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SF PERUSALS

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

A Play in Two Acts

by Robert Bolt

SAMUEL FRENCH

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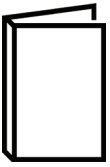
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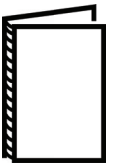
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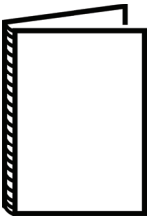
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A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

Produced by H. M. Tennent Ltd at the Globe Theatre, London, on the 1st July 1960, with the following cast of characters:

(in the order of their appearance)

THE COMMON MAN	Leo McKern
SIR THOMAS MORE	Paul Scofield
MASTER RICHARD RICH	John Bown
THE DUKE OF NORFOLK, Earl Marshal of England	Alexander Gauge
LADY ALICE MORE, Sir Thomas's wife	Wynne Clark
LADY MARGARET MORE, Sir Thomas's daughter	Pat Keen
CARDINAL WOLSEY	Willoughby Goddard
THOMAS CROMWELL	Andrew Keir
SIGNOR CHAPUYS, the Spanish Ambassador	Geoffrey Dunn
CHAPUYS' ATTENDANT	Brian Harrison
WILLIAM ROPER	John Carson
KING HENRY THE EIGHT	Richard Leech
A WOMAN	Beryl Andrews
THOMAS CRANMER, Archbishop of Canterbury	William Roderick

Directed by Noel Willman
Scenery and costumes by Motley

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

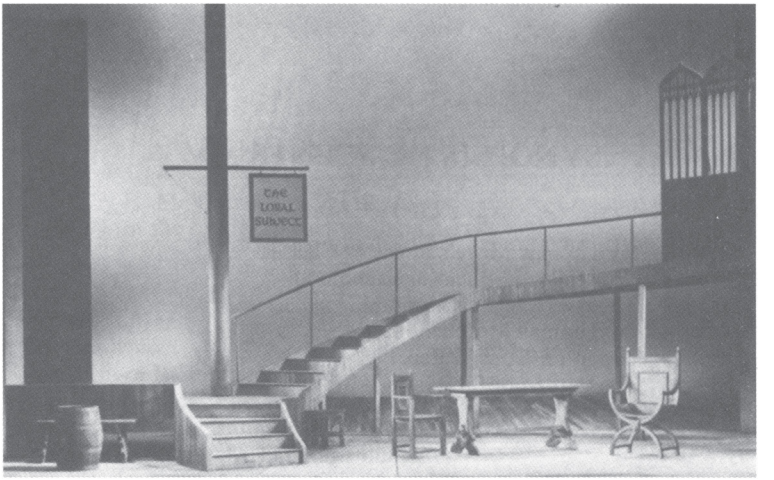
ACT I

Scene One	Sir Thomas More's house at Chelsea
Scene Two	Wolsey's apartment at Richmond
Scene Three	The riverside at Richmond
Scene Four	Sir Thomas More's house
Scene Five	Hampton Court Palace
Scene Six	The garden of Sir Thomas More's house
Scene Seven	An Inn

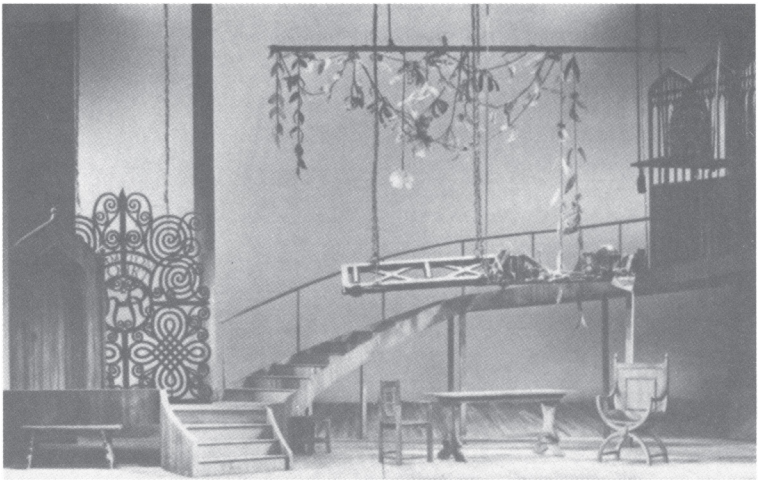
ACT II

Scene One	Sir Thomas More's house
Scene Two	Cromwell's apartment at Hampton Court
Scene Three	Sir Thomas More's house
Scene Four	Cromwell's apartment at Hampton Court
Scene Five	The riverside at Hampton Court
Scene Six	The Tower of London
Scene Seven	The same
Scene Eight	The Hall of Westminster
Scene Nine	Tower Hill

Time – the Sixteenth Century



Act I, Scene Five: Hampton Court Palace. Showing also: Papal crown, I, 2; Chapel door and flowers, I, 6; Shelf, II, 2; Rack, II, 6.



Act I, Scene Seven: An Inn.

"More is a man of an angel's wit and singular learning; I know not his fellow. For where is the man of that gentleness, lowliness and affability? And as time requireth a man of marvellous mirth and pastimes; and sometimes of as sad gravity: a man for all seasons."

Robert Whittinton

"He was the person of the greatest virtue these islands ever produced."

Samuel Johnson

ACT I

SCENE. *The main setting is the same throughout, but is varied by lighting and the addition of scenic items to indicate the venue of the action. A lightly constructed curved stairway from a rostrum up right, leads up and off left. From the rostrum, four steps lead to ground level right centre. On the rostrum, at the foot of the stairway, there is a slender pillar reaching up to the flies. The stairway has a light hand-rail on the upstage side, and the top is masked at the downstage side by a light window grille. Black wings mask the setting right and left and a cyclorama fills the background. At the opening of the Play, there is a refectory table centre, with a large armchair left of it and a small chair right of it. There is a short bench below the rostrum right, and a small stool is in the curve of the stairway right centre. A large property basket stands down left.*

Before the curtain rises, a loud, single bell rings.

When the curtain rises, the setting is in darkness. The bell stops. A single spot comes on, focused vertically on The **COMMON MAN** *who is seated on the basket. He is in late middle age. He wears from head to foot, black tights which delineate his pot-bellied figure. His face is crafty, loosely benevolent, its best expression that of base humour.*

COMMON MAN It is perverse! To start a play made up of Kings and Cardinals in speaking costumes and intellectuals with embroidered mouths, with me. If a King or Cardinal had done the Prologue he'd have had the right materials. And an intellectual would have shown enough majestic meanings,

coloured propositions, and closely woven liturgical stuff to dress the House of Lords. *(He rises to show off his costume)* But this! Is this a costume? Does this say anything? It barely covers one man's nakedness. A bit of black material to reduce Old Adam to The Common Man. *(He moves forward a step or two)* Oh, if they'd let me come on naked, I could have shown you something of my own. Which would have told you without words – something I've forgotten – Old Adam's muffled up. *(He backs to the basket)* Well, for a proposition of my own, I need a costume. *(He takes the coat and hat of a* **STEWARD** *from the basket and puts them on)* Matthew!

Scene One

The general lighting comes up.

The Household Steward of Sir Thomas More. *(He takes from the basket a wicker tray on which there are five goblets, a silver cup and a pewter jug of wine with a lid)*

A burst of conversational merriment is heard off up left.

(he indicates the head of the stairway) There's company to dinner. *(He puts the jug, cup and goblets on the left end of the table)* All right! A Common Man! A Sixteenth-Century Butler! *(He drinks from the jug)* All right – the Six— *(He breaks off, agreeably surprised by the quality of the liquor, regards the jug respectfully and drinks again)* The Sixteenth Century is the Century of the Common Man. *(He replaces the tray in the basket, closes it and pushes it to the side)* Like all the other centuries. *(He pulls the chair left of the table below the left end of it, then crosses to right of the stairway)* And that's my proposition.

SIR THOMAS MORE *enters at the top of the stairway. He is in his late forties. He is pale, middle-sized and not robust. But the life of the mind in him is so abundant and debonair that it illuminates the body. His movements are open and swift but never wild, having a natural moderation. The face is intellectual and quickly delighted, the norm to which it returns serious and compassionate. Only in moments of high crisis does it become ascetic, though then freezingly.*

STEWARD That's Sir Thomas More.

MORE *(descending the stairway)* The wine, please, Matthew.

STEWARD It's there, Sir Thomas.

MORE *(crossing to left of the table)* Is it good?

STEWARD Bless you, sir – *I* don't know.

MORE *(mildly)* Bless you, too, Matthew.

MASTER RICHARD RICH *enters at the top of the stairway. He is in his early thirties, and has a good body, unexercised. He has a studious, unhappy face lit by the fire of banked down appetite. He is an academic hounded by self-doubt to be in the world of affairs and longing to be rescued from himself.*

RICH *(as he slowly descends the stairway; enthusiastically pursuing an argument)* But every man has his price.

MORE No, no!

STEWARD *(contemptuously)* Master Richard Rich.

RICH But, yes! In money, too.

MORE *(with gentle impatience)* No, no, no! *(He pours wine)*

RICH Or pleasure. Titles, women, bricks and mortar, there's always something. *(He reaches the foot of the stairway)*

MORE Childish.

RICH *(moving below the right end of the table)* Well, in suffering, certainly.

MORE *(interested)* Buy a man with suffering?

RICH Impose suffering, and offer him...escape.

MORE Oh. For a moment I thought you were being profound. *(He hands* **RICH** *a goblet of wine)*

RICH *(to the* **STEWARD***)* Good evening, Matthew.

STEWARD *(snubbing)* 'Evening, sir.

RICH No, not a bit profound; it then becomes a purely practical question of how to make him suffer sufficiently.

MORE M'm. *(He takes* **RICH** *by the arm and walks with him down centre)* And...who recommended you to read Signor Machiavelli?

RICH *breaks away laughing; a fraction too long.*

(he smiles) No, who?

RICH *laughs.*

Mm?

RICH Master Cromwell.

MORE Oh. *(He moves to the table)* He's a very able man.

RICH And so he is!

MORE Yes, I say he is. He's very able.

RICH *(moving up centre)* and he will do something for me, he says.

MORE I didn't know you knew him.

RICH *(moving above the right end of the table)* Pardon me, Sir Thomas, but how much do you know about me?

MORE Whatever you've let me know.

RICH I've let you know everything.

MORE Richard, you should go back to Cambridge; you're deteriorating.

RICH Well, I'm not used! D'you know how much I have to show for seven months' work...?

MORE Work?

RICH Work! Waiting's work when you wait as I wait, hard! For seven months, that's two hundred days, I have to show: the acquaintance of the Cardinal's outer doorman, the indifference of the Cardinal's inner doorman, and the Cardinal's chamberlain's hand in my chest. Oh – also one half of a "Good morning" delivered at fifty paces by the Duke of Norfolk. Doubtless he mistook me for someone.

MORE He was very affable at dinner.

RICH Oh, everyone's affable here.

MORE *is pleased.*

Also, of course, the friendship of Sir Thomas More. Or should I say "acquaintance"?

MORE Say "friendship".

RICH Well, there! "A friend of Sir Thomas" and still no office? There must be something wrong with him.

MORE I thought we said "friendship". *(He considers)* The Dean of St Paul's offers you a post; with a house, a servant, and fifty pounds a year.

RICH What? What post?

MORE At the new school.

RICH *(bitterly disappointed)* A teacher! *(He moves to left of the steps)*

MORE A man should go where he won't be tempted. *(He picks up the silver cup and crosses to left of* **RICH***)* Look, Richard, see this. *(He hands the cup to* **RICH***)* Look. Look.

RICH Beautiful.

MORE Italian. Do you want it?

RICH Why...?

MORE No joke; keep it; or sell it.

RICH Well, I... Thank you, of course – thank you. Thank you. But...?

MORE You'll sell it, won't you?

RICH Well, I... Yes, I will.

MORE And buy, what?

RICH *(with sudden ferocity)* Some decent clothes.

MORE *(with sympathy)* Ah!

RICH I want a gown like yours.

MORE You'll get several gowns for that, I should think. It was sent to me a little while ago by some woman. Now she's put a lawsuit into the Court of Requests. It's a bribe, Richard.

RICH Oh. *(Chagrined)* So you give it away, of course.

MORE Yes.

RICH To me.

MORE Well, I'm not going to keep it, and you need it. Of course, if you feel it's contaminated...

RICH No, no. I'll risk it.

They both smile. **RICH** *moves to right of the table and puts the cup on it.*

MORE *(moving to the armchair left centre and sitting)* But, Richard, in office they offer you all sorts of things. I was once offered a whole village, with a mill, and a manor house, and Heaven knows what else – a coat of arms, I shouldn't be surprised. 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 pupils, your friends. God – not a bad public, that. Oh, and a *quiet* life.

RICH *(laughing) You* say that!

MORE Richard, I was commanded into office; it was inflicted on me.

RICH *regards* **MORE.**

Can't you believe that?

RICH It's hard. *(He moves above the table)*

MORE *(grimly)* Be a teacher.

NORFOLK *(offstage)* It was magnificent!

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK, *Earl Marshal of England, enters at the top of the stairway. He is in his late forties. He is heavy, active, a sportsman and soldier held together by rigid adherence to the minimal code of conventional duty. Attractively aware of his moral and intellectual insignificance, but also a great nobleman, untouchably convinced that his acts and ideas are important because they are his. He comes into view and stops, looking back.* **MORE** *rises and moves to left of the table.*

STEWARD *(to the audience)* The Duke of Norfolk. Earl Marshal of England.

NORFOLK *(looking offstage left)* I tell you he stooped from the clouds... *(He breaks off stage. Irritably)* Alice!

LADY ALICE *enters at the top of the stairway. She is in her late forties. Born into the merchant class, now a great lady, she is absurd at a distance, impressive close to. Overdressed, coarsely fashioned, she worships society; brave, hot-hearted, she worships her husband. In consequence, troubled by and defiant towards both.*

ALICE *(irritably)* Here!

STEWARD *(to the audience)* Lady Alice. My master's wife.

NORFOLK I tell you he stooped...

ALICE *(crossing below* **NORFOLK** *and descending the stairway)* He didn't!

MARGARET MORE *enters at the top of the stairway. She is in her middle twenties. She is a beautiful girl of ardent moral fineness. She both suffers and shelters behind a reserved stillness which it is her father's care to mitigate.*

NORFOLK *(following* **ALICE** *down the stairway)* Goddammit, he did!

ALICE Couldn't!

NORFOLK He *does.*

ALICE Not possible!

NORFOLK But *often.*

ALICE *(moving down centre)* Never!

NORFOLK *(moving to right of the table)* Well, damn my soul!

MORE *(to* **MARGARET***)* Come down, Meg.

STEWARD *(to the audience; soapy)* Lady Margaret, my master's daughter – lovely, really lovely.

ALICE Matthew, get about your business.

The **STEWARD** *exits down right.* **MARGARET** *descends the stairway.*

(she moves below the table) We'll settle this, my lord. We'll put it to Thomas. Thomas, no falcon could stoop from a cloud, could it?

MORE I don't know, my dear; it sounds unlikely. I have seen falcons do some very splendid things.

ALICE But how could he stoop from a cloud? He couldn't see where he was going. *(She sits in the armchair left centre)*

MORE *pours wine for* **ALICE** *and* **NORFOLK**.

NORFOLK You see, Alice – you're ignorant of the subject: a falcon like Hector don't *care* where he's going.

MORE *hands a goblet to* **NORFOLK**.

Thank you, Thomas. *(He turns to* **MARGARET***)* Anyway, I'm talking to Meg.

MORE *moves to left of the table, hands a goblet to* **ALICE**, *then pours wine for* **MARGARET** *and himself.*

(he resumes his "sportsman's" story) 'Twas the very first cast of the day, Meg; the sun was behind us. And from side to side of the valley like the roof of a tent, was solid mist.

ALICE Oh…mist.

NORFOLK Well, mist is cloud, isn't it?

ALICE No.

RICH *(with a step down stage)* The opinion of Aristotle is that mists are an exhalation of the earth whereas clouds...

NORFOLK He stooped five hundred feet! Like *that*! Like an act of God, isn't he, Thomas?

MORE He's tremendous.

NORFOLK *(to* **ALICE***)* Tremendous.

MARGARET Did he kill the heron?

NORFOLK Oh, the *heron*. The heron was *clever*. *(Very discreditable, evidently)* It was a royal stoop, though. *(Slyly)* If you could ride, Alice, I'd show you. *(He moves below the table and sits on the downstage edge of it)*

ALICE *(hotly)* I can ride, my lord!

MORE No, no, you'll make yourself ill. *(He takes a goblet to* **MARGARET** *and gives it to her)*

ALICE And I'll bet...twenty-five – no, thirty shillings I see no falcon stoop from no cloud.

NORFOLK Done!

MORE Alice – you can't ride with *them*.

ALICE God's body, Thomas, remember who you are. Am I a City Wife?

MORE No, indeed. You've just lost thirty shillings, I think; there *are* such birds. *(To* **MARGARET***, gently teasing)* And the heron got home to his chicks, Meg, so everything was satisfactory. *(He gets his own goblet and sits right of the table)*

MARGARET *(smiling)* Yes.

MORE What was that of Aristotle's, Richard?

RICH *(moving down left of the table)* Nothing, Sir Thomas – 'twas out of place.

NORFOLK *(to* **RICH***)* I've never found much use in Aristotle, myself – not practically. Great philosophy, of course. Wonderful mind.

RICH *(crossing to left of* **NORFOLK***)* Exactly, Your Grace.

NORFOLK *(suspiciously)* Eh?

MORE Master Rich is newly converted to the doctrines of Machiavelli.

RICH Oh, no...

NORFOLK Oh, the Italian. Nasty book, from what I hear.

MARGARET *(moving to the foot of the steps)* Very practical, Your Grace.

NORFOLK You read it? Amazing girl, Thomas, but where are you going to find a husband for her?

MORE *and* **MARGARET** *exchange a glance.*

MORE Where indeed?

MARGARET *moves to right of* **MORE** *and holds his hand for a moment.*

RICH *(crossing down left)* The doctrines of Machiavelli have been largely mistaken, I think; indeed, properly apprehended he has no doctrine. Master Cromwell has the sense of it, I think, when he says...

NORFOLK You know Cromwell?

MARGARET *moves up centre.*

RICH Slightly, Your Grace.

NORFOLK The Cardinal's secretary.

There are exclamations of shock from **MORE**, **MARGARET** *and* **ALICE**.

It's a fact.

MORE *(rising, crossing and standing below the steps)* When, Howard?

MARGARET *moves to left of* **MORE**.

NORFOLK Two, three days.

ALICE *(rising and moving to left of the table)* A *farrier's* son?

NORFOLK Well, the Cardinal's a butcher's son, isn't he?

ALICE It'll be up quick and down quick with Master Cromwell.

NORFOLK *grunts.*

MORE *(with a step down right centre; to* **RICH**, *quietly)* Did you know this?

RICH No!

MARGARET *(moving between* **MORE** *and* **NORFOLK**) Do you *like* Master Cromwell, Master Rich?

ALICE He's the only man in London if he does.

RICH I think I do, Lady Alice.

The **STEWARD** *enters right, crosses to right of* **MORE** *and hands him a letter.*

MORE *(pleased)* Good! Well, you don't need *my* help now. *(He opens the letter and reads it)*

RICH Sir Thomas, if only you knew how much, much rather I'd yours than his.

MORE Talk of the Cardinal's secretary and the Cardinal appears. He wants me. Now.

There are smothered exclamations of impatience.

ALICE At this time of night?

MORE *(mildly)* The King's business.

ALICE The Queen's business.

NORFOLK *(rising and moving above the table)* More than likely, Alice, more than likely.

MORE *(cutting in sharply; to the* **STEWARD***)* What's the time?

STEWARD Eleven o'clock, sir.

MORE Is there a boat?

STEWARD Waiting, sir. *(He moves up right)*

MORE *(crossing to centre; to* **ALICE** *and* **MARGARET***)* Go to bed. You'll excuse me, Your Grace? Richard?

ALICE *moves to left of* **MORE** *and* **MARGARET** *to right of him.*

(to **ALICE** *and* **MARGARET***)* Now you'll go to bed.

MORE, ALICE *and* **MARGARET**, *as a matter of routine, put their hands together. The* **STEWARD** *removes his hat. During the prayer,* **NORFOLK** *refills his goblet and drinks.*

ALICE
MORE
MARGARET } *(together)* { Dear Lord, give us rest tonight, or if we must be wakeful, cheerful. Careful only for our souls' salvation. For Christ's sake. Amen.

MORE And bless our Lord the King.

ALICE
MARGARET
ALL Amen. } *(together)* { And bless our Lord the King.

ALICE *crosses and goes on to the bottom step of the stairway.* **MARGARET** *goes on to the rostrum and stands at the top of the steps.* **NORFOLK** *moves to the foot of the steps.* **RICH** *puts his goblet on the table then moves to left of* **MORE.**

MORE *(to* **NORFOLK***)* Howard, are *you* at Richmond?

NORFOLK No, down the river.

MORE Then good night.

RICH *looks disconsolate.*

Oh, Your Grace, here's a young man desperate for employment. Something in the clerical line.

NORFOLK Well, if you recommend him...

MORE Oh, I don't recommend him; but I point him out. *(He crosses to left centre)* He's at the *New Inn*. You could take him there.

NORFOLK *(going on to the rostrum)* All right, come on.

RICH *(crossing to the foot of the steps)* My Lord.

NORFOLK We'll hawk at Hounslow, Alice.

ALICE Wherever you like.

NORFOLK *takes farewell of* **ALICE** *and* **MARGARET**.

RICH Sir Thomas.

MORE *turns to* **RICH**.

Thank you.

ALICE *and* **MARGARET** *go up the stairway.*

MORE Be a teacher.

RICH *exits right on the rostrum.*

Oh – the ground's hard at Hounslow, Alice.

NORFOLK Eh? *(He gives a delighted roar of laughter)* That's where the Cardinal crushed his bum.

MORE, ALICE *and* **NORFOLK** *call "good night" ad lib.*

NORFOLK *exits right on the rostrum.*

ALICE *and* **MARGARET**, *laughing, exit at the top of the stairway.*

MORE *exits up left, but re-enters immediately and stands below the stairway.*

MORE *(calling softly)* Margaret!

MARGARET *enters at the top of the stairway.*

MARGARET Yes?

MORE Go to bed.

MARGARET *exits at the top of the stairway.*

MORE *exits up left. There is a brief pause.*

RICH *enters swiftly right on the rostrum, crosses to the table, picks up the silver cup and turns to go.*

STEWARD Eh! *(He crosses to right of* **RICH** *and takes the cup from him)*

RICH What...? Oh. It's a gift, Matthew. Sir Thomas gave it to me. He gave it to me.

STEWARD *(returning the cup to* **RICH***)* Very nice present, sir.

RICH *(going on to the rostrum)* Yes. Good night, Matthew.

STEWARD *(moving to the foot of the steps)* Sir Thomas has taken quite a fancy to you, sir.

RICH *(giving the* **STEWARD** *some coins)* Er, here...

STEWARD Thank you, sir.

RICH *exits right on the rostrum. The* **STEWARD***, during the following speech, moves anticlockwise around the table turning in the corners of the cloth. He then takes the tablecloth with the goblets and jug inside and puts it in the basket. When he removes the white linen cloth from the table, a velour cloth is ready set underneath. From the basket he takes a brass inkwell, 2 quills and Wolsey's portfolio with papers and documents in it.*

He puts these on the table at the left end, and sets the armchair left of the table.

(to the audience) That one'll come to nothing. My master – Thomas More – would give anything to anyone. Some say that's good and some say that's bad, but I say he can't help it – and that's bad – because some day someone's going to ask him for something that he wants to keep; and he'll be out of practice. *(He goes to the basket and closes it)*

The lights change for the following scene.

There must be something that he wants to keep. That's only Common Sense.

The **STEWARD** *exits down left, pushing the basket off in front of him. A Pope's crown, resting on a tasselled panel is lowered from the flies and hangs over the armchair left of the table.*

Scene Two

CARDINAL WOLSEY *enters right. He is old. A big decayed body in scarlet. An almost megalomaniac ambition unhappily matched by an excelling intellect, he now inhabits a lonely den of self-indulgence and contempt. He carries a lighted candle in a brass candlestick. He crosses to left of the table, sits, sets the candlestick on the table in front of him and immediately commences writing.*

MORE, *carrying a lighted candle in a brass candlestick, enters at the top of the stairway and comes slowly down.*

WOLSEY *(writing)* Where've you been? It's half past one.

A bell strikes one.

MORE One o'clock, Your Grace. I've been on the river. *(He puts the candlestick on the table and stands above it, waiting)*

WOLSEY *writes in silence for some moments, then still writing, he pushes a paper across the table to* **MORE.**

WOLSEY Since you seemed so violently opposed to the despatch for Rome, I thought you'd like to look it over.

MORE *(touched)* Thank you, Your Grace.

WOLSEY Before it goes.

MORE *(smiling)* Your Grace is very kind. *(He picks up the paper)* Thank you. *(He reads the paper)*

WOLSEY *(still writing)* Well, what d'you think of it?

MORE It seems very well phrased, Your Grace. *(He puts the paper on the table)*

WOLSEY *permits himself a chuckle.*

WOLSEY The devil it does! *(He sits back)* And apart from the style, Sir Thomas?

MORE I think the Council should be told before that goes to Italy.

WOLSEY Would you tell the Council? Yes, I believe you would. 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.

MORE *(after a brief pause)* Oh, Your Grace flatters me.

WOLSEY Don't frivol. Thomas, are you going to help me?

MORE *hesitates and looks away.*

MORE If Your Grace will be specific.

WOLSEY Ach, you're a plodder. Take you altogether, Thomas, your scholarship, your experience – what are you?

A single trumpet calls, distant, frosty and clear.

(he rises, crosses and goes on to the rostrum right) Come here.

MORE *joins* **WOLSEY** *on the rostrum and both look off stage right.*

The King.

MORE Yes.

WOLSEY Where has he been? D'you know?

MORE I, Your Grace?

WOLSEY Oh, spare me your discretion. He's been to play in the mud again.

MORE *(coldly)* Indeed!

WOLSEY Indeed! Indeed! Are you going to oppose me?

The trumpet call is repeated.

(he visibly relaxes) He's gone in. *(He motions* **MORE** *down the steps)*

MORE *moves down right.*

(He moves down to right of **MORE***)* All right, we'll plod. The King wants a son; what are you going to do about it?

MORE *(in a dry manner)* I'm very sure the King needs no advice from me on what to do about it.

WOLSEY *(fiercely gripping* **MORE***'s shoulder)* Thomas, we're alone. I give you my word. There's no one here.

MORE *(with mild surprise)* I didn't suppose there was, Your Grace.

WOLSEY Oh. *(He crosses and sits left of the table)* Sit down! *(He signs to* **MORE** *to sit right of the table)*

MORE *unsuspectingly obeys and sits right of the table.*

(deliberately loud) Do you favour a change of dynasty, Sir Thomas? D'you think two Tudors is sufficient?

MORE *(rising in horrified alarm)* For God's sake, Your Grace…!

WOLSEY Then the King needs a son; I repeat, what are you going to do about it?

MORE *(steadily)* I pray for it daily.

WOLSEY *(staring at* **MORE***; softly)* God's death, he means it. That thing out there's at least fertile, Thomas.

MORE But she's not his wife.

WOLSEY No, Catherine's his wife and she's as barren as brick. Are you going to pray for a miracle?

MORE There *are* precedents.

WOLSEY Yes. All right. 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 *(resuming his seat)* A dispensation was granted so that the King might marry Queen Catherine, for State reasons. Now we are to ask the Pope to – dispense with his dispensation, also for State reasons?

WOLSEY I don't *like* plodding, Thomas – don't make me plod longer than I have to. Well?

MORE Then clearly all we have to do is approach His Holiness and ask him.

The pace becomes rapid.

WOLSEY I think we might influence His Holiness's answer.

MORE *(indicating the letter)* Like this?

WOLSEY Like that and in other ways.

MORE I've already expressed my opinion on this.

WOLSEY *(rising)* Then...good night.

MORE *rises. He and* **WOLSEY** *regard one another for a few moments.*

(he moves down left) Oh, your conscience is your own affair; but you're a statesman. Do you *remember* the Yorkist Wars?

MORE Very clearly.

WOLSEY Let him die without an heir and we'll have them back again. *(He moves to the table and picks up* **MORE***'s candlestick)* Let him die without an heir and this "peace" you think so much of will go out like— *(He extinguishes* **MORE***'s candle)* that! *(He puts down the candlestick and moves to left of the table)* Very well, then England needs an heir; certain measures, perhaps regrettable, perhaps not... *(Pompously)* There is much in the Church that *needs* reformation, Thomas.

MORE *smiles.*

All right, regrettable. But necessary to get us an heir. Now explain how you as a Councillor of England can obstruct those measures for the sake of your own, private conscience.

MORE Well... *(He moves above the table, picks up his candlestick and relights his candle from* **WOLSEY***'s)* I believe, when

statesmen forsake their own private conscience for the sake of their public duties...they lead their country by a short route to chaos. And we shall have my prayers to fall back on.

WOLSEY You'd like that, wouldn't you? To govern the country by prayer.

MORE Yes, I should.

WOLSEY *(sitting left of the table)* I'd like to be there when you try. Who *will* deal with all this...paper, after me? You? Tunstall? Suffolk?

MORE Tunstall for me.

WOLSEY Aye, but for the King. What about my Secretary – Master Cromwell?

MORE Cromwell!

WOLSEY You'd rather do it yourself?

MORE Me rather than Cromwell.

WOLSEY Then come down to earth – and until then, allow for an enemy, here.

MORE As Your Grace pleases. *(He moves with his candlestick to the steps)*

WOLSEY As God wills.

MORE *(ascending the stairway)* Perhaps, Your Grace.

WOLSEY *(rising and gathering his portfolio and papers together)* More! You should have been a cleric.

MORE *(half-way up the stairway; amused)* Like yourself, Your Grace?

MORE *exits at the top of the stairway.*

WOLSEY *stares after him for a few moments, then picks up his candlestick and exits up left. The lights cross fade and the whole rear of the stage now patterns with webbed reflections thrown from brightly moonlit water,*

so that the structure is thrown into black relief. The Pope's crown is raised and an oar and a bundle of clothing are lowered from the flies down stage.

THE COMMON MAN *enters down left, unties the bundle and dons the coat and hat of the* **BOATMAN**. *He is illuminated by the vertical spot.*

(off in the distance; calling) Boat! *(Nearer)* Boat!

The lights come up down stage for the Riverside scene.

Scene Three

BOATMAN *(calling)* Here, sir!

MORE *(offstage)* A boatman, please!

BOATMAN Boat here, sir. *(He seizes the oar)*

MORE *enters down the stairway.*

MORE *(peering)* Boatman?

BOATMAN Yes, sir. *(To the audience, indicating the oar)* A boatman.

MORE Take me home.

BOATMAN *(pleasantly)* I was just going home myself, sir. *(He moves left centre)*

MORE *(moving to right of the* **BOATMAN***)* Then find me another boat.

BOATMAN Bless you, sir – that's all right. *(Comfortably)* I expect you'll make it worth my while, sir.

THOMAS CROMWELL *enters left. He is in his late thirties. He is subtle and serious; the face expressing not inner tension but the tremendous outgoing will of the Renaissance. A self-conceit that can cradle gross crimes in the name of effective action. In short, an intellectual bully.*

CROMWELL Boatman, have you a licence?

BOATMAN *(turning)* Eh? Bless you, sir – yes; I've got a licence.

CROMWELL Then you know that the fares are fixed. *(He crosses below the* **BOATMAN** *to left of* **MORE**. *With exaggerated pleasure)* Why, it's Sir Thomas.

MORE Good morning, Mister Cromwell. You work very late.

CROMWELL I'm on my way to the Cardinal. *(He expects an answer)*

MORE Ah.

CROMWELL You have just left him, I think.

MORE Yes, I have.

CROMWELL You left him...in his laughing mood, I hope?

MORE On the whole, I would say...not. No, not laughing.

CROMWELL Oh, I'm sorry. *(He backs below the* **BOATMAN** *to left)* I am one of your multitudinous admirers, Sir Thomas. *(To the* **BOATMAN***)* A penny ha'penny to Chelsea, Boatman.

CROMWELL *exits down left.*

BOATMAN The coming man, they say, sir.

MORE Do they? Well, where's your boat?

BOATMAN Just along the wharf, sir. *(He crosses below* **MORE** *to right centre)*

MORE *turns to follow the* **BOATMAN.**

SIGNOR CHAPUYS, *the Spanish Ambassador enters down left.*

His **ATTENDANT** *follows him on.* **CHAPUYS** *is in his sixties. He is a professional diplomat and lay ecclesiastic dressed in black. Much on his dignity, as man of the world, he, in fact, trots happily along a mental footpath as narrow as a peasant's. The* **ATTENDANT** *is an apprentice diplomat of good family.*

CHAPUYS Sir Thomas More! *(He crosses to left of* **MORE***)*

The **BOATMAN** *sits on the bench right of the steps. The* **ATTENDANT** *stands left centre.*

MORE Signor Chapuys? You're up very late, Your Excellency.

CHAPUYS *(significantly)* So is the Cardinal, Sir Thomas.

MORE *(closing up)* He sleeps very little.

CHAPUYS You have just left him, I think.

MORE You are correctly informed. As always.

CHAPUYS I will not ask you the subject of your conversation... *(He waits)*

MORE No, of course not.

CHAPUYS Sir Thomas, I will be plain with you – plain, that is, so far as the diplomatic decencies permit. *(Loudly)* My master – Charles, the King of Spain... *(He draws* **MORE** *down left. Discreetly)* My master – Charles, the King of Spain feels himself concerned in anything concerning his blood relation. He would feel himself insulted by any insult offered to his father's sister. I refer, of course, to Queen Catherine. *(He regards* **MORE** *keenly)* The King of Spain would feel himself insulted by any insult offered to Queen Catherine.

MORE His feeling would be very natural.

CHAPUYS *(consciously sly)* Sir Thomas, may I ask if you and the Cardinal parted, how shall I say, amicably?

MORE Amicably – yes.

CHAPUYS *(a shade indignant)* In agreement?

MORE Amicably.

CHAPUYS *(warmly)* Say no more, Sir Thomas; I understand. *(He backs left)*

MORE *(a shade worried)* I hope you do, Your Excellency.

CHAPUYS You are a good man.

MORE I don't see how you deduce that from what I've told you.

CHAPUYS *(holding up a hand)* A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse. I understand. You are a good man. *Dominus vobiscum.*

CHAPUYS *turns and exits left.*

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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