

SIX WIVES

Book and Lyrics by
JOE MASTEROFF

Music by
EDWARD THOMAS

CAST

HENRY VIII

CATHERINE OF ARAGON (All three played by same actress)
ANNE OF CLEVES
CATHERINE PARR

ANNE BOLEYN (All three played by same actress)
JANE SEYMOUR
KATHRYN HOWARD

(Played by same actor) MINISTER (All of them)
THE MESSENGER (Also MINSTREL and FOOL)

May 2004 (Latest script)

AT RISE:

HENRY enters. HE is a slim,youthful, attractive man.

HENRY

I cannot rest. I cannot rest! Do you know what it is to spend eternity — unable to sleep? To spend eternity knowing that you are considered a sort of madman who murdered six wives? And it is not right. It is not justified. For I may not have been a saint. Far from it. But I was not a monster. I was a human being. I was...

I suddenly realize: you may not recognize me. I am Henry. Henry Tudor, the Eighth Henry to be King of England. Born 1491 — died 1547. And now you are thinking: "If it truly is Henry the Eighth, then to Hell with him! We know all we need to know of him!" But what do you know? History? Truthful history? Or a centuries—old accumulation of lies and slander?

Are the wives here?

FEMALE (Voice off)

Here!

HENRY

Are the ministers here?

VOICE (Off)

Here!

HENRY

Are the messengers here?

VOICE (Off)

Here!

HENRY (to AUDIENCE)

And so... my story. But... needless to say... my story... as I perceived it... as I remember it. All truthful... all historical... and as brief as possible. Yes — but how to begin?

(HENRY looks around the stage)

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

Look! Look about!
This is England!

HENRY (Cont'd)

The Wars of the Roses are finally done and swords have been put aside.
I am seventeen years old and suddenly the King.
In London, under me, the Parliament rules.
And, in the countryside, the fields are green —

Green and prosperous.
But this — this is my pride...

PICTURE MY PALACE
RISING BEFORE YOU.
HERE ON A LEAFY GREEN RIVERSIDE
THE TOWERS AND TURRETS WILL SPREAD SO WIDE!
AS MONUMENTAL AS RESIDENTIAL CAN BE!

HERE IN MY PALACE
I WILL ASSEMBLE
ARTISTS AND WISE MEN OF EVERY KIND,
AND I'LL DEPUTISE THEM TO HELP ME FIND
A WAY TO FASHION A NATION FORCEFUL AND FREE!

AS RULER, I HAVE A VOW TO KEEP
SO HOW THEN — HOW CAN I EVER SLEEP
TILL ENGLAND WRITES A HISTORY
MORE MIGHTY THAN ANY COUNTRY CROSS THE SEA!

SO ENTER MY PALACE!
PICTURE MY KINGDOM!
SHOWING THE MONARCHS OF FRANCE AND SPAIN!
THE GLORY AN ENGLISHMAN WILL ATTAIN!
LOOK AND YOU WILL SEE!
LOOK AND YOU WILL SEE!
LOOK AND YOU WILL SEE!

(CATHERINE OF ARAGON enters. SHE is an impressive—
looking Spanish woman)

CATHERINE

How handsome you were, Henry! How like a God. So manly — and yet so tender.
After my stormy voyage from Spain — after the storms here at the Court — I finally
sailed into a warm tranquil harbor — and there you were on the shore — your arms
extended — enfolding me.

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

My first wife, Catherine of Aragon. I was passionately in love with her — in the
beginning. Passionately.

(MUSIC OUT)

HENRY (Cont'd)

It is now twenty years later.

(To CATHERINE)

Good evening, Catherine.

CATHERINE

I was awaiting you in the Chapel. You said we would pray for a son.

HENRY

I cannot pray. I cannot kneel. My knee grows increasingly bothersome.

CATHERINE

What do the new doctors advise?

HENRY

They advise: "Do not kneel."

CATHERINE

My poor Henry. And there is no remedy?

HENRY

None they know of. They seem to think it unfortunate that I am King and have little reason to kneel down to anyone.

CATHERINE

Except, of course, God.

HENRY

One is hopeful He understands.

CATHERINE

God? God understands all, Henry. And I have spoken to Him again. I have pleaded with Him to bring us a male child.

HENRY

How long have we prayed Madam and where is our son? Where?

CATHERINE

Henry, come to my bed. God will see to it that your passion returns. I am certain it is only your painful knee that...

CATHERINE (Cont'd)

lately has kept you from me. We will have a son — many sons — with God's help.

HENRY

With God's help, God help us.

(JANE SEYMOUR runs in. SHE is young, pretty, rather vacuous.)

JANE SEYMOUR

Your majesty!

HENRY

Yes, Jane?

(To AUDIENCE)

My third wife, Jane Seymour.

(To JANE)

You are too soon, Jane. I have promised them — chronologically.

JANE

But she is mounting the scaffold!

HENRY

Who is mounting the scaffold?

JANE

Why — Anne Boleyn, Sire.

HENRY (Patiently)

No, no Jane. Too soon. Much too soon.

JANE

Yes, my Lord.

(JANE exits.)

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

Sweet, simple Jane. She was never one to keep things in order.

HENRY (Cont'd, to CATHERINE)

Forgive the interruption, Catherine.

CATHERINE

May I proceed?

HENRY

If you will, Catherine.

CATHERINE

I have always loved you. And admired you — your knowledge of history and science...
that you could be so worldly — yet so devout...

(During this, a MINISTER has entered — dressed in red.)

That you could write sacred songs — discuss the Sacraments...

MINISTER

If it please your Majesties — we are ready to begin the Masque...

HENRY

It pleases us, Cromwell. May it proceed.

(MUSIC INTO MORRIS DANCE)

(Near end of dance ANNE BOLEYN enters. SHE is young,
beautiful, bright—looking. HENRY cannot take his eyes off her.
MESSENGER seats ANNE and throws her kisses.)

HENRY

Who is that?

MINISTER

Anne Boleyn, Sire.

HENRY

Anne Boleyn?

MINISTER

Tom Boleyn's daughter.

HENRY

But where has she been?

MINISTER

At the French Court.

HENRY

Mais elle est charmant!

ANNE (Singing to HENRY)

OH TELL ME WHY SO MANY MAIDS
CAN FIND ROMANCE WITH EASE?
LOVE COMES TO THEM
AS FREELY AS A BREEZE.

BUT I — ALAS — I SEARCH AND SEARCH
BUT CANNOT FIND A MATE.
AM I TOO PLAIN — TOO DULL — TOO VAIN — TOO LATE?

OH SHALL I EVER KNOW A LOVER'S ARMS —
A LOVER'S WAYS?
OR DIE ALONE — A SPINSTER STILL —
A SPINSTER ALL MY DAYS?

OH HELP ME, SIR, FOR YOU MAY BE
THE VERY ONE I SEEK.
GIVE ME YOUR HAND, YOUR HEART, YOUR LOVE —
OR FAILING THIS, AT LEAST A KISS —
A KISS UPON MY CHEEK.

(Into GALLIARD DANCE)

HENRY (To AUDIENCE) (Music under dialogue)

Anne Boleyn. Anne Boleyn. The name itself was musical. Anne Boleyn. I was —
entranced by her. How strange. How very strange. (Indicating ANNE) Beautiful. But
no more beautiful than a hundred others. No more charming. No more fascinating. And
yet? And yet I could not *breathe* without her.

ANNE

OH SHALL I EVER KNOW A LOVER'S ARMS, A LOVER'S WAYS?
OR DIE ALONE — A SPINSTER STILL —
A SPINSTER ALL MY DAYS?

OH HELP ME, SIR, FOR YOU MAY BE
THE VERY ONE I SEEK.
GIVE ME YOUR HAND, YOUR HEART, YOUR LOVE —
OR FAILING THIS, AT LEAST A KISS —
A KISS UPON MY CHEEK.

CATHERINE (Who has been watching ANNE disapprovingly)

You must be new at the Court. I do not recognize your face.

ANNE

I have only recently returned from France, Your Majesty. My name is Anne Boleyn.

CATHERINE (With an edge)

Anne Boleyn. I have heard of the moral decay in France. You are fortunate to be back at
a Court where decency prevails.

ANNE (To HENRY)

Have I the King's permission to withdraw?

(HENRY nods. ANNE exits.)

MINISTER (To CATHERINE)
She is very young, Your Majesty.

CATHERINE (Pointedly)
That has not escaped our notice.

(CATHERINE and MINISTER exit.)

HENRY
And so — Anne Boleyn withdrew — temporarily.

(HE looks in a mirror.)

And I have discovered — a few grey hairs. But it is of no importance. For I am in love!
Deeply in love. And so — I am — a puppy! And here — here is the source of my
delight.

(ANNE BOLEYN enters. MUSIC IN.)

ANNE
You sent for me, Your Majesty?

HENRY
I had a need — to see your face.

ANNE
Luckily I have it with me.

(She positions herself in front of him.)

ANNE (Cont'd)
Is this — satisfactory?

HENRY
How fair it is. And to think that such a splendid piece of sculpture can also speak — and
sing...

(MUSIC OUT)

ANNE
And frown — far too often.

HENRY

Will you sing for me, Anne Boleyn?

ANNE

If your Majesty wishes...

HENRY

I wish — more. So much more.

(MUSIC IN)

ANNE

HOW YOU STARE AT ME, MY LORD.
YOUR EYES BURNING DEEP, MY LORD.

HENRY

Anne, you must forgive them.

ANNE

I MUST LOOK AWAY, MY LORD.

HENRY

My eyes are wildly in love with you.

ANNE

WHERE AM I TO TURN, MY LORD?

HENRY

To *me* — turn to me.

ANNE

WHAT ARE WE TO DO, MY LORD?

A GREAT KING IS A MAN AS WELL,
HE NEEDS A TENDER CARESS —

ANNE (Cont'd)

A LOVING AND TENDER CARESS,
THE SAME AS ANY MAN.

(CATHERINE OF ARAGON appears upstage.)

(TRIO — CATHERINE, HENRY and ANNE)

CATHERINE

I WAS AWAITING YOU IN THE CHAPEL
YOU SAID WE WOULD KNEEL TOGETHER
YOU SAID WE WOULD PRAY FOR A SON

PRAY WE MAY HAVE A SON

HENRY

MY LEG IS BOTHERING ME AGAIN
MY LEG
THE CHAPEL IS COLD AND DAMP
AND HOPE DIES AFTER TWENTY YEARS
(Looking at ANNE)
TO LOVE AGAIN, TO LOVE

ANNE

A GREAT KING IS A MAN AS WELL
HE NEEDS A TENDER CARESS —
A LOVING AND TENDER CARESS,
THE SAME AS ANY MAN

CATHERINE

I WAS AWAITING YOU
IN THE CHAPEL
YOU SAID WE WOULD
KNEEL TOGETHER
TOGETHER

HENRY

ANNE CATHERINE

MY LEG IS BOTHERING

ME AGAIN
THE CHAPEL IS
COLD AND DAMP
AND HOPE DIES
AFTER TWENTY YEARS
TO LOVE AGAIN,
TO LOVE
TO LOVE A GREAT KING
IS A MAN AS WELL
HE NEEDS A TENDER
CARESS
A LOVING AND TENDER
CARESS
THE SAME
AS ANY MAN YOU SAID WE WOULD
PRAY FOR A SON
PRAY WE MAY HAVE
A SON
PRAY WE MAY HAVE
A SON

CATHERINE, HENRY, ANNE

DO NOT DENY MY LOVE FOR YOU
DO NOT DENY MY LOVE

ANNE

COULD I GIVE YOU JOY, MY LORD

HENRY

OH HOW YOUNG SHE IS, SO FAIR

CATHERINE

LET ME SHARE YOUR BED AGAIN

ANNE

COULD MAKE YOU SMILE, MY LORD

HENRY

OH, HOW PURE SHE IS, SO RARE

CATHERINE

LET ME HOLD YOU TIGHT AGAIN

ANNE

IN A LITTLE WHILE, MY LORD

HENRY

HOW MY HEART RESPONDS TO HER

CATHERINE

LET US SPEND THE NIGHT AGAIN

CATHERINE, HENRY, ANNE

DO NOT DENY MY LOVE FOR YOU
DO NOT DENY MY LOVE

ANNE

I COULD BRING YOU JOY, MY LOVE

HENRY

OH, HOW YOUNG SHE IS, SO FAIR

CATHERINE

LET ME SHARE YOUR BED AGAIN

ANNE

I COULD MAKE YOU SMILE,
MY LORD,
MY LORD

HENRY

HOW MY HEART
RESPONDS
TO HER WITH LOVE

CATHERINE

LET US SPEND
THE NIGHT AGAIN

ANNE

MAKE YOU SMILE AGAIN,
MY LORD

A GREAT KING IS A MAN AS WELL CATHERINE HE NEEDS A
TENDER CARESS — YOU SAID WE WOULD
PRAY FOR A SON

 HENRY ANNE CATHERINE AND LOVE DIES
AFTER TWENTY YEARS
TO LOVE AGAIN,
TO LOVE
TO LOVE A LOVING AND TENDER
CARESS
THE SAME
AS ANY MAN PRAY WE MAY HAVE
A SON
PRAY WE MAY HAVE
A SON

CATHERINE, HENRY, ANNE

I MUST BE WITH YOU
LET ME BE WITH YOU
LET ME BE WITH YOU
WITH YOU MY LOVE
WITH YOU MY LOVE

(CATHERINE exits.)

HENRY

Anne Boleyn, will you lie with me?

ANNE

I am a virgin, Sire.

HENRY

Yes. That is what you always say.

ANNE

And you are a married man.

HENRY

And *that* is what you always say. But I adore you!

ANNE

And that is what *you* always say.

HENRY

You think our conversation is becoming too predictable?

ANNE

If the situation does not change — how then can the conversation change?

HENRY

Oh, you could be — perhaps — a little more flexible. More sympathetic...

ANNE

But I am so very sympathetic.

(MUSIC OUT)

HENRY

And yet you will not love me. You will not let me love you. Anne — we grow older every day. On the way to our graves, will there still be the same conversation, do you think? I unrequited? You — a virgin?

ANNE

I pray it will not be so.

HENRY

But how are we to avoid it? I worship you. I must be with you!

ANNE

Perhaps — if I were to be the Queen...

HENRY (Surprised)

What?

ANNE

If I were Queen...

(MUSIC IN)

HENRY (Really taken aback)
The Queen? Well this is — at least — a new conversation.

ANNE
I COULD GIVE YOU SONS, MY LORD

HENRY
But Queen? How? In what way?

ANNE
A KING SHOULD HAVE SONS, MY LORD.

HENRY
You know how much I desire...

ANNE
I COULD GIVE YOU SONS, MY LORD.

HENRY
More than anything, I would wish...

ANNE
I CAN GIVE YOU SONS, MY LORD

HENRY
But it is so utterly impossible! Or — you think Catherine of Aragon will die — perhaps — obligingly?

(MUSIC OUT)

She is not that kind of woman — let me tell you.

(Clutching at straws)

I see now — you are joking. Surely you are joking.

(ANNE begins to hum her tune. HE looks at ANNE — then turns to the AUDIENCE.)

She was not joking.

(MUSIC IN)

(ANNE exits as CATHERINE OF ARAGON enters, HENRY contemplates CATHERINE — then says to the AUDIENCE)

HENRY (Cont'd)

A time for diplomacy.

(to CATHERINE)

Madam — I have been thinking: We are both unhappy in our marriage. So let us part — peaceably. I have consulted the ecclesiastic authorities. They believe us justified in asking the Pope for an annulment. And I will make you a handsome settlement. Name your terms. What would you wish? It is yours! And just think, Madam — you can go where you will. Even to a Nunnery. A Nunnery! Could anything be more — delicious?

CATHERINE

A nunnery? Are you mad?

HENRY

I merely — thought you might wish...

CATHERINE

You are my husband! My husband! There is nothing else possible!

HENRY

An annulment is possible.

CATHERINE

On what grounds?

HENRY

On the grounds of Leviticus — as well you know!

CATHERINE

Leviticus?!

HENRY

Leviticus.

(To AUDIENCE)

Leviticus. We cannot escape Leviticus. Sooner or later, the subject must be broached. And it is so boring! It has been

HENRY (cont'd)

boring for hundreds of years! But we must deal with it. How else to explain my plight with Catherine of Aragon?

(Calling offstage)

Minister!

(MINISTER enters)

HENRY (To MINISTER)

Cromwell — explain Leviticus.

MINISTER

I am not Cromwell, Sire.

HENRY

Not Cromwell? Not my Minister Cromwell? Cranmer? Wolsey?

(MINISTER nods at the name Wolsey)

Wolsey. No matter. You were all the same.

MINISTER (Haughtily)

Indeed, Sire.

HENRY

And all of you, in the end — disappointing.

MINISTER (Pointedly)

Perhaps, my Lord — we lost our heads.

HENRY

And perhaps there was good reason!

(More calmly)

At any rate, kindly explain Leviticus — if you will, Cromwell.

(MINISTER gives HENRY a dirty look)

— Or whoever...

MINISTER

Leviticus, in the old Testament, ordains:

MINISTER (cont'd)

NO MAN SHALL KNOW HIS BROTHER'S WIFE —
IN THE BIBLICAL STYLE.
AND, IF HE DOES KNOW HIS BROTHER'S WIFE —
THEY SHALL BE WITHOUT CHILD.

CATHERINE — CATHERINE FROM ARAGON
CAME TO ENGLAND FROM SPAIN
AS WIFE TO THAT JUVENILE PARAGON — PRINCE ARTHUR —
THEN DESTINED TO REIGN.

HENRY
MY BROTHER. PRINCE ARTHUR, MY BROTHER.

MINISTER
BUT, FROM THE DAY THEY WERE MARRIED ON,
AN AILING ARTHUR WAS HE —
AND ALL COULD SEE CATHERINE OF ARAGON
WAS QUICKLY A WIDOW TO BE.

AND THEN, SO SADLY — R.I.P.

(HE crosses himself.)

AND THEN...

THE COURTS OF ENGLAND AND ARAGON
DECREED — SINCE ARTHUR WAS DEAD
THAT CATHERINE MIGHT NOW BE PREVAILED UPON
TO MARRY PRINCE HENRY INSTEAD.

(MUSIC stops briefly)

HENRY
But what of Leviticus?

MINISTER
BUT WHAT OF LEVITICUS?
YEA — WHAT OF HE?
BIBLICAL SCHOLARS
WERE QUICK TO AGREE
THAT ONLY THE CHASTENESS OF CATHERINE OF ARAGON
WOULD OFFER A BASIS THAT SHE COULD REMARRY ON.
AND THEN — MIRACLE OF MIRACLES...

MINISTER (cont'd)

HOSANNA! CATHERINE OF ARAGON
REVEALED A VIRGIN WAS SHE —
AND AFTER A HEARING WAS UNDERGONE,
THE VATICAN CHOSE TO AGREE.

HENRY

Though she and Arthur
Had slept in the same bed
Five months.
Five months!

MINISTER

She was, she swore, in fact —
Intact.

SO...

AS LONG AS CATHERINE OF ARAGON
WAS PURE, SHE COULD BE RE—WED.
AND WITH EVERY REASON TO TARRY GONE,
THE MARITAL PLANS WENT AHEAD.
AND CATHERINE AND HENRY WERE...

HENRY (Breaking in)

Childless! Childless!

CATHERINE

And what of the Princess Mary?

HENRY

Mary? A girl—child.

(MUSIC OUT)

CATHERINE

Who may well be someday Queen of England.

HENRY

For how long? A day? A week? You think any woman could control this rebellious country?

CATHERINE

Not "any woman," Henry. My daughter — and yours.

HENRY

And she would vanish in a sea of blood! I need sons! Where are your sons, Madam?
The future Kings of England — where?

MINISTER

Dead. All the sons — born dead.

CATHERINE (To HENRY)

No, not all. One lived. And how happy you were! You dressed in a cloak embroidered
with gold — do you remember? Embroidered with our initials — "H.C." — tied with
love—knots. And you rode out into the streets — where you allowed your subjects to
tear away bits of the precious cloth as souvenirs of the great event. We were both — so
— blissful...

HENRY

And — the next day — he died. It is the curse of Leviticus. You were no virgin,
Madam. You were my brother's wife — in every way. And I have "known" you and
therefore we will never have a son. Never. Never! Never! You lied, Madam. How you
lied.

CATHERINE

I did not lie! I was a virgin when you married me! A virgin! I swear it!

HENRY (To MINISTER)

Send for the sheets!

MINISTER

What, my Lord?

HENRY

The sheets! The sheets!

MINISTER

Which ones, My Lord?

HENRY

Of Catherine and my brother. Their wedding night.

(MUSIC IN)

MINISTER

But those were sent to Spain — twenty years ago!

HENRY

Get them back, and we will examine them!

CATHERINE

EXAMINE THEM!
BY ALL MEANS EXAMINE THEM!
YOU WILL SEE I DO NOT LIE!
I SWEAR TO GOD —
I DO NOT LIE!

A VIRGIN BRIDE!
YES I WAS YOUR VIRGIN BRIDE!
IT'S NO USE TO INTRODUCE
LEVITICUS!
NO USE TO TRY!

HEAVEN AND ROME SUPPORT ME — DEVOUTLY
BRISTLING THAT YOU SHOULD DOUBT ME!

IBERIA
RECOGNIZED MY PURITY.
DEMONSTRATING SURETY,
ALL EUROPE SAID
WE SHOULD BE WED.

BUT NOW THAT A STRUMPET HAS CAPTURED YOUR EYE —
YOU'VE DECIDED TO PUT ME ASIDE.

AM I TO BE SO FREELY DISCARDED,
DAMAGED AND DISREGARDED?

DO YOU BELIEVE
I WOULD WALK AWAY FROM YOU?
LEAVE YOU TO YOUR CONCUBINE?
HOW COULD IT BE —
WHEN YOU ARE MINE?

FOR I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU, HENRY.
WE TWO ARE SO BONDED TOGETHER!
OH, YES! — FOREVER — MARRIED YOU AND I
EVEN UNTO DEATH!
EVEN UNTO DEATH!
EVEN UNTO
EVEN UNTO DEATH!

(SHE exits majestically — followed by MINISTER.)

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

She was not — an easy woman. Score: Catherine, one — Henry, nothing. And so — a time for decisions.

(LIGHTS change)

A year passes.

(MINISTER rushes in)

MINISTER

Your Majesty — the Messenger has returned! The Messenger to the Pope!

HENRY

At last! We will see him!

(MUSIC IN)

(MESSENGER enters — worn, bloody and exhausted.)

MESSENGER

Your Majesty...

HENRY

What news from Pope Clement? Will he annul my marriage?

MESSENGER (Gasping for breath)

Oh, England! England! Never did I think to see my beloved country again! A journey, Sire! A miserable journey!

HENRY

But what news from the Pope?

MESSENGER

STORMS IN THE CHANNEL!

WAVES AS TALL AS MOUNTAINS!

TOWERING! TOWERING!

AND CIVIL WAR — CIVIL WAR EVERYWHERE! CIVIL WAR!

TWICE WAS I ALMOST SLAIN — ALMOST SLAIN WAS I.

AND ROME — ROME BESIEGED — A MADHOUSE!

FIRE! MURDER! MADNESS! MOBS IN THE STREETS!

UNIMAGINABLE CHAOS!

HENRY

And the Pope...?

MESSENGER

The Pope? The Pope fled. Not to be found.

HENRY

Not found.

MESSENGER

Not found.

HENRY

Not found.

MESSENGER

Not found. Until — at last — after unbelievable travail —

IN THE HILL TOWN OF ORVIETO...
ORVIETO!

A most attractive town, noted for its wine—making...

(ANNE BOLEYN has entered. HENRY sees her)

HENRY

But the annulment, man! Speak! What does the Pope say of the annulment?

MESSENGER (Matter—of—factly)

Oh — the annulment. Out of the question. Quite out of the question. Quite.

HENRY

You hear, Anne?

ANNE

What will you do?

HENRY

Send another Messenger!

MINISTER

The Pope will still say no.

HENRY (To MINISTER)

Then we must keep asking. Again and again. Did he or did he not annul the marriage of my sister, Margaret, Queen of Scotland?

MINISTER

The marriage of your sister, Margaret Queen of Scotland? The Pope did annul it.

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

Be warned: this is a topic even more boring than Leviticus.

MINISTER (To HENRY)

But, if I may suggest:

Your sister, Margaret Queen of Scotland, was not married to Catherine of Aragon. But you most assuredly are married to Catherine of Aragon.

(MUSIC IN)

And who is the nephew of Catherine of Aragon?

CHARLES EMPEROR OF SPAIN.

AND WHO IS THE MASTER OF EUROPE?

CHARLES EMPEROR OF SPAIN.

AND WHO HAS THE POPE SECURELY UNDER HIS THUMB?

ANNE & HENRY

Charles!

MINISTER

AND IS CHARLES –

ANNE & HENRY

CHARLES EMPEROR OF SPAIN!

MINISTER

- EMPEROR OF SPAIN ANXIOUS TO SEE
KING HENRY DIVORCED FROM CATHERINE OF ARAGON?
NO. HE IS NOT.

AND THEREFORE POPE CLEMENT, BEING UNDER THE THUMB OF

ALL

CHARLES EMPEROR OF SPAIN —

MINISTER
MAY NOT DISSOLVE THIS MARRIAGE.
CAN NOT DISSOLVE THIS MARRIAGE.
WILL NOT DISSOLVE THIS MARRIAGE.

IS THAT PERFECTLY CLEAR —
OR SHALL I EXPLAIN IT AGAIN?

ANNE & HENRY
CHARLES EMPEROR OF SPAIN!

HENRY
You hear, Anne? There seems to be little hope... But we will marry — somehow. We will have sons. We must!

(To MINISTER)

Send another Messenger.

(MUSIC IN)

(LIGHTS change)

HENRY
Five years pass. Slowly.

MINSTER
Your Majesty, the Messenger has returned.

HENRY
The Messenger to the Pope?

MINISTER
Yes, Sire. Number Seventeen, I believe. Or have I lost the count?

(MESSENGER staggers in — even bloodier.)

MESSENGER
Your Majesty...

HENRY
What news from Pope Clement?

MESSENGER
A journey, sire!

MESSENGER (Cont'd)

PLAGUE ALL AROUND ME.
DEADLIER THAN SMALLPOX.
THREATENING, THREATENING.
AND FUNERALS — FUNERALS
EVERYWHERE. EVERYWHERE.
TWICE I WAS TAKEN ILL.
TAKEN ILL WAS I.
BUT STILL I PRESSED ON — UNSWERVING
ACHING, STUMBLING, SHAKING —
YET I SURVIVED
UNIMAGINABLE CHAOS...

HENRY

Enough! Enough! Enough!

(MUSIC in)

(MINISTER, MESSENGER and ANNE exit.)

Still the same. Catherine says no, the Pope says no and Anne Boleyn says no. Five years I have waited for the woman I love. Five years for the right to possess her — to make sons with her!

FIVE YEARS.
UNABLE TO RESUME MY LIFE,
WHATEVER I MAY TRY —
I BITTERLY MUST CONTEMPLATE
THAT LOVE HAS COME TO ME TOO LATE.
FIVE YEARS.

AND
NOTHING CHANGES.
NOTHING.
I ACCOMPLISH
NOTHING —
WHILE MEN ARE BORN AND DIE,
IT SEEMS I ONLY SIGH
AND WAIT.

AND EVERYWHERE I TURN I SEE
ROADS THAT I CAN NOT EXPLORE:
DOORS THAT DO NOT HAVE A KEY —
KEYS THAT DO NOT HAVE A DOOR

NOTHING CHANGES.

HENRY (Cont'd)

NOTHING IT AMOUNTS TO
NOTHING
IF I CAN RULE THE LAND
AND YET CANNOT COMMAND MY FATE.

WHEN NOTHING CHANGES.
NOTHING CHANGES.

OR SHALL I TAKE A STAND?
A KING SHOULD TAKE A STAND —
WHATEVER IT MAY BRING.
A KING MUST BE SUPREME —
OR HE IS NOT A KING!

IF THAT IS WHAT MUST BE,
THEN THAT IS WHAT MUST BE.
TIMID KINGS LET KINGDOMS DIE!

SO NOW — SOMETHING CHANGES.
SOMETHING CHANGES...

(As MUSIC continues...)

Minister!

(MINISTER enters.)

MINISTER

Yes, Sire?

HENRY

I wish to send a message to the Pope.

MINISTER (Wearily)

Of course, Sire. The customary message?

HENRY

I think not.

The message is:

If the Pope will not grant us a divorce, we will grant the Pope a divorce. A divorce from England.

MINISTER (Astonished)

Your Majesty! But — !

HENRY

Am I not the King? And to whom must I answer? To Rome — or to God?

MINISTER

But they are generally considered the same. — And if you separate from Rome...

HENRY

When we separate.

MINISTER

All Europe will be allied against you. On this one issue, they will finally unite.

HENRY

We will risk it!

MINISTER

And attack us!

HENRY

Let them. Let them swim the Channel then. We will be waiting!

MINISTER

But they have ships, Your Majesty. Someday a vast armada will appear...

HENRY

And our fleet will conquer them!

MINISTER

Our fleet? And what fleet is that, Your Majesty — if I may ask?

HENRY

We have ships!

MINISTER

A few trading vessels. Nothing more.

HENRY

So let us build — with whatever time we have. Let us build a Navy.

MINISTER

But the cost. The cost! Do you really believe we can afford to...?

HENRY

I believe — if England is to survive — we cannot afford not to.

SO NOW I MUST TAKE A STAND.
A KING MUST TAKE A STAND —
WHATEVER IT MAY BRING.
A KING MUST BE SUPREME —
OR HE IS NOT A KING!

IF THAT IS WHAT MUST BE,
THEN THAT IS WHAT MUST BE.
TIMID KINGS LET KINGDOMS DIE.

SO NOW — SOMETHING CHANGES.
SOMETHING CHANGES.
I!!!

(WEDDING MUSIC begins)

MINISTER

King Henry and Catherine of Aragon were divorced by the Church of England.
King Henry and Anne Boleyn were married by the Church of England.

HENRY

Nine months pass.

MINISTER

Your Majesty — the child will arrive at any moment!

HENRY

Not the child, Wolsey. The son! The son!

(JANE SEYMOUR rushes on.)

JANE

Your Majesty — !

HENRY

Yes, Jane?

JANE

She is mounting the scaffold!

HENRY

Who is mounting the scaffold?

JANE

Anne Boleyn, Sire.

HENRY

No, Jane. Too soon. Still too soon.

JANE

Yes, my Lord.

(JANE exits.)

HENRY

Sweet, simple — Jane.

(LIGHTS change)

Nine months pass.

(To MINISTER)

Wolsey!

MINISTER

Your Majesty. I am not Wolsey.

HENRY

Not Wolsey? Not my Minister Wolsey? But what matter? Today the King of England is father to a boy! We have waited — how many years? And finally — I will have a son today. And then another. And then another. I will give England more sons than it can hold!

(An infant's cry is heard offstage.)

Listen! Magnificent lungs!

(MUSIC in)

(MINISTER rolls a bed onstage. In the bed are ANNE BOLEYN and an infant.)

MINISTER

Your son, Sire.

(HE moves away so HENRY can see the infant. HENRY hesitates.)

HENRY

Yes. Yes. But you first...

(MINISTER takes a look at the infant.)

MINISTER

You will need a name for the — child. Perhaps, Sire — your mother's name: Elizabeth.

(MUSIC out)

HENRY

It will do. It will do.

ANNE

Henry! Henry!

(HENRY goes to ANNE's side.)

(MUSIC in)

I am so sorry. How disappointed you must be.

HENRY (Bravely)

But not a bit! We have a fine — daughter. A fine healthy daughter. We will call her Elizabeth.

ANNE

You wanted a boy.

HENRY

Not half so much as I wanted you. And we will have other children, you and I.

ANNE

I am so tired...

HENRY

So sleep then. I adore you.

ANNE

Even now?

HENRY

Eternally.

(MUSIC out)

(MINISTER rolls the bed offstage. CATHERINE OF ARAGON
appears upstage.)

(MUSIC in)

CATHERINE OF ARAGON (Crocodile tears)

SO, ANOTHER GIRL, HENRY
ANOTHER GIRL
I AM SO SORRY, SO VERY SORRY
WHAT A BLOW
WHAT A DISAPPOINTMENT
OH SORROW, OH DESPAIR
OH SORROW, OH DESPAIR
I WAS CERTAIN, CERTAIN
THAT YOU WOULD HAVE A BOY...
NOW YOU'VE DISCARDED ME
AND FOUND A NEW MARE
TO BREED

I WAS SO CERTAIN THERE WOULD BE
NOTHING BUT BOYS
NOTHING BUT HEALTHY BOYS
HEALTHY SONS
FOR HENRY AND HIS NEW BRIDE
FOR HENRY AND HIS CONCUBINE

SOMETHING IS STILL WRONG
IT SEEMS
SOMETHING NOT QUITE RIGHT
IT SEEMS
SOMETHING NOT QUITE RIGHT
IT MUST BE ANNE
THAT ANNE BOLEYN
SHE CANNOT BEAR A SON
IT SEEMS

SHE IS TO BLAME
AS I WAS BLAMED
WHEN I DID NOT BEAR ANY SONS

CATHERINE (Cont'd)

FOR HOW COULD THE MANHOOD OF HENRY
BE BLAMED
WHEN HENRY CANNOT MAKE A SON
A... A SON

I WAS SO CERTAIN THERE WOULD BE

NOTHING BUT BOYS...
A BOY, A BOY, A BOY
A BOY, A BOY
I AM SO SORRY FOR YOU HENRY

TO KNOW THAT THE PRINCE
YOU HAVE FATHERED
OH, YES! IS HEALTHY, BUT...
HIS NAME WILL BE...
ELIZABETH
ELIZABETH
ELIZABETH
ELIZABETH!

(CATHERINE exits)

HENRY

Minster.

(MUSIC in)

(MINISTER returns)

Is there a war?

MINSTER

No, Sire.

HENRY

Not even with France?

MINISTER

No, Sire.

HENRY

But there is always a war with France!

(MINISTER shakes his head)

(MUSIC out)

MINISTER

We just signed a treaty.

HENRY

Pity.

(MINISTER exits)

Another year passes. We are not as young as we were.

(MINISTER enters)

MINISTER

Your Majesty! The child will arrive at any moment.

HENRY

Not the child, Cromwell. The son! The son! A brother for the Princess Elizabeth! It will be a boy! It must be a boy! For England, for the Crown, for *me*! A fine, healthy son.

(MINISTER goes upstage)

Let it be a boy.

(MINISTER returns)

MINISTER

It is a son, Sire.

HENRY

A son!!

MINISTER

Born dead.

HENRY

You did not say that. I did not hear you say that. Because it is not possible. It is a son — that is what you said — And now you are going to say that he is well. A fine, healthy son. For I will not listen to anything else. I will not believe anything else. I can not! I will not!!

(A long, long pause)

Born dead?

(MINISTER nods)

HENRY (Cont'd)

And the Queen? How is the Queen?

MINISTER

Quite well. She is asleep.

HENRY

Thank God.

(MINISTER starts to exit)

Wait. Send us a Minstrel.

MINISTER

A Minstrel, Your Majesty? As you wish.

(MINISTER exits)

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

I think it is time — more than time — for another pretty tune.

(MESSENGER enters)

MESSENGER

Your Majesty —

HENRY

No. No. Not a Messenger. A Minstrel!

MESSENGER

I am a Minstrel, Sire.

HENRY

Indeed?

MESSENGER

Transferred — at my request.

HENRY

And where is my Chief Minstrel?

MESSENGER

On vacation, Sire.

HENRY

And my First Assistant Minstrel?

MESSENGER

Visiting his sick sister in Sussex, Sire.

HENRY

Tell me — do you know "Oh Come Sweet Maid?"

MESSENGER

Of course. Of all Your Majesty's songs, it is far and away my favorite.

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

You hear? As a young man I wrote many many ballads. Some even say I was the author of "Greensleeves." Would that I were.

(HE shakes his head — signals the MESSENGER to begin)

MESSENGER

OH COME SWEET MAID —
COME VIRTUOUS MAID
AND LET ME TAKE THY HAND
AND I SHALL LEAD THEE HENCE FROM HERE
INTO A WONDROUS LAND

AND WE SHALL THERE
SUCH GLORY SHARE
AND SUCH ENCHANTMENT KNOW —
AS HAND—IN—HAND
WE ROAM THE SKY
AND CAUSE THE STARS TO GLOW

AS HAND—IN—HAND
WE ROAM THE SKY
AND CAUSE THE STARS TO GLOW

(MINISTER rushes in)

MINISTER

I have very grave news, Your Majesty.

HENRY (To MESSENGER)

Leave us.

(MESSENGER exits)

Grave news?

(MUSIC out)

MINISTER

I pray you will hear me without offense.

HENRY

Speak, Cromwell.

MINISTER

It concerns the Queen...

HENRY

The Queen? What of the Queen?

MINISTER

With your permission, Sire — there is only one appropriate word. If I may use the word: "adultery..."

HENRY

What? Adultery? The Queen? How dare you speak such nonsense?

(JANE SEYMOUR enters)

JANE SEYMOUR

Your Majesty — she is mounting the...

HENRY

Not now, Jane!

JANE

Yes, Your Majesty.

(JANE exits)

MINISTER

We have proof, My Lord. A young man, by name Mark Smeaton, has confessed that he and the Queen — on many occasions...

HENRY

Confessed? Confessed how? Under torture?

(MINISTER nods)

But a man will say anything under torture. Is that not so, Cromwell? And I seem to detect a personal vendetta in this —

HENRY (Cont'd)

since of late you have barely been able to conceal your dislike of the Queen.

MINISTER

Not "dislike," Sire — I *hate* the Queen. Yes! As I would hate any woman who betrayed her husband — any subject who conspired against my King — any person who planned

reasonable acts...

(ANNE BOLEYN rushes in)

ANNE

Henry, I must speak with you!

HENRY

You may go, Cromwell.

ANNE

No. I wish him to stay.

(To MINISTER)

Why have you arrested Mark Smeaton?

MINISTER

A political matter.

ANNE

Mark Smeaton?

(To HENRY)

You know him, Henry. The young man who sings for us occasionally. He is so — innocent. And *he* — political? It is almost a joke.

(To MINISTER)

I demand you release him immediately.

(To HENRY)

He will listen to *you*.

HENRY

It worries me to see you so agitated.

ANNE

But who would not be agitated when a dear friend... Henry — if you love me...

HENRY (Carefully)

But Anne — as you well know — in matters of State I must sometimes defer...

ANNE

Defer? To *him*?

(Icily)

I see. I will not speak to you — not one word, I swear — till Mark Smeaton is set free!

(SHE storms out)

MINISTER

The Queen — I fear — is not the most persuasive witness in her own defense.

HENRY

Get out, Cromwell!! Get out!!

(MINISTER bows stiffly, and starts to exit)

No — wait. Treason? You said — treason?

MINISTER

The Queen stands accused of plotting the King's death.

HENRY (Shaken)

My death?

MINISTER

And further — of planning to marry — to marry one of the...

HENRY

If you lie, Cromwell — I will have your head! You will be drawn-and-quartered — eviscerated — hung from a gibbet!

MINISTER

And I would deserve nothing less, Your Majesty. *If I lie.*

(MINISTER exits)

(MUSIC in)

HENRY

I CANNOT ACCEPT.
I WILL NOT ACCEPT.
NO.
IT REEKS OF
INVENTION
AND MALICE.
PALACES FULL OF SPIES

FULMINATING LIES.

(ANNE appears in a dim light upstage)

HENRY ANNE IT SIMPLY COULD NOT BE
THAT YOU WOULD PROVE
SO FALSE TO ME.
SO FALSE TO ME.
SO SOON TO BE
UNTRUE
I CANNOT BELIEVE.
I CANNOT ACCEPT.
NO, NEVER.
I SWEAR I WILL LOVE YOU
FOREVER, FOREVER.
I SWEAR I WILL LOVE YOU
FOREVER, FOREVER, FOREVER,
FOREV... A GREAT KING SHOULD HAVE SONS,
MY LORD.
A KING SHOULD HAVE
A YOUNG WIFE.
I COULD GIVE YOU SONS,
MY LORD.

I SWEAR I WILL LOVE YOU
FOREVER, FOREVER.
I SWEAR I WILL LOVE YOU
FOREVER, FOREVER, FOREVER,
FOREV...

(MINISTER rushes in. ANNE disappears)

MINISTER

Your Majesty!

HENRY

What now, Cromwell?

MINISTER

In the case against Anne Boleyn — proof incontrovertible!

HENRY

What proof have you?

MINISTER

Mark Smeaton, Sire — on the gallows. At the final moment, Sire. His last words — heard by all...

HENRY

Mark Smeaton's last words? What?

MINISTER

These, Sire: "I have deserved the death. I have deserved the death." Proof incontrovertible of the Queen's guilt.

HENRY

Mark Smeaton said: "I have deserved the death?"

MINISTER

It was heard by all — by all attending.

(HE extends a paper and pen to HENRY)

We will need your signature...

(HENRY looks at the paper — then throws it aside.)

There is no alternative, Your Majesty. If Anne Boleyn were to have a child now — if she were to have a son — how many would believe the child was yours? The country might be torn apart!

(HE hands the paper to HENRY, who crumples it)

HENRY

But — what of — divorce? She could live — away from the court — somewhere. But she would live! Or would you find that too disappointing?

MINISTER

It is possible, perhaps, to divorce an adulteress. But a King — a King who wishes to hold his throne — cannot merely divorce a traitor. There are laws. And, above all — let me remind you — the law of survival.

HENRY

I will never — I could never — It is unthinkable — Outside any possibility of consideration!

MINISTER

My Lord.

(MINISTER takes the paper and exits)

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

But — eventually... much, much later — I did sign. You know I signed. History, as I said, cannot be avoided.

(Drums are heard. JANE SEYMOUR enters)

JANE SEYMOUR

Your Majesty — now?

HENRY

Yes, Jane. Now.

JANE

Your Majesty, she is mounting the scaffold. I can see through the window.

HENRY

I DO NOT WISH TO HEAR. I DO NOT WISH TO HEAR.

JANE

She says: "I have such a little neck."

HENRY

I DO NOT WISH TO HEAR. I DO NOT WISH TO HEAR.

JANE

She asks that all will pray — That all will pray for you, Your Majesty — for you!

HENRY

I CANNOT BEAR TO HEAR. I CANNOT BEAR TO HEAR.

JANE

She begs forgiveness for her sins.

HENRY

I CANNOT BEAR TO HEAR. I CANNOT BEAR TO HEAR.

JANE

They are binding her eyes.

HENRY

ANNE. MY ANNE.

JANE

She is smiling. Smiling! Now she is kneeling...

HENRY

ANNE! MY ANNE!

(Offstage the headsman's axe falls.)

She begged forgiveness for her sins.

As I do now. Anne — if ever I judged you wrongly. At the time — I was so certain. But I have never really known. No one has ever really known. Except you, as you smiled and knelt and faced your death...

I loved you — more than anyone!!

(To AUDIENCE)

And then — perhaps days — perhaps weeks later...

JANE

Your Majesty —

HENRY

Yes, Jane?

JANE

I have been set in to entertain you.

HENRY

To entertain me?

JANE

That is what I was told — by one of the men in the red coats. He said: "The King is so depressed. Go in and see if you can entertain him." He did not say how. Would you like me to tell you a rather amusing story?

HENRY

No.

JANE

Then I am at a loss.

HENRY

How can you expect to cheer me when you yourself look so glum?

JANE

Not glum, Sire. Only thoughtful. Wondering how to entertain.

HENRY

Very well then. You may tell me your amusing story.

JANE

It is not all that amusing.

HENRY

Tell it anyway.

JANE

Thank you, Sire!

(Suddenly concerned)

If I can remember...

(LIGHT fades on JANE)

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

She could not remember. Who could resist such — simplicity? Who could resist — loving her — a little? And — as time went on — she helped me to forget what had gone before. And — as time went on — it seemed a good possibility that she might well be — God willing — the mother of my urgently needed sons. So that is how Jane Seymour came to be Queen of England — Wife Number Three

And then — praise be to God — And then — at long last — And then, finally...

(MINISTER pushes a curtained bed onstage)

I HAVE A SON! I HAVE A SON! I HAVE A SON!
ENGLAND HAS A PRINCE! PRINCE EDWARD!
ENGLAND HAS A KING! A FUTURE KING! KING EDWARD!

- IF I EVER SHOULD DIE. AND I MAY NEVER DIE.
I AM TOO FULL OF JOY —
TOO FULL OF JOY TO EVER DIE!

I HAVE A SON! A BOY AT LAST! IT IS A BOY!
NOW PATERNAL PRIDE ROUTS MY SORROW —
FOR HE IS AT MY SIDE TO GUARANTEE
THERE WILL BE A TOMORROW!

SO LET THE TRUMPETS BLOW AND LET THE BANNERS FLY
TO LET THE PEOPLE KNOW THAT ALL IS WELL.

HENRY (Cont'd)

TO TELL THE WORLD I HAVE A SON! I HAVE A SON!
I HAVE A SON! COME SEE MY SON!

SEE HENRY'S SON!

(HENRY goes to the bed and draws the curtain. To his surprise,
the bed is empty.)

Cromwell!

MINISTER

Yes, Sire?

HENRY

My son? Where is my son?

MINISTER

In the nursery, Sire.

HENRY

He is well?

MINISTER

Yes, Sire.

HENRY

You are certain he is well?

MINISTER

Certain, Sire.

HENRY

And where — where is his mother, Jane Seymour?

MINISTER

The Queen, Sire — I regret — The Queen is dead.

HENRY

Dead? Jane dead?

MINISTER

Yes, Sire. Of complications following the birth.

HENRY

And my son - ? My son?

MINISTER

Well, Sire. Quite well.

HENRY

You are certain?

MINISTER

Certain, Sire. And, if I may — my condolences on the death of Her Majesty.

(MINISTER exits, taking the bed with him.)

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

Poor Jane. Sweet, simple Jane. I have sometimes been accused of her death. But — as you have seen — she died in childbirth.

Alone. Alone.

After almost thirty years of marriage. After Catherine of Aragon — after Anne Boleyn — after Jane Seymour.

I had no wife. No wife.

And — ah — the joy of it! The freedom!

I would never marry again! Never!

Of that I was certain!

(MINISTER enters carrying an oil-painting on an easel. HE places it with his back to the audience.)

MINISTER

A King must have sons.

HENRY

I have a son.

MINISTER

Two sons are better than one.

HENRY

Two sons?

MINISTER

Three sons are better than two.

HENRY

Why? To butcher one another for the crown?

MINISTER

To guarantee the succession.

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

And so — Wife Number Four.

(MUSIC in)

MINISTER

With your permission, Sire — This painting is by Holbein. Hans Holbein.

HENRY (Interested)

An excellent artist. And note the technique. Observe, Cromwell — the boldness of the line.

MINISTER

Yes, Sire. And, if I may suggest, observe also the subject: The Lady Anne of Cleves.

HENRY

Anne of Cleves?

MINISTER

A most well-favored young lady. And far more fair than pictured here. Far more fair. And skilled in domestic arts — needlework especially. And well-disposed. As bright as day. And, of course, a virgin. A virgin — need I say?

HENRY

We think — she appears to be too far along in years to be a virgin.

MINISTER

But I assure you, Sire — authenticated.

HENRY

Authenticated?

MINISTER

Yes, Sire. She was examined by the Holy Sisters of Westphalia.

HENRY

And how old...? How old would such a lady be?

MINISTER

How old? Barely passing thirty, Sire.

HENRY

That old? But we had wished...

MINISTER

BUT SIRE — THIS LADY
THIS LADY ANNE OF CLEVES...
IF SHE APPEARS SOMEWHAT — TARNISHED
IT IS THE PORTRAIT SIRE
THE PORTRAIT NOT THE LADY

HENRY

You guarantee?

MINISTER

I guarantee, Sire. I guarantee.

HENRY

Well, perhaps we will consider...

MINISTER

Thank you, Your Majesty. And consider also if you will...

THE MANY BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED
FROM SUCH A UNION
FOR YOU ARE ENGLAND
ENGLAND
AND ANNE OF CLEVES
IS GERMANY
ENGLAND AND GERMANY

(MUSIC out)

HENRY

Very well. For political reasons — we will consider.

(Wistfully)

There are, in Germany, no younger ladies?

(MUSIC in)

(HENRY and MINISTER exit. ANNE OF CLEVES enters and surveys the stage gloomily.)

ANNE OF CLEVES

ACH LIEBER GOTT — ACH LIEBER GOTT —
IN ENGLAND NOW I SET MY FOOT.
ACH LIEBER GOTT — ACH LIEBER GOTT —
MY HAPPINESS IS ALL KAPUT.

LONDON.
ACH LIEBER GOTT — WHY I BE HERE?
LONDON.
ACH LIEBER GOTT — WHY I LEAVE CLEVES?

NOT THAT CLEVES IS SO FINE.
NOT THAT CLEVES IS SO MUCH.
IT'S NOT ALL DRINKING WINE,
SINGING, DANCING AND SUCH —
ON THE BANK OF THE RHINE...
ON THE BANK OF THE RHINE.

BUT I WISH I AM BACK IN WESTPHALIA.
NOT THAT WESTPHALIA'S SUCH BLISS.
WESTPHALIA IN FACT IS A LOT LIKE A JAIL YET
YA BET IT IS BETTER THAN THIS.

FOR I AM THE WIFE NUMBER FOUR —
NUMBER FOUR.
AND OF THE FIRST THREE, TWO ARE DEAD.
ACH, IF I LIE IN KING HENRY'S BED
AND IF I DO NOT SATISFY —
WILL I SOON JOIN THE TWO WHO DIE?

ACH, LOOK FOR ANNE OF CLEVES TOMORROW.
IN A CHURCHYARD SHE WILL BE.
IN A CHURCHYARD YOU WILL FIND HER.
FIND HER STONE AND YOU WILL SEE
ON HER STONE THESE WORDS OF SORROW:

"ANNE OF CLEVES, SHE DIE ALONE —
FAR FROM HAPPY — AND FAR FROM HOME."

LONDON.
ACH LIEBER GOTT — WHY I BE HERE?
LONDON.
ACH LIEBER GOTT — WHY I LEAVE CLEVES?

NOT THAT CLEVES IS SO GREAT
IF YOU'D LIKE TO GET WED.
A LONG TIME YOU CAN WAIT.
YOU CAN WAIT TILL YOU'RE DEAD.
SO YOU SIT IN YOUR BED
AND EMBROIDER INSTEAD.

BUT I WISH I AM BACK IN WESTPHALIA.

NOT THAT WESTPHALIA'S SO GAY.
WAS I A FAILURE
IN WESTPHALIA?

IS THAT WHY THEY SEND ME AWAY?
AWAY?
IS THAT WHY THEY SEND ME AWAY?
AWAY?
IS THAT WHY THEY SEND ME AWAY?

(MUSIC in)

(MINISTER enters, leading HENRY, who has aged considerably)

MINISTER

Your Majesty, I should like to present to you The Lady Anne of Cleves.

(HENRY and ANNE look at each other unhappily)

HENRY

She was not young. She was not beautiful.

ANNE OF CLEVES (Indicating HENRY)

He is old and fat.

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

I think it is safe to say: It started badly.

MINISTER (To AUDIENCE)

And now the wedding.

(MUSIC in)

The wedding of King Henry to The Lady Anne of Cleves. January the eighteenth in The Year of Our Lord One Thousand Five Hundred and Forty.

(MINISTER conducts the service in pantomime. HENRY looks very glum.)

I now pronounce you man and wife — King and Queen.

(To HENRY)

You may kiss the bride.

(HENRY does nothing)

You may kiss the bride.

(HENRY pauses — then HE lifts ANNE's veil and gives her a peck on the cheek.)

(MUSIC in)

(MINISTER brings on the marriage bed. Then HE exits.)

(MUSIC out)

(ANNE OF CLEVES inspects the bed. The pillows and sheets are lavishly monogrammed with the initials: "H-A." ANNE admires the embroidery.)

ANNE OF CLEVES

Ach. Very fine.

HENRY

What?

ANNE

Very fine. The embroidery.

HENRY

What?

(ANNE holds up a pillow. HENRY takes a look)

ANNE

"H-A." Henry-Anne. Very fine.

HENRY (Attempting a conversation)

I am told you have a talent — a definite talent for needlework.

ANNE

Ach — but not like this. I embroider — but not so good. You have special people — people to do this?

HENRY

I imagine so...

ANNE

They must be busy.

HENRY

What?

ANNE

I mean: I know — you know — everybody know I am the Wife Number Four. So — it's a lot of embroidery. Yes?

(MUSIC in)

(SHE thinks about it)

Unless...

HENRY

Unless?

ANNE

Unless — if you save this — you save it from your second wife... Also Anne: "H.A."

(HENRY takes a pillow and looks at it tenderly)

HENRY

"H.A." Ha. The sound of laughter.

(MUSIC in)

SHE HAD A WONDROUS LAUGH, MY ANNE BOLEYN.
A SOFT AND GENTLE LAUGH, MY ANNE BOLEYN.

ANNE

You speak so fond of her...?

HENRY

I would have given my life for her.

ANNE

But it work out the other way.

HENRY

She committed adultery. Adultery! The one unforgivable crime for a Queen!

ANNE

Why so unforgivable?

HENRY

Why?? Just think of it! If a Queen — a Queen commits adultery — secretly — and has a child... a child not the son of the King — Not in any way the son of the King — and if that child then assumes the throne... You see?

ANNE (Nods)

It break the royal line. Ach — I just now realize: This is why I am here! They take one look at me. They say: "With her — who worries about adultery? Nobody will want her!"

(Sadly)

You included.

(HENRY guiltily takes her hand)

HENRY

The problem is, Madam: There is a serious flaw in my character. And, you may ask, what is this flaw? For, after all, am I not a King? And is not a King perfect? Or believed to be perfect?

ANNE

So — what flaw?

HENRY

The truth is, Madam: I am hopelessly, uncontrollably attracted to young women — to young, beautiful women. And, sad to say, this is not a condition which ameliorates with age. It seems to wax rather than wane.

ANNE

Excuse, please. What is this wax — wane...?

HENRY

It is not important. What is important, Madam, is that if we do not consummate this marriage, it can be easily annulled. And I will give you anything. Anything! I will give you what you wish. Just name it, Madam — it is yours!

ANNE

You mean this?

HENRY

Desperately!

ANNE

And — you will not — will not chop off my head? You promise?

HENRY

I promise.

ANNE

You swear it?

HENRY

I swear it!

ANNE

My head stays...?

(SHE indicates her neck. HENRY vigorously assents)

(MUSIC in)

ANNE

So — in that case — very good.

HENRY (Delighted)

You mean...? You mean...?

ANNE

Ja! Ja!

(ANNE and HENRY laugh. THEY shake hands happily)

HENRY

WAS EVER A NEWLY WED GROOM LESS DEMANDING?

ANNE

WAS EVER A MARRIAGE SO BRIEF?

HENRY

WAS EVER A LADY WHO'S MORE UNDERSTANDING?

ANNE

WAS EVER THERE SUCH A RELIEF?

BOTH

HA HA HA HA HA HA —
WHAT COULD BE MORE RIGHT?
HA HA HA HA HA HA —
THE PERFECT WEDDING NIGHT!

HENRY

WAS EVER A MARRIAGE SO TRULY DELIGHTFUL?

ANNE

WAS EVER A MARRIAGE SO NICE?

HENRY

WAS EVER A GROOM OR A BRIDE SO INSIGHTFUL?

ANNE

WITHOUT EVEN ONCE THINKING TWICE!

BOTH

HA HA HA HA HA HA —
WHAT COULD BE MORE FAIR?
HA HA HA HA HA HA —
OH WHAT A MERRY PAIR!

HENRY

WAS EVER A KING OR A QUEEN MORE JUDICIOUS?

ANNE

WAS EVER A MARRIAGE SO FINE?
[I'M PRACTICALLY BACK ON THE RHINE]

HENRY

WHO EVER BELIEVED YOU'D ACCEDE TO MY WISHES?

ANNE

EXCEPT THEY TURN OUT TO BE MINE!

BOTH

HA HA HA HA HA HA —
MARRIAGE CAN BE BLISS.
HA HA HA HA HA HA —
WHEN MARRIAGE ENDS LIKE THIS!

HENRY

I'LL SOON BE A BACHELOR AND FREE TO MEANDER.

ANNE

A ROOSTER WHO'S NEEDING A HEN.

HENRY

I'M NOT LIKE A GOOSE WHO MUST HAVE A NEW GANDER

ANNE

- BUT SOON THEY'LL BE SEWING AGAIN.

BOTH

HA HA HA HA HA HA —
MARRIAGE CAN BE FUN.
HA HA HA HA HA HA —
WHEN IT IS QUICKLY DONE.

HENRY

I NEVER BELIEVED WE WOULD SO QUICKLY SEVER.
I NEVER BELIEVED YOU'D AGREE
THAT I NEED A BRIDE WHO IS NOT QUITE SO CLEVER —
AND QUITE A BIT YOUNGER THAN ME.

BOTH

HA HA HA HA HA HA —
WHAT COULD BE MORE RIGHT?
HA HA HA HA HA HA —
THE PERFECT WEDDING NIGHT!

ANNE

WAS EVER A KING MORE DESERVING OF PITY?
BUT THERE IS NO REASON FOR GLOOM.
THEY'LL FIND YOU A BRIDE WHO IS YOUTHFUL AND PRETTY.
AND I'D LIKE A SIMILAR GROOM!

BOTH

HA HA HA HA HA HA —
WHAT COULD BE MORE RIGHT?
HA HA HA HA HA HA —
THE PERFECT
NON-CONSUMMATELY PERFECT
THE PERFECT WEDDING NIGHT!!

(ANNE OF CLEVES kisses HENRY on the cheek. SHE bows to
the AUDIENCE. Then SHE exits)

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

Anne of Cleves — the most agreeable of all my wives. And you will be happy to hear that she fell in love with a young man of my Court — I forget his name — and married him and lived in the neighborhood — and came to see me quite often. But, even now, I sometimes wonder — Anne of Cleves and I? How would it have been? At least, I imagine — good for a laugh or two. And, as time passes, one begins to suspect that perhaps the most desirable asset in a wife is — not beauty, not wisdom — but cheerfulness. Simple cheerfulness.

(LIGHTS change)

Days pass. Weeks pass. Months pass...

(MINISTER enters with a heavy coat, which HE helps HENRY put on)

MINISTER

I hope this coat will be warm enough, Sire.

(Wearing the coat makes HENRY look older and fatter than ever)

Can I do anything else for Your Majesty?

HENRY

Yes, Cromwell. I should like you to prepare a presentation.

MINISTER

I am not Cromwell, Sire. I am Cranmer.

HENRY

Cranmer? Very well, Cranmer — I should like you to prepare a presentation. A listing — possibly chronological — of the events of my reign. By which I mean such things as battles, treaties, alliances, disalliances, victories and so on... Not forgetting, of course, my role as founder of the British Navy.

MINISTER

Certainly, Your Majesty.

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

I think it is important for you to see how I occupied my time on the throne. That is, in the odd moments I was not slaughtering my wives.

MINISTER

Certainly, Your Majesty. And when would you wish such a presentation?

HENRY

As soon as possible, Cranmer — if you will.

MINISTER

It shall be done.

(HE starts to exit)

HENRY

It is always so drafty in this Palace. I do not recall it being so drafty.

MINISTER

Possibly, Sire, the winters are getting more severe.

HENRY

It must be.

(MINISTER exits)

(MUSIC in)

My leg pains me.
It is swollen, ugly, troublesome.
And I have severe headaches.
Severe.
But there is no cure.

AND I HAVE GROWN SOMEWHAT HEAVY.
SOMEWHAT.
IT IS THE FOOD HERE.
TOO MUCH WINE.
TOO MUCH SUGAR.
TOO MUCH HONEY.

IT IS TOO DARK IN THE PALACE.
DREARY.
THERE IS NO LOVE HERE.
NO MORE DREAMS.
NO MORE PASSION.
NO MORE LAUGHTER.

IF I COULD RIDE THROUGH THE FOREST
WITH PRINCES AT MY SIDE —
IF I HAD SONS TO SHARE
MY KINGLY CARES
I WOULD BE FILLED WITH PRIDE.

BUT I AM ALONE IN THE PALACE.
WEARY.
THERE IS NO PURPOSE.
EMPTY TALK.
EMPTY TABLES.
EMPTY FACES.

THE DAYS ARE SLOW IN THE PALACE.

TOO SLOW.
BUT OH — THE YEARS —
HOW FAST THEY GO.

AND IT IS COLD IN THE PALACE.
TOO COLD.
AND I — AND I —
AND I —
GROW OLD.

(MUSIC out)

(KATHRYN HOWARD enters. SHE looks very, very much like ANNE BOLEYN. HENRY can hardly believe his eyes)

Anne? Anne Boleyn...?

KATHRYN HOWARD

I beg Your Majesty's pardon?

HENRY (Shaken)

No. I see you are not. But there is — such a very strong resemblance.

KATHRYN

I am Kathryn Howard, Sire.

HENRY

Kathryn Howard? You have my leave to go, Kathryn.

KATHRYN (Curtsying)

Yes, Your Majesty.

(SHE exits)

(MUSIC in)

HENRY (Urgently)

You have my leave to go. Go, Kathryn! Go far away! Away from this Court! Away from England! Away from this Hemisphere! Or we shall most certainly destroy one another.

(MINISTER enters)

(MUSIC out)

MINISTER

As you requested, Your Majesty — I have prepared the presentation.

HENRY

Well done, Cranmer.

MINISTER

I have listed your many many glorious deeds — your glorious deeds and accomplishments. Also treaties, negotiations, battles and so on and so on. I may begin?

(HENRY nods)

(MUSIC in)

With Your Majesty's permission — As I am somewhat tight of throat today, I have enlisted the aid of this Lady and this Minstrel...

(KATHRYN HOWARD and MESSENGER enter. HE carries a large scroll)

MESSENGER

THE CHRONICLE OF HENRY EIGHT
WOULD FILL A HUNDRED SCROLLS OR MORE

MINISTER

AND HISTORY WILL ESTIMATE
HIM GREATER THAN THE KINGS OF YORE.

KATHRYN, MESSENGER, MINISTER

LA, HA HA
LA, HA HA
LA, HA HA

IN ANARCHY DID ENGLAND DWELL
WITH YORK AND LANCASTER IN MIND
UNTIL THE GREAT HENRY
HENRY —

(MUSIC out)

HENRY (Interrupting)

I am concerned... Is all this, do you think — possibly — somewhat extravagant?

MINISTER

In no way, Your Majesty — in my opinion.

HENRY

In no way?

(MINISTER shakes his head vigorously)

Which is not to say that I do not enjoy hearing it.

(HENRY motions THEM to continue)

KATHRYN, MESSENGER, MINISTER
UNTIL GREAT HENRY TOOK THE HELM
AND WHITE AND RED ROSE INTERTWINED
INTERTWINED.

LA, HA HA
LA, HA HA
LA, HA HA

(MUSIC out)

HENRY (Interrupting)

Cranmer, hold a minute. And — if you will — tell me all you know of...

(HE indicates KATHRYN HOWARD)

MINISTER

Kathryn Howard, Sire? She is the daughter of Sir Edmund Howard. Also the niece of the Duke of Norfolk. What more would Your Majesty wish to know?

(MUSIC in)

KATHRYN, MESSENGER, MINISTER
ONE COUNTRY UNIFIED AND FREE
WAS HIS UNPARALLELED BEQUEST

(MUSIC out)

HENRY (Interrupting)

Is she — very young? Have you any idea?

MINISTER

Too young, Your Majesty — if I may say so.

HENRY

You may not.

MINISTER

In that case, I pray you will forgive me.

(MUSIC in)

KATHRYN, MESSENGER, MINISTER
A MIGHTY NAVY DID HE...

(MUSIC out)

(HENRY indicates that KATHRYN and MESSENGER should
leave. THEY exit)

HENRY

I will hear it — tomorrow.

MINISTER

As you wish.

HENRY

What you do not seem to realize, Cranmer — is that while some men are old at thirty —
others may be strong and vigorous at forty — at fifty, even... What would you say if
England were to have another Prince — or two?

MINISTER

I should be most pleased.

HENRY

And it may well occur. For I am suddenly... Do you not think Kathryn Howard
extraordinarily beautiful?

MINISTER (Nods)

It is no wonder so many men seek her acquaintance.

HENRY

Many men?

MINISTER

It is only natural.

HENRY (Getting angry)

Is there some kind of innuendo here?

MINISTER

Not at all, Your Majesty. I merely suggest that when a young lady is...

HENRY

You know the matter with you, Cranmer? You are old — you look old — you feel old. Therefore you resent the fact that I, more or less your contemporary... At any rate, the subject is closed! You may go.

MINISTER

- If I have offended Your Majesty...

HENRY

You have. But I suppose one must forgive the elderly.

(MINISTER exits as KATHRYN HOWARD comes downstage to HENRY)

(MUSIC in)

KATHRYN HOWARD

You set for me, Your Majesty?

HENRY (Nods)

I am told you sing — ballads — most beautifully. I have always been partial to — ballads. Will you sing for me, Kathryn Howard?

KATHRYN

If Your Majesty wishes...

TO A MAIDEN FAIR
IN A FOREST GLADE,
A SUITOR SANG
A SERENADE;

"OH LOVE ME, LADY.
OH BE MINE.
OH LET MY ARMS
AND THINE ENTWINE.
OH LOVE ME LADY —
BE MY BRIDE."

TO WHICH
THE MAIDEN FAIR
REPLIED:

"NO NO NO
I DO NOT WISH TO MARRY.
NO NO NO
I NEVER SHALL BE THINE.

GO GO GO
I PRAY YOU WILL NOT TARRY.
GO GO GO
YOU NEVER SHALL BE MINE.

SEEK AND YOU MAY
FIND DEVOTION
EITHER FAR OR NEAR.

BUT I MUST NAY NAY
THE NOTION
YOU WILL FIND IT HERE.

NO NO NO
NEVER SHALL I MARRY
NO NO NO
I NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER
NEVER SHALL BE THINE!"

(MUSIC out)

HENRY

Will you love me, Kathryn Howard?

KATHRYN

Will I love you? No, Your Majesty.

HENRY

What? You do not love your King?

KATHRYN

I do indeed love my King, Sire. But that — that — is not what you meant.

HENRY

Quite true. Will you lie with me, Kathryn?

KATHRYN

No, Sire.

HENRY

But, tell me — would you marry me? Would you marry me — IF — if — the occasion — were to arise...?

(MUSIC in)

KATHRYN (Humming her tune)

NO NO NO
I DO NOT WISH TO MARRY.
NO NO NO
I NEVER SHALL BE THINE.

(KATHRYN continues to hum her song as HENRY speaks)

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

It was original — but not, in the end, very amusing. Not very amusing at all. For she would not lie with me — not love me — not marry me. And, need I say, the more she refused — the more she refused — the more desperate I became. — Until it seemed I would die if I could not possess her.

And so days passed, and weeks passed, and months passed... Until, one day...

KATHRYN

You sent for me, Your Majesty?

HENRY

I am not Your Majesty, Kathryn. I am a man like any other. And I come to you — so humbly.

(MUSIC in)

Because life is meaningless without you. And I realize — I realize I am not perhaps as youthful as you might wish. And I realize — I realize I have certain — infirmities — which are possibly unpleasant to look upon...

But I beg of you — come be my bride. And I will make you happy. Happier than you can dream. And you will make me young again. So young again. — If only you will honor me...

KATHRYN (Suddenly and unexpectedly)

Yes.

HENRY

Yes? Yes?? You mean it? Yes??

KATHRYN (Flatly)

Yes. I will marry you.

(MINISTER enters)

MINISTER

And now — the wedding of King Henry to Kathryn Howard. July the Twelfth in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Five Hundred and Forty Three.

(WEDDING MUSIC begins. The ceremony as before)

I now pronounce you husband and wife — King and Queen. You may kiss the bride.

(HENRY kisses KATHRYN passionately. Then KATHRYN and the MINISTER exit)

HENRY

AND SO BEGAN
THE HAPPINESS.
BEGAN THE
FINAL HAPPINESS.
AND IF IT WAS
NOT QUITE IDEAL —
IT BROUGHT AT LEAST
A FLEETING LAUGH.
A FLEETING WARMTH.
A FLEETING JOY.

AND IF INDEED
SHE DID NOT LOVE —
SHE WAS AT LEAST
COMPASSIONATE.
COMPASSIONATE.
AND IT WAS —
STRANGE ENOUGH —
ENOUGH.
AND IT WAS —
STRANGE ENOUGH —
ENOUGH.

(MUSIC continues as MINISTER enters)

MINISTER (Grimly)

I have grave news, Your Majesty. Very grave news. I pray you will hear me out without offense.

HENRY

Speak. Speak, Cranmer.

MINISTER

It concerns the Queen.

HENRY

The Queen? What of the Queen?

MINISTER

- If I may use the word: "adultery...?"

(MUSIC out)

HENRY

No! No! Say no more! But go! Begone! And never speak of this again! Do you hear?

MINISTER (Icily)

If you wish, Your Majesty.

(HE starts to exit. HENRY detains him)

HENRY

Cranmer — there will be no more scaffolds — no more regrets.

(MINISTER nods stiffly)

I have lived through this once before. Bitterly. And I will not — I cannot live through it again. So, whatever is being said — whoever is being accused — whatever — whoever — I will not listen. This time there will be no inquiry, no torture, no confession on the gallows. Do you understand?

MINISTER

Indeed, Sire. But what of the Privy Council?

HENRY

They know of this — accusation?

MINISTER

It is they who make it. They have many witnesses...

HENRY

No. No witnesses. I will dispose of this nonsense myself. I will go directly to the Queen and I will question her. She will of course refute all charges. How could it be otherwise? And so there will be an end to it. Do you hear? An end to it! For I wish to live in peace, Cranmer — in peace.

(MINISTER exits)

(LIGHTS change)

(KATRYN HOWARD enters — followed by MINISTER)

KATHRYN

You sent for me, Your Majesty?

(MUSIC in)

HENRY

Truly. There are some questions — that must be answered: Kathryn — I am much troubled. Troubled. I have heard — stories. Lies — I am sure. But they are — bothersome. I need to speak with you. I need to hear you — to hear you tell me they are lies. Lies. Untrue.

KATHRYN (Very self-controlled)

What are these — stories?

HENRY

Of your relations — of your relations with other men. With many other men. Before our marriage. Some before — and many after. Many after. I am so sure. So sure it is not true. I wait for you to say. I wait for you to say.

(A long, long pause)

KATHRYN

It is all true.

HENRY

BUT DO YOU KNOW...?
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?

KATHRYN

I SAY IT IS ALL TRUE

HENRY

AND YOU ADMIT, THEN...?
YOU ADMIT?

KATHRYN (Shrugs)

WHAT USE IS DENYING?
THERE IS PROOF.
I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN ONE DAY IT WOULD EMERGE.
I'VE ALWAYS WAITED —
KNOWING SOME DAY YOU WOULD ASK ME
IF THE STORIES WERE ALL TRUE.
ARE THEY TRUE?
AND I WOULD ANSWER "YES" TO YOU.

AND I WOULD ANSWER "YES."
ALL TRUE.

HENRY
AND THERE WERE OTHERS THEN? OTHERS?
DURING OUR MARRIAGE? OTHERS?

KATHRYN
I SAY IT IS ALL TRUE.
I SAY I'VE LOVED WITH MANY MEN —
WITH MANY OTHER MEN.

HENRY
BUT WHY?

KATHRYN
BUT WHY? BUT WHY?
YOU THINK I COULD BE SATISFIED —
BE SATISFIED — YOU THINK —
BY YOU??

HENRY
I am — too old?

KATHRYN
TOO OLD.
TOO SOFT.
TOO FAT.
TOO WEAK.
TOO UGLY.
I CANNOT BEAR TO SEE YOUR LEG —
YOUR STINKING ULCERATED LEG.

It makes me retch.

HENRY
OH, KATHRYN — KATHRYN —

You are committing suicide.
Do you not know
You are committing suicide?

KATHRYN
I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN HOW IT WOULD END.

HENRY

Then why — then why —
Why did you marry me?

KATHRYN

YOU FOOL! YOU FOOL!
AND I THOUGHT ANYONE COULD SEE!

HENRY

NOT I. NOT I.

KATHRYN

I wanted to be Queen.

(KATHRYN HOWARD and MINISTER exit)

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

And that is how I remember it. But now — I realize that is how I have chosen to remember it. But it is not the way it was. Not entirely the way it was.

Because — in truth — hearing her words, I flew into a rage. A titanic rage.

For she had humiliated me — she had betrayed me — she had taken my very life away!!

"I want her out of my sight! I want her out of the palace! I want her — gone!!"

A King, indeed, has too much power. If a common man flies into a rage and wishes someone dead — when the rage has past, that someone is still alive.

And so her life came to an end — and mine also.

(Pause)

I think it is time now for a lighter moment...

(Calling offstage)

Send us a fool!

(MESSENGER enters)

No! No! Not a Messenger. A Fool!

MESSENGER

I am he, Your Majesty. Actually, if truth be told, I am First Apprentice Fool — but...

HENRY

Never mind. Make me laugh, Fool.

MESSENGER

Make you laugh?

HENRY

That is what a Fool does — is it not?

MESSENGER

Oh, no — Your Majesty. I will tell you what a Fool does: He marries five times.

HENRY

You presume, Fool!

(Calming down)

But you are right. Five times is — excessive.

MESSENGER

And six...?

HENRY

What? Never in a thousand years!

MESSENGER

But it is said — the Lady Catherine Parr is determined to be your bride. And no man — not even a King — can escape a truly determined woman.

HENRY

What are you? Some new type of Fool — striving to sadden me? But I am sad enough already.

(Curious)

Who is this — Lady Catherine Parr?

MESSENGER

The daughter of Sir Thomas Parr.

HENRY

But is she attractive? Young?

MESSENGER

A woman of some years — already twice-widowed.

HENRY

Enough! And another Catherine, of all things! Never! Never! Never! Never! Never!

(CATHERINE PARR enters — solid, respectable, middle-aged woman)

CATHERINE PARR

Time to sleep, Henry. Time to sleep.

(SHE dismisses the MESSENGER, who exits)

HENRY (Imitating her)

"Time to sleep, Henry. Time to sleep."

(To AUDIENCE)

Catherine Parr. Wife Number Six.
And did I need another wife?
Another sorrow in my life.
Another sorrow, another wife.

CATHERINE

Then why did you marry again?

HENRY

Why? Why indeed?
Habit.

CATHERINE

And why did I marry you — do you suppose?

HENRY

There's no need to suppose. You wished to be Queen of England.

CATHERINE

And what have I become? A nursemaid to an irritable, elderly child.

HENRY

I am only irritable when you nag at me.

CATHERINE

You think I enjoy following you about — apologizing for you — wiping the spillings from your chin...? You think I enjoy cajoling you into taking your endless medicines — which you do not take — as I am well aware. I have never a moment's peace: following you — watching you — making sure you do not trip on the stair. I am not a wife. I am a servant — hired to look after you.

HENRY

Look after me? But I have many — so many courtiers, doctors, attendants...

CATHERINE

Ha! You think they care if you live or die?

HENRY (Very sadly)

No. I do not think they care.

(CATHERINE starts to exit)

Catherine...

(SHE stops and turns to him)

I think — possibly — you care.

(CATHERINE gives a sort of half-nod — then SHE exits)

(To AUDIENCE)

And so it ended.

I passed away on a snowy January day in the Year of Our Lord 1547 — and I am buried at Windsor.

And — for centuries — I slept. Fitfully. But I slept. But, of late — as I explained at the outset — I cannot rest, I simply cannot sleep.

And — lying awake — I sometimes wonder...

(MUSIC in)

If Arthur had lived.

If Arthur, my brother, had not passed away.

If he had been King for a lifetime —

With Catherine of Aragon as his Queen.

And if I were a Prince — Prince Henry

How would it have been?

One thing I know:

I would have married Anne Boleyn.

Nothing could have kept us apart.

And, if I were not the King

Nothing would have parted us.

And we would have had our little girl —

Our bright little Elizabeth.

Elizabeth — who would never be Queen of England

If Arthur had lived.

And if I were a Prince
If that was my lot
Would I wish to be King?
Oh, my friends, I would not.

ONLY FOOLS CRAVE A THRONE —
AND THE TROUBLES IT BRINGS
ALL THE CARES — AND THE WOES
AND THE NIGHTMARES OF KINGS

SIMPLE MEN, IT IS SAID
DREAM OF WEARING A CROWN —
WHILE THE KING AT THEIR HEAD
DREAMS OF LIVING IN TOWN

DREAMS OF STAYING IN BED
WITH NOTHING TO DO AND NO ONE TO SEE
AND DREAMS OF EVERYDAY THINGS
KINGS KNOW ONLY IN DREAMS

FOOLS CRAVE A THRONE
AS THEY RULE FROM ON HIGH
BUT THE KINGS ARE ALONE
AS LIFE PASSES THEM BY

YET SINCE FOOLS ARE NAÏVE
THEY WILL NEVER BELIEVE

ONLY FOOLS CRAVE A THRONE
ONLY FOOLS

CATHERINE (Offstage)

Come to bed, Henry.

HENRY

What did you say, Catherine?

CATHERINE (Much louder)

Come to bed, Henry.

HENRY (To AUDIENCE)

My nanny calls.

CATHERINE