DISSOLVE commences, and ON SOUND wind rises, as he continues to himself: Yes, Pd give the Devil benefit of law. For my own safety's sake. 54

65 EXT. DOCKSIDE PUB NIGHT

Wind blowing over black water, wet cobbles. A figure flits, its thin garments clapped about it by the wind. RICH. He turns a corner, another, hesitates, dives into a doorway over which a bushel of hops thrashes in the gusts. 66 INT. DOCKSIDE PUB

Passes through room where two or three poor looking watermen sit silently drinking. Into a short corridor. Hesitates, uncertain. CROMWELL comes to a doorway, a tankard in his hand. CROMWELL Here, Rich:

He goes back in. We follow. A dark little room made cheerful by firelight, a black oak table with jug and bread. A picture of simple comfort., and CROMWELL smiling: CROMWELL

It's taken you long enough to get here.

RICH Have I kept you waiting?

CROMWELL Months. Here.

He takes a mug of warmed wine from the fireside, gives it to RICH. CROMWELL Do you know the news?

RICH What news?

CROMWELL Sir Thomas Paget is retiring.

His voice thickens with almost physical pleasure. And I succeed him. RICH Secretary to the Council: You?

CROMWELL T'is surprising, isn't it?

66 Continued

RICH:

Oh no—I mean one sees—it's logical.

CROMWELL:

No ceremony, no courtship. As His Majesty might say.

RICH laughs, but glances into the shadows. Yes, see how I trust you. RICH

Oh I would never repeat or report a thing like, that.

CROMWELL:

What kind of thing would you repeat or report?

RICH:

Well nothing said in friendship.

CROMWELL Do you believe that?

RICH Why yes.

CROMWELL No but seriously.

RICH Yes!

CROMWELL Rich, seriously.

RICH hesitates, mumbles:

RICH:

It would depend what I was offered.

CROMWELL Don't say it just to please me.

55

56

RICH:

(bitterly)

It's true; it would depend what I was offered.

CROMWELL appraises him; RICH looks back.

CROMWELL:

We-ell ... There is another post vacant. Collector of. Revenues for York.

RICH Is it in your gift?

CROMWELL Effectively.

RICH What must I do for it?

CROMWELL sits by him and, as telling a story to a child, while RICH watches him hawklike: CROMWELL

Rich, I know a man who wants to change his woman. Normally a matter of small importance, but in this case it's our liege lord Henry the eighth of that name—which is a quaint way of saying that if he wants to change his woman he will. And our job as administrators is to minimize the ...

Searches delicately for the word.

...inconvenience, which this is going to cause. That's our only job, Rich, to minimize the—inconvenience—of things. A harmless occupation you would say, but no, we administrators are not liked, Rich, we're not popular—I say "we" on the assumption you accept this post at York I've offered you. 57

RICH's smile fades; he looks down, almost whispers:

RICH Yes ... Yes.

CROMWELL:

(with distaste)

It's a bad sign when people-are depressed by their own good fortunes. RICH

I'm not depressed.

CROMWELL You look depressed.

RICH:

I'm lamenting. I've lost my innocence.

CROMWELL:

Some time ago. Have you only just noticed? ... Now your friend, our present Lord Chancellor—there's an innocent man. RICH The odd thing is, he is.

CROMWELL smiles at him, understandingly.

CROMWELL:

(with dislike)

Yes, I say he is. Unhappily he's got his innocence entangled in this proposition that you can't change your woman without a divorce, and can't have a divorce unless the "Pope" says so. And from this quite meaningless circumstance, I fear some measure of .. , He searches again. RICH, like the bright boy of the class waving his cup RICH Inconvenience!

58

CROMWELL:

Just so. This goblet he gave you, how much was it worth?

RICH freezes, puts down cup, licks lips. CROMWELL, gently: Come on, Rich, he gave you a silver goblet. How much did you get for it? RICH Fifty shillings.

CROMWELL:

It was a gift, wasn't it, from a litigant, a woman?

RICH Yes.

CROMWELL Which Court? Chancery?

RICH raises his cup and drinks desperately. CROMWELL restrains him.

CROMWELL

No don't get drunk. In which Court was the litigant's case? RICH Court of Requests.

CROMWELL grunts, looks abstracted, turning over the information in his mind. Becoming aware of RICH's hypnotized gaze he says, comfortingly:

CROMWELL

There. That wasn't too painful, was it?

RICH:

(a short, rueful laugh)

No!

CROMWELL No.

Suddenly looks contemptuously at his protege.

59

CROMWELL:

And you'll find it easier, next time.

RICH has a moment of violent shame.

DISSOLVE 67 INT. CANTERBURY CHAPTERHOUSE

ANGLING DOWN. The Princes of the Church ascend the shallow stone spiral to the Chapterhouse of Canterbury in a river of black velvet caps, billowing lawn sleeves and susurrating slippers. The KING'S REPRESENTATIVE .stands impassively, in the circular Chapterhouse as they take their seats, each in his episcopal throne. Silence and stillness save for a little nervous coughing which echoes from the vaulted roof. REPRESENTATIVE glances at CRANMER, raised above the rest. CRANMER bows assent. REPRESENTATIVE lets fall open the scroll he carries. REPRESENTATIVE

My Lord Archbishop, my Lords, Reverend Doctors of the Church—CAMERA PANS over the varied faces, benign, shrewd, ascetic, gross. REPRESENTATIVE

The answer of our liege lord Henry to his trusty well-beloved subjects, pontiffs in the Canterbury Convocation. BACK to the REPRESENTATIVE.

His Majesty accepts your humble admission of many grievous errors, for which he accepts the manumission of one hundred thousand pounds in token.

But, mindful for the ordering of the Realm and the quietness of his subjects, His Majesty requires that you do now straightly renounce your pretended allegiance to the See of Rome and admit the Statute passed through Parliament, acknowledging the King's good title: Supreme Head of the Church in England. He folds the scroll, looks round the assembly.

Now my lords, what's your answer, yea or nay?

CUT:

Revised 4-5-66 60 68 INT. MORE'S HOUSE GREAT HALL

CLOSE SHOT MORE, his hands on the chain, his face grim, listening to NORFOLK who faces him, ALICE, ROPER, MARGARET in a formal row. He half lifts the chain . it catches in the folds of his fur hood MORE Take it.

NORFOLK:

MORE turns to his wife:-

MORE Alice?

ALICE:

No! Sun and moon Master More you're taken for a wise man! Is this wisdom—to betray your ability, abandon your station, and forget your duty to your kith and kin? MORE bows his head to it, turns to MARGARET and ROPER, who steps forward eagerly. ROPER Shall I sir?

MORE:

No thank you, son Roper Margaret, will you?

She steps forward.

MARGARET Yes.

A moment's confrontation She takes the chain from his shoulders MARGARET If you want.

MORE There's my clever girl.

MARGARET turns to NORFOLK, about to hand him the chain.

Revised 4-5-66 61 68 Continued

ROPER Well done, sir!

MORE and NORFOLK both look sharply at: ROPER, defiant.

ROPER:

In my opinion, that thing's a degradation! In my opinion-

MORE:

(-with sudden rage)

Silence!

(more softly)

Will! Silence! Remember that you have a wife now, and may have children!

NORFOLK steps forward, with deliberate formality and takes chain from MARGARET. NORFOLK

His Majesty accepts your resignation very sadly. He is mindful of your goodness and past loyalty: And in any matter which concerns your honour and welfare he will continue your good lord- CUT TO 69 EXT. MORE'S GARDEN

The chain rests on NORFOLK's arm as he and MORE emerge from the house to the garden, walking fast 62

NORFOLK:

(curtly)

All right Thomas, make me understand. Because tell you now-.to me this looks like cowardice! MORE

(a bit ruffled)

All right, I will. This isn't "reformation", this is war against the Church. Our King, has declared war on the Pope because the Pope will not declare that the Queen is not his wife. NORFOLK And is she?

MORE looks at him, laughs, pats his arm. NORFOLK shakes off his hand and repeats: Is she?

MORE arrests him. Makes a display of looking about, conspiratorial. MORE Have I your word that what we say here is between us two?

NORFOLK:

Very well.

MORE:

And if the King should command you to repeat what I may say?

NOR FOLK:

I should keep my word to you!

MORE:

Then, what has become of your oath of obedience to the King?

Revised 4-5-66 63

69 Continued

NORFOLK:

NORFOLK:

MORE No, I show you the times.

CUT:

70 EXT. MORE'S GARDEN & STEPS

NORFOLK:

river wall from MORE's garden. He turns: NORFOLK

All right—we are at war with the Pope! The Pope's a Prince, isn't he? MORE He is also the successor of St. Peter, our only link with Christ. NORFOLK So you believe! And will you forfeit all you've got—which includes the respect of your country—for a belief? MORE

Mm. Because what matters to me is that

I believe it. Or rather, no—not that I believe

it, but that I believe it. I trust I make myself obscure?

64

ò NORFOLK

Perfectly. Why d'you insult me with his lawyer's chatter?

MORE Because I am afraid.

71 EXT. RIVER MUD-FLAT

NORFOLK:

He descends the steps, turns and looks up, framed in green willow. This isn't Spain, you know! ... This is England!

ò

CUT:

72 MORE'S HOUSE ò GREAT HALL

MORE's household is assembled in the hall. Their babble dies as a door

opens in the gallery above and ALICE, MARGARET, ROPER, MORE emerge. MORE My friends, you know why I have called you here. I have to-day resigned my office. I am no longer a-
(smiles at them) "Great Man".

Murmur of sycophantic laughter from HOUSEHOLD. STEWARD steps forward, righteous: STEWARD

Sir, we want you to know that we're all on your side!

65

MORE:

(sharply)

My side? What side is that?

STEWARD:

(unctuous)

Well sir, we all know what you think.

MORE:

None of you knows what I think! And if you guess at what I think and babble it about, . you do me no good service! Reaction Shrt his POV. HOUSEHOLD stare back uncomprehending, puzzled by his sudden urgency. MORE

Now since I am no more a Great man, I no longer need a great household. Nor can I afford one. You will have to go ... However I still number some Great Men among my friends; and they still need great households, No-one will be turned away from here until we've found another place for him (to STEWARD; quietly)

That is all.

STEWARD turns, gestures HOUSEHOLD out.

ALICE, MARGARET, ROPER return _through door on gallery. MORE is about to follow when (on SOUND) a discreet cough. He turns, reluctantly. Looks down and sees: STEWARD, a model of mournful propriety, looking up at him at foot of stairs, his WIFE behind him; she bobs a curtsey. MORE, foreseeing it all, looks a bit dry; as one tackling a small, necessary, distasteful task, descends, saying: MORE

What about you, Matthew, will you stay?

STEWARD Well sir, that's according.

MORE at foot of stairs helps him to the heart of the matter. 66

MORE:

There will be more work and ... less money.

STEWARD:

(statesmanlike)

Don't see how I can then, sir. After all, I've got my own responsib-

Indicates WIFE.

MORE:

Quite right Matthew. Why should you?

Turns to reascend watched by STEWARD, turns again.

MORE:

I shall miss you, Matthew.

STEWARD:

(jocose)

No-o-o sir—you see through me sir; I know that.

MORE:

I shall miss you Matthew. I shall miss you.

A moment of confrontation. MORE releases him by turning away. STEWARD, with wife, CLOSE SHOT, his face puzzled, shocked watches him. Then goes. So soon as they are out of sight: 73 INT. BUTLER'S ALCOVE

STEWARD:

Now damn me isn't that them all over!

He hurls cap onto ground. His WIFE retrieves it. He takes it, absently.

Miss me? What's in me for .him to miss? He lectures WIFE, defensive, wordly-wise. "Matthew, will you take a cut in your wages? No Sir Thomas I will not"—that's it. Points_warning finger at WIFE. And that's all of it!
67

WIFE, a fan of MORE, afraid of her husband, looks at him dubious. He reacts: All right—so he's down on his luck—Pm sorry'Don't mind saying that; Pm sorry—bad luck! If I had any good luck to spare he could have some! I wish we could all have good luck all the time! I wish rain water was beer! I wish we had wings! ... But we don'. CUT r14 INT. MORE'S HOUSE
BED CHAMBER

MORE enters his bedroom, ALICE sirs there, sewing savagely. He waits. She looks up. ALICE

So there s an end of you. What will you do now? Sit by the fire and making goslings in the ash?

MORE:

Not at all, Alice. I expect write a bit. I'll write, read, think. I

think learn to fish: play with my grandchildren when son Roper's done his duty. Alice—shall I reach you to read? ALICE No by God:

And now comes out with what preys deepest on her mind:

Poor silly man—d'you think they'll leave you here to learn to fish? MORE

If we govern our tongues they will!

It threatens to be a marital row. Curtly:

Look) I have a word.to say about that. I

have made no statement. I've resigned, that's all. The King is made by Act of Parliament Supreme Head of the Church in England. This English Church will first divorce him from the QueEn, then marry him to Lady Anne. MORE (Con')

But on any of these matters, have you heard me make a statement? ALICE

No. And if I'm to lose my rank and fall to housekeeping I want to know the reason: so make a statement now. MORE

No! Alice, it's a point of law. Accept it from me, Alice, that in silence is my safety under the law: But my silence must be absolute, it must extend to you. ALICE

In short you don't trust me.

MORE:

Look—Fm the Lord Chief Justice, I'm Cromwell, Pm the Keeper of the Tower and I take your hand and I clamp it on the Bible, on the Blessed Cross—CLOSE SHOT, he takes a Bible and does so—

And I say. "Woman. has your husband made a statement on these matters?"

Now—on peril of your soul remember—what's your answer? ALICE No.

MORE And so it must remain.

ALICE sews; he puts away the Bible. She speaks, softly.

ALICE:

Have you opened your mind to Meg?

MORE:

Would I tell Meg what I won't tell you?

ALICE:

Meg has your.heart. I know that well enough.

68

69

It is said sadly, but not resentfully. MORE is moved, but it is the truth.

He stoops and kisses the coarse grey hair. She says anxiously: ALICE

This is a dangerous matter then; if you haven't told Meg.

MORE:

(comfortably)

I don't think so. No no—when they find I'm silent they'll ask nothing better than to leave me silent: you'll see. CUT

75 EXT. HAMPTON COURTYARD SNOW

It is Winter but all that we can see is snow 'on pavement and ledges as in

CLOSE TRACKING SHOT we cross a courtyard of Hampton with RICH. He is well clad now and has an air of modest consequence. He passes two officials with a little bow and they turn to look after him, heads together. 75A INT.

HAMPTON STAIRS

He enters a small doorway and plunges up the dark stairs, pauses and listens at a door. 76 INT. CROMWELL'S NEW STUDY

#A ROOM IN HAMPTON. CROMWELL seated at a table loaded with papers. NORFOLK seated in a carved chair, uneasy and exasperated CROMWELL is insultingly patient. NORFOLK

But he's silent Mr Secretary—why not leave him silent?

CROMWELL:

Not being a man of letters, Your Grace, you perhaps don't realize the extent of his reputation. This "silence" of his is bellowing up and down Europe! In Europe he is claimed as the King's enemy. NOR FOLK Rubbish—Crank he may be: traitor he is not.

. 70

CROMWELL:

Exactly. And with a little pressure—

Door opens at far end of room and RICH enters.

With a little pressure he can be got to say so. And that's what we need—a brief declaration of his loyalty to the present administration. NORFOLK I still say let sleeping dogs lie.

CROMWELL:

The King does not agree with you.

NORFOLK:

RICH looks at NORFOLK.

CROMWELL looks at NORFOLK. He rallies:

NORFOLK:

What kind of pressure do you think you can bring to bear?

CROMWELL:

I have evidence that Sir Thomas, while he" was a judge, accepted bribes. NORFOLK What?

Leaps up.

Goddammit he was the only judge since Cato who didn't accept bribes! When was there last a Chancellor whose possessions, after three years in office totalled one hundred pounds and a gold chain? CROMWELL Richard.

RICH goes to door. CROMWELL sits back,

It is as you imply common practice, but a

CROMWELL (Cont)

practice may be common and remain an offence; this offence could send a man to the tower. RICH admits WOMAN (Averil Machin) Come here.

She comes forward.

This woman's name is Averil Machin; she comes from Leicester. She entered a case in the Court of Requests in-Consults papers.

WOMAN A property case it was.

CROMWELL:

(mildly)

Shut your mouth. A property case in the Court of Requests in April 1526.

WOMAN

And got a wicked false judgement!

CROMWELL:

And got an impeccably correct judgement from our friend Sir Thomas. WOMAN

No sir, it was not!

CROMWELL:

Tell this gentleman about the gift you gave the judge. The judgement for what it's worth, was the right one. WOMAN No sir-!

CROMWELL looks at her. She falters.

Well not to my thinking ...

(then with eager venom, to Norfolk) I gave him a cup sir; an Italian silver cup I bought in Leicester for a hundred shillings. 71

72

NORFOLK:

Did Sir Thomas accept this cup?

WOMAN He did sir.

CROMWELL:

He did, we can corroborate that. You can go.

She wants to linger and explain her case.

Go!

RICH takes her to the door and returns, while NORFOLK, scornfully: NORFOLK

Is that your witness?

CROMWELL:

No; by an odd coincidence this cup later came into the hands of Master Rich here. NORFOLK How?

RICH:

He gave it to me, Your Grace.

NORFOLK:

RICH looks fleetingly awkward; then, an off-hand shrug.
RICH A gift.

NORFOLK:

Oh ... Oh yes ... Yes, you were a "friend" weren't you?
Looks RICH up and down as though he were a faulty animal. RICH looks down.
When did Thomas give you this thing?

RICH:

I don't exactly remember, Your Grace.

NORFOLK:

73

NORFOLK:

D'you "remember" what you did with it?
RICH I sold it.

NORFOLK:

RICH A shop.

NORFOLK:

RICH:

No. They've lost track of it.

NORFOLK:

CROMWELL has watched RICH's discomfiture, NORFOLK's bullying with some
enjoyment. CROMWELL
You doubt Master Rich's word, Your Grace?

NORFOLK:

CROMWELL This is the Bill of Sale.

NORFOLK:

CROMWELL, satisfied, lays down the paper. With extraordinary agility for so
hefty a man, NORFOLK grabs it. Then, frowning, he labours over reading it,
breathing hard; we realize that he is barely literate. Then: NORFOLK
That cow put her case into court in April 26, you said. That is dated May.
He replaces the bill on the table.
In other words, the moment Thomas knew this cup was a bribe, he dropped it
into the nearest 74

He looks at RICH.

NORFOLK:

RICH looks venomous, CROMWELL laughs.

CROMWELL:

The facts will bear that interpretation, I suppose.

NORFOLK:

NORFOLK:

Oh this is a horse that won't run, Master Secretary.

CROMWELL:

Just a trial gallop Your Grace: we'll find something better. He stands, too. NORFOLK's grin fades. He looks unhappy and grunts again. NORFOLK Well—I want no part of it.

CROMWELL You have no choice.

NORFOLK:

What's that you say?

CROMWELL The King—

NORFOLK:

The King particularly wishes you to be active in this matter of Sir Thomas.

NORFOLK He has not told me that.

CROMWELL Indeed? He told me.

75

NORFOLK:

(appealing)

Look here, Cromwell, what's the purpose of all this?

CROMWELL:

(pleasantly)

Now there you have me. It's a "matter of conscience" I think. The Kings wants Sir Thomas to bless his marriage. If Sir Thomas attended the wedding now it might save us all a lot of trouble. He is escorting NORFOLK out.

NORFOLK shakes his head, gloomy. NORFOLK He won't.

CROMWELL:

If I were you I should try to persuade him.

NORFOLK:

menace from this upstart. CROMWELL I really would try, if I were you.

NORFOLK:

CROMWELL My dear Norfolk, this isn't Spain—
He spreads his hands, jocose:

This is England:

CUT 77 EXT. BELL-TOWER

ANGLING UPWARDS. BELL-ROPES, garlanded with green and white, leap up and down like dancers. ON SOUND the bells crash out. ANGLING DOWNWARDS. THE BELL-RINGERS pull frenziedly; barrels of beer and tankards about them, a fresh relay of ringers ready. Everyone wearing green and white favours. CUT 76

78 INT. BOLLEYN'S MANOR HOUSE HALL

CHURCH BELLS continuous but now more distant, and overlain by cheering. HENRY, dressed in green and ANNE dressed in white, backs to CAMERA at an open window, HENRY raising a golden tankard to the unseen crowd outside. He turns to us, leading ANNE to a seat at a table, festooned in green and white. SERVANTS wearing green and white favours shut the window, so that bells and cheering are overlain by music; applause. HENRY raises tankard to guests. MEDIUM SHOT A representative sample of GUESTS, looking up at him, clapping, all wearing green and white favours. HENRY, smiling. Suddenly sees something over their heads. Looks eager. MEDIUM LONG SHOT what he has seen: A group of OFFICIALS, along them, back towards us, MORE. HENRY descends from dais. TRACKING shot, with mounting interest he advances swiftly, not heeding the bowing and curtsying GUESTS. HIS POV The group of OFFICIALS. They become aware of his approach; MORE, the last. His attention is drawn by one of the others, he is turning. The KING, delighted, only about fifteen feet away now.

KING Thomas—

MORE turns. It is not MORE at all but some quite different man of similar physique. The KING checks, looks deeply chagrined.

The OFFICIALS, puzzled, bow.

The KING returns the bow mechanically, turns on his heel.

ANNE is watching, nervously. He joins her. Sits in his chair looking gloomy and dangerous. She doesn't know what to do. The bells peel out ON SOUND.

DISSOLVE

01.

77

79 EXT. RIVERSIDE NEAR MORE'S HOUSE WITH REEDS

The screen is full of windblown Autumn reeds, scarlet, gold and brown. ON SOUND, Autumnal wind, and heavy breathing, with splashing feet, the swish and crunch of sickles. MARGARET and ROPER, intent, bent low, work onto frame MARGARET slightly ahead; it is a race. MARGARET more absorbed than

ROPER. Both reach simultaneously for a bunch of reeds with their left hands, sickles poised in right. CLOSE SHOT, their flushed faces, ROPER amused, but MARGARET: MARGARET Mine.

ROPER straightens, looks down fondly as she vigorously sickles it and straightens. They retrace their steps through the shallows to the bank, add each his own harvest to two separate piles. MARGARET's twice the size of ROPER's. Now she smiles: MARGARET Well?

ROPER Monstrous, I married a woodcutter.

He throws his heap onto hers and slips a rope round. Straightens. She looks at him. ROPER

Oh winner take all. And carry it.

She accepts the challenge, stoops and struggles. Instantly: ROPER No: He lifts the bundle with one arm. She looks at him pleased. Pleased in turn he lifts her with the other arm, her face now level with his CLOSE SHOT, the young married pair, flushed and healthy, face to face. MARGARET Strong Will ... Good Will ... Good, good Will .

And gently takes his face in her hands and kisses him. He puts her 78 down, and in the instant both become aware of something, off, their faces alert. On sound, hoofbeats. Their POV, a horseman, not galloping madly but at the canter, speeds past them at a distance, the river flashing behind him. They look at one another, not quite alarmed, yet alert, ROPER drops the reeds; they run, barefoot. 80 INT. MORE'S HOUSE GREAT HALL

MESSENGER enters hesitantly, holding letter. With him we mark the signs of downfall, the very small fire in the baronial fireplace, the table stripped of silver its bare oak clean, the carpets gone, the tapestries gone, all quiet, stripped, empty. His footsteps echo as he traverses the house, meeting at the rear: MARGARET and ROPER, breathless from running. They don't look like the scions of a distinguished house. MESSENGER uncertain. MESSENGER Lady Margaret?

MARGARET Yes?

His glance falls quizzically. a little embarrassedly on the sickles she holds, MARGARET We've been cutting reeds.

She hands them to ROPER and in answer to his continuing uncertainty says straightforwardly: We use them for fuel.

She is effortlessly Lady Margaret, despite her rough warm clothes and peasant vigour. He bows a little, produces the letter Formal. MESSENGER I have a letter for your father, Lady Margaret. From Hampton Court . She looks at him, fear showing.

He is to answer certain .. charges .. Before Secretary Cromwell CUT 79

81 INT. HAMPTON CROMWELL'S NEW STUDY

CLOSE SHOT The brutal, clever face of CROMWELL, ready for the fray. CROMWELL

Good of you to come, Sir Thomas. Master Rich will make a record of our

conversation. MORE

Good of you to tell me, Master Secretary..

CROMWELL laughs pleasantly, looks at: RICH ready to write. CROMWELL I think you know one another?

MORE:

Indeed yes, we're old friends. That's a nice gown you have, Richard. RICH has the grace to look uncomfortable.

CROMWELL:

Believe me Sir Thomas--no that's asking too much--but let me tell you all the same, you have no more sincere admirer than myself. RICH prepares to write. Not yet, Rich, not yet.

He invites MORE to join him in laughing at RICH.

MCRE:

If I might hear the charges.

CROMWELL Charges?

MORE:

I understand there are certain charges.

CROMWELL:

Some ambiguities of behaviour I should like to clarify--hardly 'charges'.

80

MORE:

Make a note of that, will you Master Rich? There are no charges. CROMWELL laughs admiringly and shakes his head.

CROMWELL Sir Thomas, Sir Thomas ...

His smile fades, sadly, as one reluctantly compelled to broach a painful subject. The King is not pleased with you.

MORE I am grieved.

CROMWELL:

Yet do you know that even now, if you could bring yourself to agree with the Church, the Universities, the Lords and the Commons, there is no honour which the King would be likely to deny you? MORE

I am well acquainted with His Grace's generosity.

CROMWELL:

(disapproves. Sighs again)

Very well. You have heard of the so-called "Holy Maid of Kent"--she who was

executed for prophesying against the King? MORE Oh yes; I met her.

CROMWELL:

Just so, you met her. Yet you did not warn His Majesty of her treason. How was that? MORE

She spoke no treason. Our talk was not political.

CROMWELL:

My dear More, the woman was notorious. Do you expect me to believe that? 81

MORE:

Happily there were witnesses.

CROMWELL consults paper.

CROMWELL You wrote a letter to her.

MORE:

Yes, I wrote advising her to abstain from meddling in affairs of State. I have a copy of this letter—also witnessed. ò CROMWELL You have been cautious.

MORE:

I like to keep my affairs regular.

CROMWELL puts down paper, picks up a small book. He opens it, glancing at the fly: CROMWELL

Sir Thomas, in the May of 1526 the King published a book

(permits himself superior smile of an intellectual for the work of an amateur)

a theological work. It was called "A Defence of the Seven Sacraments."

MORE:

Yes. For which he was named "Defender of the Faith" by His Holiness the Pope. CROMWELL

- By the Bishop of Rome. Or do you insist on "Pope"?

MORE:

No. "Bishop of Rome" if you like. It doesn't alter his authority. CROMWELL looks surprised, amused, pleased.

CROMWELL:

Thank you. You come to the point very readily; what is that authority? As regards the Church in England, for example, what exactly is the Bishop of

Rome's authority? 82

eft TWO SHOT MORE and CROMWELL A tense confrontation. Then: MORE
You will find it very ably set out and defended, Master Secretary, in the
King's Book. CROMWELL drops the book, saying:

CROMWELL:

The Book published under the King's name would be more accurate. You wrote
that book. MORE

- I wrote no part of it.

CROMWELL:

- I do not mean you actually held the pen.

MORE:

- I answered to my best ability some points of common law which the King
put to me. As I was bound to do. CROMWELL

- Do you deny that you instigated it?

MORE:

- It was from first to last the King's own project.

CROMWELL:

- The King says not..

MORE thinks this out. Then:

MORE:

The King knows the truth of it. And whatever he may have said to you, he
will not give evidence to support this accusation. CROMWELL Why not?

MORE:

Because evidence is given on oath, and he will not perjure himself. If you
don't know that, you don't yet know him. 83

OP" THREE SHOT RICH again.

MORE smiles at CROMWELL, proud of the ICING. CROMWELL glowers. He goes
apart. Formal. CROMWELL

Sir Thomas More, is there anything you wish to say to me concerning the
King's marriage With Lady Anne? MORE

I understood I was not to be asked that again.

CROMWELL:

Evidently you understood wrongly. These charges—

MORE:

They are terrors for children, Master

Secretary, not for me!

CROMWELL:

Then know that the King commands me to charge you in his name with great ingratitude! And to tell you that there never was nor could be so villainous a servant nor so traitorous a subject_ as yourself ! MORE
So I am brought here at last.

CROMWELL:

(contemptuous)

Brought? You brought yourself to where you stand now.

He flings himself into his seat. You may go home.

MORE rises, goes.

CLOSE SHOT, CROMWELL adds: For the present.

MORE checks at the door, and goes.

84

Instantly, CROMWELL's immobility deserts him. He takes a heavy paper from the table, rising, saying: CROMWELL Right.

RICH is at his back, prepared, throws a heavy cloak over CROMWELL's shoulders. CROMWELL going. CUT

82 EXT. HAMPTON RIVER-STEPS NIGHT

Heavy rain. MORE, his garments wet, stands on the bank and calls: MORE
Boat:

His POV, the flickering torches of the "cab-rank". Boat ...? CLOSE SHOT The BOATMAN huddled under a sack. MORE's voice comes distantly, He looks out. The voice comes again, Other BOATMEN look out from under their shelter. They look at one another. BOATMAN seizes his torch, plunges it in the river, pulls sack over his head again. MORE as before. With him we see the torches extinguished. MORE is worried. He says, without much conviction to himself: MORE

Oh come along .. It's not as bad as that:

His head turns sharply.

A shadowy figure, walking close to the wall, approaches. It is NORFOLK. MORE is pleased.

MORE:

Howard .. ,

(comic indignation)

I can't get home. They won't bring me a boat.

85

NORFOLK:

NORFOLK:

MORE Is it as bad as that?

NORFOLK:

MORE:

Then it's good of you to be seen with me.

NORFOLK:

NORFOLK:

MORE follows his glance, seeing:

The rain-wet, puddled towpath. Some distance away, a rowing'boat upended, leaning against the wall. MORE (incredulous)
Were you followed?

NORFOLK:

It bounces, echoing, leaps and strikes the boat. A moment's pause. A figure darts out and scuttles away ratlike into the darkness. MORE, horrified, confronts NORFOLK, who nods, grimly.

NORFOLK:

Thomas. You're dangerous to know!
MORE Then don't know me.

NORFOLK:

MORE I mean as a friend.
86

NORFOLK:

I am your friend! I wish I wasn't but I am:
MORE What's to be done, then?

NORFOLK:

He puts a hand on MORE's arm. Gently, MORE removes it.

MORE:

I can't give in, Howard.
(smiles)
Our friendship's more mutable than that.

NORFOLK:

Oh that's immutable is it? The one fixed point in a world of turning friendship, is that Thomas More will not give in: MORE
(urgent to explain)

To me it has to be, for that's myself: Affection goes as deep in me as you I think, but only God is love right through; Howard, and that's my self.
NORFOLK And who are you?
He walks away a few paces, and looks MORE up and down.

A lawyer:

ones, the proud, splenetic ones—and we've all given in: Why must you stand out? Goddammit man, it's disproportionate: (quick and quiet)
You'll break my heart.
87 MORE is moved. He goes to NORFOLK and takes his hand.

MORE:

No-one's safe Howard, and you have a son. We'll end our friendship now.
NORFOLK For friendship's sake?
MORE Yes.

NORFOLK:

gloomily: NORFOLK Daft!
MORE looks at him affectionately. Walks away, puts his hands behind his back and says loudly: MORE Norfolk you're a fool!
The insult produces an automatic reflex. But then NORFOLK folds his arms, snorts. NORFOLK
You can't place a quarrel Thomas, you haven't the style.

MORE:

Hear me out. You and your class have given in—as you rightly call it—because the religion of this country means nothing to you one way or the other. NORFOLK
Well that's a foolish saying for a start. The nobility of England—MORE
The nobility of England my lord would have snored through the Sermon on the Mount! But you'll labour like scholars, at a bull-dog's pedigree. NORFOLK begins to breathe hard, but:
88.

NORFOLK:

An artificial quarrel's not a quarrel,

MORE:

We've had a quarrel since the day we met. Our friendship was mere sloth.
NORFOLK
You can be cruel when you've a mind to be,
but I've always known that.

MORE:

What d'you value in your bulldogs? Gripping, is it not?

NORFOLK:

going now. Sharply. jeering. Eh?

NORFOLK:

MORE That's their nature ?

NORFOLK:

MORE:

And that s why you breed them?

NORFOLK:

MORE:

It's so with men I will not give in because I oppose it—not my pride, not my spleen, nor any other of my appetites but I do, I. He goes up to NORFOLK and begins prodding him offensively, and NORFOLK's temper begins to go.. Is there nowhere in the midst of all this muscle, one single sinew which serves no appetite of Norfolk's but is. just Norfolk? There is! Give that some exercise my lord! 89

NORFOLK:

Thomas—

MORE:

For as you stand you'll go before your Maker ill-conditioned: NORFOLK Now steady, Thomas—

MORE:

And he'll think that somewhere back along your pedigree—
He pauses, glances apprehensively at his powerful friend, and says: a bitch got over the wall: NORFOLK simply can't take it in for a beat. Then galvanically lashes out. MORE ducks without dignity. They freeze thus, MORE down in the wet looking up fearfully at NORFOLK, enormous:.. and splendid. Then NORFOLK turns. We hear his receding footsteps, as MORE rises, shakily, looking sadly after him. Tarns, wrapping his cloak about him, sets off along the towpath. CUT 83 INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS NIGHT
CROMWELL walks swiftly along an obscure brick passage, still carrying the heavy paper, throwing off his rainsoaked cloak, thrusts open an unimportant looking door and is in: The House of Commons in session. An OLD MAN is on his feet, his thin voice, echoing under the vault. The Knights and Burgesses barely heed him, and in any case it is CROMWELL they are waiting

for. His quiet entry draws attention, makes them sit up and whisper. OLD MAN falters to silence, thus: OLD MAN

(rhubarb speech as required,
partly audible)

... in consequence of which decay of Guilds, the rough wool coming out of my own County of Yorkshire is now notably amiss, to the great dislike of foreign merchants. The prosperity of England 90

He, last of all, sees CROMWELL, sitting nearby, all eyes on him, looking blankly at OLD MAN who: OLD MAN

... I will defer the rest of my matter till ...

And sits. CROMWELL looks to SPEAKER. SPEAKER nods. CROMWELL rises. CROMWELL That the loyal Commons here assembled will speedily enact this Bill I doubt not, forasmuch as it concerns the King's New Title and his marriage with Queen Anne. Both matters pleasing to a loyal subject. He looks up. Hasty murmur of approbation. He nods, infuses an undertone of stern indignation into his voice: But, my masters, we have among us a sort of hypocrite; a brood of paradoxical cheats; discreet traitors and—TOP** DISSOLVE back to MORE on towpath commences.

- as it were rebels in moderation. The which deceit the King can brook no longer: And we, his loyal huntsmen must now drive these subtle foxes from their cover ... 84 EXT. TOWPATH NEAR MORE'S HOUSE NIGHT

The rain has stopped. MORE steps doggedly along the towpath, country now, wet trees glistening about him, the banks grassy. MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT. Where the footpath runs at the river's brink, the water swollen with rain, tide and current together, wrenches at the roots of the hazels, mines the soft clay banks. MORE plods on.

85 EXT. GARDEN GATE MORE'S HOUSE NIGHT

CLOSE TRACKING SHOT MARGARET leaves a garden gate set in a high wall, a hood over her head, emerging onto the same path. She looks along it. Her POV the footpath, empty.

She sets off, moving opposite on screen to MORE's progression, 91

86 EXT. TOWPATH NEAR MORE'S HOUSE NIGHT

CLOSE TRACKING SHOT', MORE He stops and listens. Looks:

His POV the path bends sharply a few feet in front of him. MARGARET comes round the bend. MORE

Margaret:

(frowns at her agitation)

What is it, Meg?

With which, he takes her arm and they walk on in tracking shot, the river running by their feet, its busy gurgle running under their talk. MARGARET There's a new Act going through Parliament. Giles Cooper's ridden out to tell us. MORE Oh?

He is more interested than alarmed, puzzled by her pent-up concern. She

nods. MARGARET

Father, by this Act they're going to administer an oath; about the Marriage, MORE stops.

MORE:

(steadily)

On what compulsion is the oath?

MARGARET High Treason.

A heavy slice of clay bank falls with soft finality into the incessantly working river. MORE What's the wording?

MARGARET:

Do the words master? We know what it will mean.

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MORE:

It will mean what the words say, Meg. An oath is made of words, It may be possible to take it