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His 114s

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By 1527 after eighteen years of marriage King Henry VIII of England desired to divorce his wife Catherine of Aragon. Frustrated with Catherine's inability to produce a male heir Henry wished to marry Anne Boleyn, a woman he believed could procure what he wanted. Catherine, determined to keep her marriage, denied Henry's request for a separation. As the annulment proceedings ensued the validity of their marriage was the key point of contention. In order to disprove the authenticity of the marriage Henry cited the Bible, specifically the book of Leviticus. While an effective approach, it is Catherine's argument that proves most compelling. Catherine understood the power of emotion, which she used to appeal to public support.

During the annulment proceedings Catherine recognized that to attain victory she needed to garner attention from the public. In order to gain the public's attention Catherine had to hone into their emotions. Catherine demonstrated her ability to attract the public's eye on June 21, 1529, when she made a speech at the Legatine Court at Blackfriars. In the speech she stated "Take some pity and compassion, for I am a poor woman, and a stranger born of your dominion. I have here no assured friends, and much less impartial counsel."<sup>1</sup> Catherine used descriptive and empathetic wording in an attempt to portray herself as weak and meek. She put herself at the mercy of not only the counsel but of Henry as well. By depicting herself as a "stranger born of

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine of Aragon: Henry's Spanish Queen, Giles Tremlett, Chapter 37 "Defiance"

your dominion” Catherine acknowledged Henry’s great power and presents herself as small in comparison to him. She further stated “I have been a true, humble, and obedient wife, ever comfortable to your will and pleasure, that never did anything to the contrary there of, being always well pleased and contented with all things wherein you had any delight or dalliance, whether it were little or much.”<sup>2</sup> Catherine, again utilized expressive language to create an image that she has been the perfect wife. She asserts she has been supportive, trustworthy, and submissive toward Henry. That she has never attempted to venture beyond her husband’s wishes. Catherine placed Henry’s happiness at the highest level of importance. She contended she would share in his feelings of sadness and distress. Creating a mental picture of her undying dedication to her husband’s needs caused people to further sympathize with her. It conjured the question in their minds as to why Henry would seek a separation from such an incredible and consummate wife. Catherine attempted to gain further sentiment by appealing to the judges.

In a final endeavor to capture emotional support in her favor, Catherine appealed to the judges. She stated “If there be any just cause by the law that ye can allege against me either or dishonesty or any other impediment to banish and put me from you, I am well content to depart to my great shame and dishonour.”<sup>3</sup> Catherine threw herself at the mercy of the judges. She claimed to be willing to accept punishment levied against her if she has broken any laws. Saying this made her appear honorable to the judges. In her closing arguments she mentions God. She stated “to God I commit my cause!”<sup>4</sup> Alluding to God portrays her as a God-fearing woman to the Judges, who are both Cardinals in the Catholic Church

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<sup>2</sup> IBID

<sup>3</sup> IBID

<sup>4</sup> IBid

After Eighteen years of marriage, King Henry VIII of England desired to divorce his wife Catherine of Aragon in 1527. Having grown impatient with Catherine's inability to produce a male heir Henry wanted to marry Anne Boleyn, whom he believed capable of blessing him with a male heir. Determined to keep her marriage intact, Catherine refused to honor Henry's request to separate. Throughout, the proceedings, arguments regarding the validity of their marriage were the main source contention. Henry cited the Bible, specifically the book of Leviticus to prove the marriage was illegitimate. While an effective method, it was Catherine's argument that proved most persuasive. Her ability to understand and manipulate the power of emotion to as she understood that the power emotion to seduce the public in supporting her was crucial in her victorious outcome.