

# Henry V F F F

Act II, sc. 4 (line 167)

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

*Most gracious sir,  
In humblest manner I require your highness,  
That it shall please you to declare, in hearing  
Of all these ears,--for where I am robb'd and bound,  
There must I be unloosed, although not there  
At once and fully satisfied,--whether ever I  
Did broach this business to your highness; or  
Laid any scruple in your way, which might  
Induce you to the question on't? or ever  
Have to you, but with thanks to God for such  
A royal lady, spake one the least word that might  
Be to the prejudice of her present state,  
Or touch of her good person?*

## **KING HENRY VIII**

My lord cardinal,

I do excuse you; yea, upon mine honour,  
I free you from't. You are not to be taught  
That you have many enemies, that know not  
Why they are so, but, like to village-curs,  
Bark when their fellows do: by some of these  
The queen is put in anger. You're excused:  
But will you be more justified? You ever  
Have wish'd the sleeping of this business; never desired  
It to be stirr'd; but oft have hinder'd, oft,  
The passages made toward it: on my honour,  
I speak my good lord cardinal to this point,  
And thus far clear him. Now, what moved me to't,  
I will be bold with time and your attention:

Then mark the inducement. Thus it came; give heed to't:

My conscience first received a tenderness,

Scruple, and prick, on certain speeches utter'd

By the Bishop of Bayonne, then French ambassador;

Who had been hither sent on the debating

A marriage 'twixt the Duke of Orleans and

Our daughter Mary: i' the progress of this business,

Ere a determinate resolution, he,

I mean the bishop, did require a respite;

Wherein he might the king his lord advertise

Whether our daughter were legitimate,

Respecting this our marriage with the dowager,

Sometimes our brother's wife. This respite shook

The bosom of my conscience, enter'd me,

Yea, with a splitting power, and made to tremble

The region of my breast; which forced such way,

That many mazed considerings did throng

And press'd in with this caution. First, methought

I stood not in the smile of heaven; who had

Commanded nature, that my lady's womb,

If it conceived a male child by me, should

Do no more offices of life to't than

The grave does to the dead; for her male issue

Or died where they were made, or shortly after

This world had air'd them: hence I took a thought,  
This was a judgment on me; that my kingdom,  
Well worthy the best heir o' the world, should not  
Be gladdened in't by me: then follows, that  
I weigh'd the danger which my realms stood in  
By this my issue's fail; and that gave to me  
Many a groaning throe. Thus hulling in  
The wild sea of my conscience, I did steer  
Toward this remedy, whereupon we are  
Now present here together: that's to say,  
I meant to rectify my conscience,--which  
I then did feel full sick, and yet not well,--  
By all the reverend fathers of the land  
And doctors learn'd: first I began in private  
With you, my Lord of Lincoln; you remember  
How under my oppression I did reek,  
When I first moved you.