PREVIEW: CROWNED

By

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Cast of Characters

ANNE BOLEYN:	Intelligent, ambitious, and defiant. Refuses to be Henry’s mistress and demands legitimacy and power. Her independence makes her both queen and scapegoat. Central protagonist.
KING HENRY VIII:	Charismatic, volatile, and insecure. Obsessed with producing a male heir and controlling both church and marriage. Flawed ruler whose desires reshape England.
THOMAS CROMWELL:	Henry’s chief strategist. Brilliant, cold, and pragmatic. Orchestrates Anne’s downfall by turning rumor into law.
CATHERINE OF ARAGON:	Henry’s first wife. Dignified and steadfast. Her displacement triggers the political and religious crisis.
JANE SEYMOUR:	Quiet and compliant contrast to Anne. Becomes Henry’s next queen, symbolizing the court’s preference for obedience.
ELIZABETH I:	Anne’s daughter. Appears as a symbolic figure of legacy and future. Rises from disgrace to become England’s greatest monarch.
THOMAS WOLSEY:	Cardinal and former chief minister. Represents the old Catholic power structure. Falls when Rome refuses Henry’s divorce.
THOMAS MORE:	Humanist and moral counterpoint. Refuses to accept Henry as head of the Church, executed for conscience.
MARY BOLEYN:	Anne’s sister. Warns Anne of Henry’s danger; represents survival through submission.
ENSEMBLE:	(Courtiers, Clerk, Guards, Legate, Physician, Brother, Man, Executioner) – Acts as narrators, rumor-mill, lawmakers, and public opinion. Shifts roles rapidly to embody court politics and societal pressure.

COURTIER 1:	Female - Courtiers are the heartbeat of Henry VIII’s court. Courtiers function as political weather vanes—gossiping, flattering, scheming, celebrating, and condemning depending on where power shifts.
COURTIER 2 :	Female - Courtiers are the heartbeat of Henry VIII’s court. Courtiers function as political weather vanes—gossiping, flattering, scheming, celebrating, and condemning depending on where power shifts.
COURTIER 3:	Female - Courtiers are the heartbeat of Henry VIII’s court. Courtiers function as political weather vanes—gossiping, flattering, scheming, celebrating, and condemning depending on where power shifts.
COURTIER 4:	Male- Courtiers are the heartbeat of Henry VIII’s court. Courtiers function as political weather vanes—gossiping, flattering, scheming, celebrating, and condemning depending on where power shifts.
THOMAS BOLEYN:	Anne Boleyn’s ambitious and politically calculating father. He is charming, intelligent, and socially adaptable.
ARCHBISHOP OF ROME:	Intelligent, composed, and politically cautious, operates through theology, legality, and careful diplomacy, and projects intellectual authority, restraint, and quiet conviction
GUARD:	The physical enforcement of the Crown’s will. Guards maintain order, escort prisoners, control crowds, and silently reinforce the atmosphere of fear within the court.
PHYSICIAN:	The royal physician charged with monitoring the health, fertility, and physical condition of the Tudor court. Calm, clinical, and discreet.
PRIEST:	A representative of traditional Catholic authority and spiritual ritual within Tudor England. The Priest serves ceremonial and moral functions throughout the musical.

MAN:	A versatile supporting role representing the ordinary men caught inside—and helping sustain—the machinery of Tudor power.
LEGATE:	Diplomatic intermediary trapped between political pressure, religious doctrine, and the immense ego of the English crown.
BROTHER:	Anne Boleyn’s brother, drawn into the deadly political machinery surrounding the Tudor court. Loyal, intelligent, and trapped by circumstance, he becomes one of the tragic casualties of Cromwell’s fabricated charges against Anne.
ANNE OF CLEVES:	Henry VIII’s fourth wife. Intelligent, practical, and unexpectedly funny, Anne survives her brief marriage to Henry by embracing independence over conflict.
CATHERINE HOWARD:	Henry VIII’s fifth wife. Young, lively, and swept into a dangerous world of royal expectations, Catherine Howard struggles beneath the pressures of court life and the King’s possessive attention.
CATHERINE PARR:	Henry VIII’s sixth and final wife. Educated, composed, and politically skilled, Catherine Parr acts as a stabilizing force within the fractured Tudor court.
EXECUTIONER:	A professional servant of the Crown tasked with carrying out Anne Boleyn’s sentence. The Executioner represents the cold finality of royal power. embodying the human cost of political ambition and the irreversible consequences of Henry VIII’s court.

Synopsis

"Crowned" reimagines the rise and fall of Anne Boleyn through a modern, hip-hop–infused lens. In the ruthless world of Henry VIII’s court, Anne refuses to be a mistress and demands a crown, igniting England’s break with Rome and the birth of the Church of England. As power shifts, rumors become weapons and love becomes law, Anne is destroyed by charges of adultery, incest, and treason—fabricated to clear the way for Henry’s next marriage and a hoped-for male heir. Yet her legacy outlives her execution: her daughter Elizabeth I rises from disgrace to rule for over forty years, defeating the Spanish Armada and ushering in England’s Golden Age. The musical asks who controls history—and what happens when a woman refuses to bow.

When

The musical spans 1526–1603, beginning in the court of King Henry VIII and concluding with the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

Note

Primary settings include the Tudor royal court, council chambers, the Tower of London, public squares, and ceremonial halls, stylized through modern theatrical language. The world blends Renaissance iconography with contemporary rhythm and staging, creating a heightened “Hamilton-style” universe where historical events unfold through rap, pop, and ensemble choreography. While rooted in 16th-century England, the production uses modern music and movement to emphasize timeless themes of power, gender, propaganda, and legacy.

DOUBLES (as needed)

Courtier I (female) / Elizabeth
Courtier 2 (female) / Ann of Cleves
Courtier 3 (female) / Catherine Parr
Courtier 4 (male) / Man
Mary Boleyn / Catherine Howard
Priest / Arch Bishop
Thomas Wolsey / Guard / Brother
Thomas More / Legate / Executioner

ACT I – (THE SPARK)

Setting: The Royal Court of King Henry VIII. A flexible playing space suggesting Tudor grandeur through banners, a raised authority platform, and movable court furnishings. The throne dominates upstage, symbolizing absolute power. The court may transition fluidly between public spectacle and private observation through lighting and actor movement.

At Rise: The stage is frozen in a tableau of court life: courtiers whispering, servants mid-task, nobles negotiating status through posture and placement. The throne stands center authority. A rhythmic pulse breaks the stillness as the court comes alive, revealing the dangerous social ecosystem Anne Boleyn is about to enter.

(Drumbeat)

(Entire cast frozen like a living painting)

(After first boom: everyone snaps their eyes to the audience)

(After second boom: ensemble slowly inhales together)

(After third boom: freeze tighter, like prey sensing danger)

Boom

Boom

Boom

(Song 1 – “This Is The Court”)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Welcome to the court where the smiles stay fake,

Where friends turn enemies on a rumor’s wake.

(COURTIERS break freeze in sharp mechanical bursts)

(Movement is angular – elbows lead, heads snap)

(Dancers form tight whisper circles that dissolve quickly)

(Every rumor lyric = finger point)

(Every betrayal lyric = physical shove)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Where crowns look shiny but the rules are cruel,

And loyalty bends when power plays you a fool.

This is chess with human lives,

(ENSEMBLE rearranges into a chessboard formation)

(COURTIERS kneel)

(LEGATE/GUARD stand tall)

(PRIEST moves slowly)

THOMAS CROMWELL

This is love with loaded knives,

This is fame before the fall,

This is London—watch your back, y’all.

You breathe wrong—

ENSEMBLE

someone writes it down,

THOMAS CROMWELL

You blink twice—

ENSEMBLE

they’re passing it around,

THOMAS CROMWELL

Every hallway got a listening ear,

Every compliment comes with a sneer.

ENSEMBLE

Who’s rising?

(“Rising” – COURTIER 1 lifted)

Who’s done?

(“Done” – COURTIER 2 dropped flat)

Who just lost favor with the sun?

Who’s tomorrow’s execution?

(“Execution” – COURTIER 2 rope mime around neck)

Who misread a situation?

Who’s favored?

(“Favored” – COURTIER 3 spotlight)

Who’s cursed?

(“Cursed” – COURTIER 4 pushed out)

Who just spoke out of turn first?

THOMAS CROMWELL

Here the crown is everything,

(Everyone reaches toward throne)

(No one touches it)

(Freeze. Spotlight center.)

(All bodies snap frozen mid-reach)

THOMAS CROMWELL

And everything is temporary.

Your best friend today?

Tomorrow’s obituary.

Gold looks good till it’s on your neck,

Silk feels soft till it’s soaked in sweat,

Everybody smiles, nobody rests,

This court eats loyalty for breakfast.

And tonight…

Everything changes.

(Heads slowly turn toward throne)

(Blackout snap)

(HENRY enters)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

King Henry.

(ENSEMBLE bows in a ripple wave)

(Some bow late showing fear)

(Others bow too deep showing desperation)

(HENRY walks through bodies – no one blocks him)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Why is everyone whispering? Am I dead already?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Only politically, sir.

KING HENRY VIII

Good. Means I’m still winning.

I rule an empire…

Spain hates me.

France fears me.

Rome keeps me on read.

And somehow…

I’m still bored.

You ever win everything

And still feel like you lost something?

I got gold in my cup,

(COURTIER 4 shadows HENRY like bodyguard)

(He pushes people aside with one finger)

(He claims space with wide stances)

KING HENRY VIII

Got God in my name,

Got laws I can break

Just by changing the game.

I got bishops who bow,

Got armies who bleed,

But tell me—

Why don’t I have what I need?

I got wives,

Got heirs,

Got the world on a chain,

But there’s something I want

That I can’t seem to claim.

They call me “Majesty,” “Your Grace,” “Divine,”

But none of them ever ask if I’m fine.

They toast to my health,

They pray for my reign,

But nobody ever asks about my pain.

ENSEMBLE

What don’t you have?

(ENSEMBLE kneels in half-circle)

HENRY & ENSEMBLE: Choice.

(Everyone freezes except HENRY)

(He steps off throne platform)

(HENRY walks through frozen people)

(He gently turns COURTIER 1 face toward him)

(COURTIER 1 drops eyes immediately)

(HENRY snaps fingers)

(Everyone cheers on cue-forced joy)

ENSEMBLE

Everybody loves the king,

Nobody loves the man.

They love the crown,

They love the gold,

They don’t know who I am.

They cheer when I walk,

They kneel when I speak,

HENRY & ENSEMBLE:

But when the doors close—

It’s just me and my grief.

I could marry tomorrow,

KING HENRY VIII

Start over again,

But I don’t want a wife—

I want a friend.

(ANNE enters quietly)

(Entire court frozen except ANNE)

(She walks freely between bodies)

(Gently moves people aside without looking)

(She never rushes)

(She always moves forward)

COURTIER 1

Who’s that girl?

(ENSEMBLE circles ANNE like surveillance cameras)

(Heads track her movement)

(She walks straight lines)

(Everyone else moves sideways)

(They orbit her, she cuts through them)

COURTIER 1

Who’s that-

Who’s that girl?

ENSEMBLE

Who’s that girl?

COURTIER 2

Who’s that girl?

ENSEMBLE

Who’s that girl?

MARY BOLEYN

(spoken)

That’s Anne Boleyn.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Danger in heels.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Watch first.

Then move.

ENSEMBLE

Who’s that girl?

MARY BOLEYN

She don’t play nice.

She don’t beg.

She don’t roll dice.

She don’t laugh when she’s told to smile,

She don’t shrink to fit their style.

ANNE BOLEYN

They taught me in France

How to speak without sound,

How to move in a room

Before you look around.

I learned every rule

So I could bend it,

Learned every lie

So I could end it.

I watched queens cry in velvet halls,

Saw crowns turn heavy on fragile heads,

Saw powerful men build paper walls

And hide behind the words they said.

I don’t want to be chosen,

ENSEMBLE

Not chosen.

ANNE BOLEYN

I choose.

ENSEMBLE

I choose.

ANNE BOLEYN

I don’t want to be wanted,

ENSEMBLE

I move it.

ANNE BOLEYN

I move.

I don’t want a cage with golden bars,

I want a seat at the table of stars.

MARY BOLEYN

What do you want?

(ENSEMBLE reaches for her)

(She steps through them)

ANNE BOLEYN

Control.

(ENSEMBLE drops to one knee-visual shock)

ANNE BOLEYN

Not borrowed power,

Not borrowed fame,

Not living quiet under someone’s name.

I won’t be a secret,

(COURTIER 3 tries to dress her like a doll)

(Adjust posture, skirt, head)

(She physically breaks free each time)

ANNE BOLEYN

A footnote,

A name in a man’s old song.

If I step in the fire,

I step in tall

And I stay too long.

They call me reckless,

Call me proud,

But I just refuse to fade into crowds.

I will not be his mistress.

(COURTIERS freezes)

(ANNE walks down center aisle)

(Only person moving)

(Makes eye contact with audience)

(Lights isolate her)

ANNE BOLEYN

I will not disappear.

If I give my heart,

I want a crown

Or nothing at all.

ANNE & ENSEMBLE: Power

ANNE BOLEYN

doesn’t scare me.

Being invisible does.

(HENRY & ANNE lock eyes)

(They stay still)

KING HENRY VIII

Who is she?

(ENSEMBLE moves in slow circles)

(HENRY and ANNE remain planted)

(One step toward each other per line)

(Mirrored gestures)

(Same movement opposite sides)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Trouble.

KING HENRY VIII

Perfect.

Everyone here

Wants what I own.

ENSEMBLE

Everyone here

ANNE BOLEYN

Thinks it’s their throne.

KING HENRY VIII

They drink my wine,

They speak my name,

They love the king,

They love the fame.

ANNE BOLEYN

They watch my walk,

They judge my face,

They love the show,

They hate the grace.

ANNE & ENSEMBLE: You’re not looking at my body.

ANNE BOLEYN

Something’s different.

Something’s wrong.

This isn’t flirtation.

This is a storm.

KING HENRY VIII

What do you want?

(ANNE steps forward)

(HENRY steps back-power reversal moment)

(CROMWELL circles them slowly like a shark)

(MARY grabs ANNE’s arm)

(ANNE pulls free)

ANNE BOLEYN

Say it again.

KING HENRY VIII

What do you want?

ANNE BOLEYN

Everything you’re afraid to lose.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Careful, sire.

That girl doesn’t fall.

ENSEMBLE

She calculates.

KING HENRY VIII

Good.

So do I.

MARY BOLEYN

(spoken)

(to Anne)

Don’t do this. He ruins women.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Only the ones who play small.

(HENRY approaches ANNE)

(COURTIERS form corridor)

(Everyone leans inward to watch)

HENRY & ENSEMBLE: Be mine.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

No.

(Entire ENSEMBLE freezes)

(Absolute silence)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

No one says no.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Then remember my name.

I’m the first.

ENSEMBLE

This is how wars start.

ANNE BOLEYN

(She stands center)

(ENSEMBLE kneels around her)

(Visual reversal of power)

I won’t be your secret sin,

Your midnight call,

Your weekend thrill.

ANNE & ENSEMBLE:

If you want me,

Say it loud—

Put a crown on it

Or walk away now.

(He steps forward)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You’re playing with fire.

(ENSEMBLE rises behind him like an army)

ANNE & ENSEMBLE: I light my own matches.

KING HENRY VIII

(Tug-of-war staging)

(ENSEMBLE physically pulled between them)

This isn’t love,

This is leverage

This is power dressed as fate.

HENRY & ANNE: We both know

ENSEMBLE

both know

HENRY & ANNE: What this costs us…

ENSEMBLE

this costs us…

HENRY & ANNE: But we’re stepping anyway.

ENSEMBLE

When a king meets a woman

Who won’t bow…

The crown starts to crack.

(HENRY on throne)

(ANNE standing)

(Same height)

(Equal power)

(Blackout)

ACT II – (NO RING, NO KING)

Setting: The court fractured into political and emotional battlegrounds. Authority platforms double as spaces of confrontation, negotiation, and royal presence. Catherine’s dignity contrasts Anne’s rising influence, while courtiers circulate as agents of rumor and loyalty.

At Rise: ANNE stands within court orbit but outside its acceptance. CATHERINE occupies a space of established legitimacy. The ensemble moves through ritual patterns reflecting hierarchy as tension builds between tradition and disruption.

(ANNE struts downstage like a runway)

(COURTIERS freeze as she passes)

(She high-fives two women, ignores men)

ANNE BOLEYN

Mistress?

Miss me with that nonsense.

(Hair flip on each “Miss me”)

(ENSEMBLE recoils backward like rejected suitors)

ANNE BOLEYN

You want my heart?

Better come with a contract.

I don’t do secrets in candlelight,

I don’t do shadows in velvet night,

If I’m your choice, say it in public,

I don’t live small—I live historic.

ENSEMBLE

Historic!

ANNE BOLEYN

You want kisses on borrowed time,

You want weekends, not a lifetime,

You want me quiet, sweet, and grateful—

Nah, babe, I’m unforgettable.

(ANNE steps onto table/chair)

(ENSEMBLE forms a fan shape behind her)

ANNE BOLEYN

I don’t warm benches, I start the game,

I don’t take titles without my name,

You want a thrill?

Call someone else,

I want a throne and a crown for myself.

(Everyone drops to one knee)

MARY BOLEYN

She said—

Mistress?

ENSEMBLE

Miss me.

MARY BOLEYN

Miss me.

ANNE BOLEYN

(Hair flip. COURTIERS laugh)

You want a secret, I want a legacy,

You want a moment, I want history,

I don’t do “maybe,”

I don’t do “soon,”

I don’t chase kings in a borrowed costume.

(ANNE walks off without looking back)

(ENSEMBLE scrambles after her}

(CATHERINE stands still center)

(COURTIERS move around her)

(No one touches her)

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

(spoken)

Another girl.

Same song.

Different verse.

Hey.

(ANNE laughs with COURTIERS. CATHERINE doesn’t.)

(CATHERINE barely moves)

(They lift her train, form a crown shape around her)

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

They call me old,

They call me past,

But I held this throne when storms hit fast.

When he was thin,

When gold ran dry,

I prayed him strength when men ran shy.

They say love fades,

They say love bends,

But I built a kingdom with broken ends.

I stood beside him when war was loud—

Tell me,

ENSEMBLE

Who deserves this crown?

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

(spoken)

Catherine the Great.

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

Before she learned how to walk in heels,

I learned how to govern battlefields,

While girls were dreaming about wedding rings,

I was signing laws and feeding kings.

You think a ring makes royalty?

I wore this crown responsibly.

(COURTIER 4 kneels)

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

History remembers who stayed strong—

Not who danced to the newest song.

(CATHERINE slowly exits)

(COURTIERS bow long as she leaves)

(THOMAS BOLEYN approaches ANNE)

THOMAS BOLEYN

Sweetheart, smile, you’re winning the room,

Every laugh’s a step to your future throne.

You don’t play hearts,

(THOMAS BOLEYN shuffles imaginary cards)

(ENSEMBLE mirrors card-shuffling hands)

THOMAS BOLEYN

You play the long game—

Family first, remember the name.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

I don’t need your advice.

THOMAS BOLEYN

You need my timing.

Power’s a clock— You gotta wind it.

Kings are gamblers, they love the risk,

You just gotta know when to flip the switch,

THOMAS BOLEYN & ENSEMBLE:

Say no soft,

Say yes slow,

THOMAS BOLEYN

Make him sweat, let him beg, then go.

ENSEMBLE

You don’t rush kings,

You let ‘em chase,

You let ‘em trip on their own disgrace.

Say no soft,

Say yes slow,

THOMAS BOLEYN

Watch him unravel under pressure.

ENSEMBLE

He’s playing cards!

THOMAS BOLEYN

I built your future with a poker face,

ENSEMBLE

All in, baby—

(COURTIERS throw arms up like casino win)

THOMAS BOLEYN & ENSEMBLE: This is our ace.

(ANNE and HENRY start opposite sides)

(ENEMBLE split center like Red Sea)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You enjoying the attention?

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

I enjoy being respected.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Same thing.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Not even close.

(Each line = one step forward)

(They never touch)

KING HENRY VIII

I don’t beg,

I don’t chase,

I don’t lose girls to their prideful ways.

ANNE BOLEYN

I don’t fold,

I don’t fade,

I don’t live scared of a king’s last name.

KING HENRY VIII

You want luxury?

I own the vault.

ANNE BOLEYN

I want legitimacy—

That’s your fault.

KING HENRY VIII

I can give you palaces,

Gold and lace,

ANNE BOLEYN

I want a title

And a place.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You think you special?

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

I know I am.

(HENRY and ANNE circle each other.)

KING HENRY VIII

I don’t share crowns,

I don’t play second,

This ain’t a throne for part-time affection.

ANNE BOLEYN

You want me loud,

You want me bold—

Put a ring on it

Or lose control.

(They stand toe-to-toe)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Careful.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Try me.

(MARY BOLEYN sings while pointing to HENRY)

(HENRY walks away)

(ENSEMBLE moves around MARY and ANNE)

MARY BOLEYN

I been where you stand,

I’ve seen that smile,

It burns real hot

Then leaves you wild.

He loves the chase,

He hates the stay,

Tomorrow you’re old news anyway.

You think you’re different—

I did too.

That crown don’t care who it chews.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

You played small.

MARY BOLEYN

(spoken)

I survived.

MARY BOLEYN

That crown cuts deep—

I still got scars.

ENSEMBLE

Still got scars.

(On “scars” she traces arms)

(MARY exits alone)

(ENSEMBLE forms spinning wheel)

(ANNE and HENRY stuck on opposite sides)

(Everyone slowly turns backs to ANNE except HENRY and CATHERINE)

ENSEMBLE

The game is rigged,

The deck is stacked,

Kings don’t lose—

They change the facts.

You climb too high,

They cut you down,

(COURTIER 1 and 2 fall)

ENSEMBLE

Welcome to life

ANNE & HENRY Inside a crown.

KING HENRY VIII

They love you loud,

They hate you fast,

Your present’s borrowed,

Not your past.

(Everyone slowly turns backs to ANNE except HENRY)

KING HENRY VIII

This court don’t care who breaks or bends,

ANNE & HENRY & ENSEMBLE: It only bets on who wins.

(HENRY steps forward and the ANNE)

(No one else moves)

ANNE BOLEYN

I don’t lose.

KING HENRY VIII

Neither do I.

(They lock eyes.)

ENSEMBLE

No ring…

No king…

No ring…

No king

(Blackout)

ACT III – (ROME SAYS NO)

Setting: Council chambers and ecclesiastical influence. Tables, documents, and clerical presence dominate the environment, suggesting bureaucracy and religious authority. Spatial divisions emphasize distance between crown and church.

At Rise: WOLSEY presides over a controlled environment of calculation. Clerks move deliberately. Letters and authority symbols circulate. The sense of pressure mounts as Rome delays judgment.

(The court resets like nothing happened. All COURTIERS glide in—already gossiping. HENRY paces. ANNE is present but not centered; she watches the machine. CROMWELL moves through people unnoticed.)

THOMAS WOLSEY

Rome’s late.

The Pope’s busy.

Spain’s angry.

France is smiling.

The King is—

ENSEMBLE

Impatient.

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

Dangerous.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Predictable.

(On “Predictable,” CROMWELL steps into spotlight)

Paper in, paper out—

Seals and wax and whispered doubt—

(ENSEMBLE passes papers like relay race)

(Stamps hit air on beat)

THOMAS CROMWELL

If Rome says “no", then who says “yes”?

Welcome to the royal mess.

(COURTIERS trip over papers, scramble to collect them)

THOMAS WOLSEY

(WOLSEY bursting in with papers, seals, a satchel of letters. He's smiling too hard.)

Your Grace—good news—great news—fine news—news!

We are very close to Rome agreeing—

To your annulment request from Catherine.

That your marriage was invalid.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Wolsey.

WOLSEY & ENSEMBLE: Yes?

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Don't say "close."

ENSEMBLE

Say "done."

THOMAS WOLSEY

Right. Done-mostly.

(HENRY glares. WOSLEY pivots into song.)

THOMAS WOLSEY

I’ve got Rome on hold—

And I’m holding on for dear life,

I’ve got cardinals in a queue

Like they’re selling indulgence half-price.

I wrote a letter. They wrote back.

I wrote again. They lost the stack.

I sent a messenger, fast—

He came back older with a beard and a past.

(COURTIERS become “Vatican operators,” moving like a switchboard chorus.)

ENSEMBLE

Thank you for calling Holy Mother Rome,

THOMAS WOLSEY

Your sin is important—please stay on the tone.

(COURTIER 1 hands WOLSEY a rosary)

(COURTIER 2 takes it back immediately)

THOMAS WOLSEY

If you’re calling for annulment, press one.

If you’re calling for forgiveness,

WOLSEY & ENSEMBLE: Press none.

THOMAS WOLSEY

If you’d like to speak to the Pope today,

Please pray.

ENSEMBLE

Oh Please pray.

(COURTIERS drops to knees instantly)

THOMAS WOLSEY

I pressed “pray.”

ENSEMBLE

Again.

THOMAS WOLSEY

I pressed “pray” again.

(WOLSEY slams imaginary keypad)

Now I’m stuck in Gregorian hold music, my friend.

(WOLSEY paces like an executive in a nightmare meeting.)

They say, “His Holiness is currently unavailable,”

Like God’s got office hours and they’re non-negotiable.

They say, “Your request is under review,”

Like my king’s life is a pamphlet in a pew.

I’m Cardinal Wolsey—

Do you know what that means?

I move thrones with a whisper, I split rooms at the seams.

But Rome?

ENSEMBLE

Rome treats me like a number in line

THOMAS WOLSEY

Behind a monk with a cough and a questionable wine.

ENSEMBLE

Please hold.

Please hold.

Please hold.

THOMAS WOLSEY

I *am* holding!

I’m holding England together with wax and prayer—

I’m holding the king’s patience by a single hair—

I’m holding my career— And it’s slipping, I swear!

Your Eminence, bless your heart—

We just need a small signature, a tiny stamp—

An annulment’s basically paperwork with incense, right?

A little holy “oops,” a marital rewrite?

(COURTIER 3 spins him in circles.)

ENSEMBLE

Transferring you now to:

THOMAS WOLSEY

Department of Matrimonial Doubts.

ENSEMBLE

Please state the nature of your crisis.

THOMAS WOLSEY

The nature of my crisis is:

ENSEMBLE

THE KING OF ENGLAND. ENGLAND

(COURTIERS reacts like “oh no” while staying politely cheerful.)

THOMAS WOLSEY

One moment?

ENSEMBLE

One moment.

THOMAS WOLSEY

I’ve been in “one moment” for twelve months!

(He shifts to threats.)

Tell the Pope if he stalls, we’ll—

ENSEMBLE

We’ll—

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

We’ll—

(spoken)

We’ll be… *very disappointed.*

(COURTIERS fake-cry)

THOMAS WOLSEY

Tell the Pope if he stalls, we’ll—

ENSEMBLE

We’ll—

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

We’ll consider… other options.

(CROMWELL's head tilts at “other options” And steps forward)

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

I sent gifts—

ENSEMBLE

They sent

THOMAS WOLSEY

They sent them back.

I offered treaties—

They lost the track.

I quoted scripture—

They quoted law.

I prayed politely—

They said “au revoir.”

ENSEMBLE

Your request is complicated by politics,

By emperors, armies, and inconvenient ethics.

Your annulment is pending.

Your patience is ending.

We recommend…

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

Surrendering.

ENSEMBLE

No!

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

No,

no, no

WOLSEY & ENSEMBLE:

I don’t surrender, I negotiate!

I don’t lose, I recalibrate!

(WOLSEY tries charm again.)

Your Grace will be so pleased, I’ve arranged a meeting—

A special court! A holy hearing!

(WOLSEY pulls out calendar - Immediately tears page off)

We’ll bring the legates, make the case,

And Rome will bless this with a straight face.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Wolsey…

If Rome says no, what then?

(WOLSEY alone moving. ENSEMBLE freezes.)

ENSEMBLE

Then

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

Then…

I call again.

(COURTIERS “click.”)

ENSEMBLE

Please hold.

WOLSEY & ENSEMBLE:

Rome says the Pope is… considering. (Please hold)

Rome says the Pope is… constrained. (Please hold)

Rome says the Pope is… occupied. (Hold)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Occupied with what?

ENSEMBLE

Survival, sir.

(ENSEMBLE mimics sword fights behind him)

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

Politics!

ENSEMBLE

Temporary politics.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Like your job.

(COURTIERS gasp-laugh. HENRY steps closer.)

THOMAS WOLSEY

Wolsey.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You promised me Rome.

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

I promised you *results*.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Then produce them.

(HENRY pokes WOSLEY'S chest)

(COURTIERS forms battle circle)

(HENRY and WOSLEY center)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Ladies and lords, place your bets—

Two titans, one throne, one set of regrets—

Cardinal with the plans, King with the need—

Who’s about to fall?

Watch and see.

KING HENRY VIII

You wore red robes like you invented blood,

You walked in my court like you owned the flood.

You said, “Your Grace, I’ll fix the knot,”

Now the knot’s still there and my patience is not.

You had one job—

ENSEMBLE

One—

KING HENRY VIII

Job.

Get me free, get Rome to nod.

I gave you power, gold, and trust—

You gave me paperwork and dust.

THOMAS WOLSEY

You think this is simple? A marriage is law.

A Pope is a Pope—

Not a pawn you can saw.

There’s Spain in the shadows, an emperor’s grip,

And Rome don’t move just because you *flip*.

KING HENRY VIII

Don’t lecture me on Rome.

I *fund* Rome.

I’ve sent more gold than their saints have bones.

I’ve fought their wars, I’ve worn their praise—

Now I ask one thing and they stall for days?

THOMAS WOLSEY

Sire, this is Europe—

Not a tavern brawl.

You can’t punch a treaty and expect it to fall.

KING HENRY VIII

I can punch *you*.

(WOLSEY steadies)

ENSEMBLE

Oooh.

I built your peace.

THOMAS WOLSEY

I built your peace.

ENSEMBLE

I raised your name.

THOMAS WOLSEY

I kept your crown

ENSEMBLE

I kept your crown

THOMAS WOLSEY

from catching flame.

You were a boy with a throne too big—

I made you feared.

ENSEMBLE

I made you *king*.

KING HENRY VIII

And now I’m king with a problem you can’t solve.

So what are you good for?

Besides applause?

THOMAS WOLSEY

I’m the wall between you and chaos.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Then why is chaos in my house?

ENSEMBLE

Chaos…

Chaos…

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You promised speed—

ENSEMBLE

Chaos…

Chaos…

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You gave delay.

ENSEMBLE

Chaos…

Chaos…

KING HENRY VIII

You promised “yes”—

ENSEMBLE

Yes

KING HENRY VIII

They said “maybe.”

You promised God would sign my name—

God’s been silent,

ENSEMBLE

Wolsey.

KING HENRY VIII

That’s the shame.

You had one job—

ENSEMBLE

One—

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

One

HENRY & ENSEMBLE: Job

KING HENRY VIII

Now look at me—look at the mob.

They smell weakness, they sharpen teeth,

And you’re standing there like a wreath.

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

I am not your scapegoat.

ENSEMBLE

You’re about to be your own.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(CROMWELL steps forward slightly, measured.)

(spoken)

If I may, Your Grace…

ENSEMBLE

Speak.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Rome isn’t slow.

ENSEMBLE

Rome is strategic.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Rome isn’t holy—

ENSEMBLE

Rome is… *politic*.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

If the Pope can’t grant you freedom,

Perhaps freedom doesn’t come from Rome.

(COURTIERS hush. WOSLEY turns—betrayed.)

WOLSEY & ENSEMBLE: Careful.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Respectfully—

ENSEMBLE

I’m being careful.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

That’s why I’m alive.

ENSEMBLE

Hear that?

KING HENRY VIII

That’s a man with solutions.

What do you have?

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

Time.

KING HENRY VIII

I’m out.

(HENRY circles WOLSEY.)

KING HENRY VIII

You wanted power,

you got it.

ENSEMBLE

You wanted

KING HENRY VIII

You wanted glory,

you bought it.

ENSEMBLE

You wanted

KING HENRY VIII

Now you can keep your robes and your pride—

But you’re done running my side.

WOLSEY & ENSEMBLE: You can’t dismiss me like a servant.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Watch me.

(HENRY snaps)

ENSEMBLE

Watch me.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You are relieved of your office.

(COURTIERS recoil from WOLSEY like he’s contagious)

ENSEMBLE

Oh…

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

Your Grace—

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Leave.

(Silence. WOLSEY stands, stunned. ENSEMBLE shifts attention immediately to HENRY and CROMWELL.)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Power moves.

Power moves.

(WOLSEY is suddenly invisible. COURTIERS physically remove his symbols: hat, chain, papers.)

COURTIER 1

(spoken)

Your Eminence… pardon—

Sir.

COURTIER 2

(spoken)

Terribly sorry.

New seating arrangement.

(ANNE watches—calculating the cruelty. HENRY doesn’t look back. CROMWELL does.)

ENSEMBLE

It happens fast.

(CROMLEY places hand briefly on WOSLEY's shoulder)

THOMAS WOLSEY

(spoken)

So does treason.

(Transition to WOLSEY’s exile song.)

(COURTIERS slowly back away)

THOMAS WOLSEY

I wore the weight of England like a tailored coat,

I spoke and men moved—

I breathed and doors broke open.

I wrote the king’s tomorrow in ink and flame,

Now tomorrow won’t even remember my name.

They loved me when I made the world obey,

They left me when the world said “no” today.

(He looks at his hands—empty.)

I built cathedrals out of favors,

Raised mountains from a single nod,

But I couldn’t move the one thing

That mattered most to God.

So what am I—

Without my seal?

Without my chain?

Without my thunder in the hall?

Just a man

In borrowed red

Who finally learned—

The crown doesn’t care at all.

(ENSEMBLE becomes a distant chorus—like ghosts of court.)

ENSEMBLE

Exiled…

Exiled…

Exiled…

THOMAS WOLSEY

I thought power was permanent.

I thought I was the rule.

But power is a ladder

And I was a rung they used.

I hear them laughing in the corridors—

New jokes, new kings, new threats—

The court moves on like music does:

No pauses.

No regrets.

(He removes an imaginary hat; places it down.)

If I had served my soul, not my station,

If I had feared God more than reputation—

Would I be saved?

Or would I

ENSEMBLE

still be me..

THOMAS WOLSEY

me?

(His voice becomes intimate.)

I wanted to be necessary. I became replaceable.

(He turns to go.)

Tell the king—

ENSEMBLE

No.

THOMAS WOLSEY

Don’t tell the king anything.

He doesn’t listen to “no.”

(He exits slowly.)

ENSEMBLE

Rome says no…

(CROMWELL steps to the hat WOLSEY left. He doesn’t put it on—he simply picks it up, weighs it.)

KING HENRY VIII

Fix this.

THOMAS CROMWELL

I will.

ENSEMBLE

Rome says no…

Rome says no…

Rome says no…

THOMAS CROMWELL

England says…?

(Blackout)

ACT IV – (DIVORCE COURT: ROME EDITION)

Setting: A tribunal-like arrangement merging royal and ecclesiastical power. Platforms suggest judicial elevation. The environment reflects spectacle disguised as legal process.

At Rise: HENRY commands attention from the central position while WOLSEY attempts to maintain order. Participants assemble as though for ceremony, masking the inevitability of political failure.

(ENSEMBLE enters briskly, rearranging furniture like stagehands in a TV courtroom show)

(COURTIER 4 removes WOLSEYs chair ceremoniously, trips slightly)

(ANNE upstage, still, watching)

THOMAS CROMWELL

He’s gone.

Wolsey’s gone. No hat. No chain.

No “Your Eminence.”

Just “Who?” and “Wasn’t he… tall?”

He used to run the room.

(COURTIER 4 pulls out imaginary lease, rips it up)

Now he can’t even rent it.

KING HENRY VIII

That’s the court.

You’re a person until you’re a lesson.

(ANNE steps forward on “lesson,” freezes again)

(HENRY storms center, pacing wide - CROMWELL stands half-step behind him)

KING HENRY VIII

Where is my answer?

(HENRY throws arms wide)

(ENSEMBLE recoils like startled birds)

ENSEMBLE

Where is Rome’s answer?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

On its way, sir.

(CROMWELL gestures vaguely upward, noncommittal)

ENSEMBLE

Everything is “on its way.”

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

So is my patience.

(HENRY checks imaginary watch, snaps it shut)

THOMAS CROMWELL

We’re staging a… formal inquiry.

Rome will be impressed by the pageantry.

(ENSEMBLE races in with desks, candles, scrolls)

KING HENRY VIII

Rome can impress itself.

I want a verdict.

And I want a kingdom that stops asking permission.

ENSEMBLE

Candles up, papers down,

(ENSEMBLE raises candles on beat - Papers rain down dramatically)

Latin prayers, judicial frowns—

If the Pope won’t bless the crown,

Who gets to say what’s holy now?

(Everyone points to HENRY… then to CROMWELL… then freezes)

ENSEMBLE

Candles up, papers down,

Latin prayers, judicial frowns—

If the Pope won’t bless the crown,

Who gets to say what’s holy now?

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Welcome to Rome, where the doors don’t open,

(ENSEMBLE becomes moving maze)

(HENRY trapped center)

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Where the answer is “maybe” and the clocks are broken.

You want a ruling? Cute. Take a seat.

The line for mercy wraps ‘round three streets.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

I’m not standing in line.

ENSEMBLE

Everybody stands in line.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

I’m the King of England.

ENSEMBLE

Take a number, Divine.

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Need a divorce?

ENSEMBLE

Fill a form.

(Papers shoved at HENRY)

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Need approval?

ENSEMBLE

Say a storm.

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Need the Pope?

ENSEMBLE

Wrong floor.

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Need the truth?

ENSEMBLE

Not sold here anymore.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

This is absurd.

ENSEMBLE

This is Rome.

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Step to the left for sacred law,

Step to the right for spiritual awe,

Step back for “political nuance,”

ENSEMBLE

Now step forward for “clerical bounce.”

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

What does that mean?

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

It means: wait.

(ENSEMBLE pulls out hourglasses)

ENSEMBLE

Formus Maximus!

Seal-us Stamp-us!

Signus, Sigh-us!

Try again tomorrow!

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Fine.

Who do I speak to?

Name a man.

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Cardinal A.

Cardinal B.

Cardinal C.

Cardinal “We can’t guarantee.”

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Bring me the Pope.

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

The Pope is unavailable.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Unavailable doing what?

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Surviving.

ENSEMBLE

Thank you for calling Holy Mother Rome,

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Your marriage is important—please stay on the tone.

If you want an annulment, press one.

If you want a blessing, press none.

If you want a miracle fast,

Please hold.

KING HENRY VIII

I did hold!

I held a kingdom together for you people!

I held your church in my hands like a donation plate!

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

And we appreciate your patience.

HENRY & ENSEMBLE: I am not patient. I’m royal.

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

“DENIED.”

HENRY & ENSEMBLE: You can’t stamp me!

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

We stamp everybody.

ENSEMBLE

Try the Office of Sacred Exceptions,

Down the hall past Moral Objections,

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Left at the Shrine of Contradiction,

Right by the Desk of Convenient Fiction.

KING HENRY VIII

I brought you gold, I brought you faith,

I fought your wars and I paid your priests,

Now I ask one thing—one tiny grace—

And you treat me like I’m begging in the streets?

ENSEMBLE

Roman runaround,

Circle ‘round the crown,

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Every answer is a hallway

With another locked door down.

ENSEMBLE

Roman runaround,

Smile and then decline,

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Welcome to the holy city—

Where “no” is dressed as “fine.”

KING HENRY VIII

In the name of “get on with it.”

(CATHERINE glides center-ENSEMBLE bows deeply- ANNE remains in shadow)

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

(spoken)

Your Grace.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Wife.

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

(spoken)

Still?

(CATHERINE places hand over heart - ENSEMBLE mirrors unconsciously)

THOMAS CROMWELL

The matter of the King’s marriage—

Requires patience, prayer, and—

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

A decision.

THOMAS CROMWELL

When men in robes say “prayer,” they mean “delay.

(ENSEMBLE nods knowingly)

KING HENRY VIII

Annul me.

Like it’s ink on a page,

Like it’s a knot you can loosen with age.

Annul me.

(HENRY alone center - ENSEMBLE seated like judges)

KING HENRY VIII

Like heaven can’t see,

Like God’s got a blind spot for royalty.

I tried being holy.

I tried being kind.

I tried being patient—

I hated the time.

Look—

I’m a king, I’m a sponsor, I’m a pillar of faith,

I’ve funded your altars, I’ve protected your gate.

Surely the church can do one small favor

For the man who keeps England from turning to vapor?

ENSEMBLE

Your Grace…

KING HENRY VIII

No

(spoken)

listen—

I’m not asking for chaos, I’m asking for “clean,”

For a “holy correction,” a neat little sheen.

My marriage was wrong—

That’s your language, not mine—

So stamp it, approve it, and let me align…

I’ll build you a chapel with gold in the stone,

I’ll send you ten ships as a floating throne,

I’ll name my next son “Pope” if you want it—

Just—

Don’t—

Make—

Me—

Wait…..

Yes, I said it.

HENRY & ENSEMBLE: Pope Tudor.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

It’s got a ring.

I need an heir.

ENSEMBLE

Heir

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

I need a future.

I need a son—

ENSEMBLE

son

KING HENRY VIII

Not a rumor.

I need my kingdom to stop holding its breath

Every time my bloodline takes a step….

Annul me.

(HENRY sinks to one knee - Everyone freezes)

KING HENRY VIII

Or admit what you are:

Not God’s voice—

Just politics in a collar…

Because if you won’t free me, I’ll free myself.

If you won’t bless my choice, I’ll bless it myself.

You call it sin—

I call it survival—

And I don’t lose fights because of a title…

You think I don’t pray?

I pray every night.

I pray for peace and I wake up to spite.

I pray for mercy—

But mercy’s a ghost—

And Rome keeps moving the goalpost….

If God is here, tell Him to speak.

(HENRY stands slowly)

Because I’m done being strong

While you stay weak…

(LEGATES huddle-Whisper theatrically-Shake heads sadly)

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

Your Grace …..

This matter is… sensitive….

Political.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Everything is political when you’re afraid to decide.

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

We will….. adjourn.

(Gavel slam - COURTIERS jump)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Adjourn?

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

For further consideration.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

How long?

ARCHBISHOP OF ROME

As long as necessary.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

That’s not an answer, it’s a hostage note…..

(CATHERINE steps between HENRY and the ARCHBISHOP)

(No one crosses her)

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

The truth doesn’t need speed.

It needs courage.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

And the throne doesn’t need sermons.

It needs heirs….

THOMAS CROMWELL

Then we stop asking.

(CROMWELL steps half-step forward)

(LEGATES exit without eye contact.)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

What did you say?

THOMAS CROMWELL

Nothing, sir.

Only… a thought…….

Remember Wolsey?

Red hat glory?

Ran the kingdom, wrote the story—

Now he’s footnotes, dust, and “sorry.”

He talked like thunder, walked like fate,

Now he’s whispered at the palace gate.

One day you’re “Eminence,”

Next day you’re “who?”

That’s what this court will do to you.

Who replaced him?

ENSEMBLE

Nobody.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Who erased him?

ENSEMBLE

Everybody.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Who remembers?

ENSEMBLE

Not a soul.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Who’s next?

ENSEMBLE

Please hold.

(Court empties slowly - Chairs removed - Candles blown out)

ENSEMBLE

The throne don’t mourn,

It just rotates.

The crown don’t love,

It just takes…..

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

They humiliated me.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

They delayed you.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Same thing.

THOMAS CROMWELL

No, sir.

Humiliation is personal.

Delay is policy……

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

So what do we do?

THOMAS CROMWELL

We stop pretending Rome is God’s voice.

We make England the voice.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You’re suggesting heresy.

THOMAS CROMWELL

I’m suggesting sovereignty.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

And what does that make me?....

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

It makes you… unquestionable…..

KING HENRY VIII

If Rome won’t crown my choice…

Then I will.

(HENRY places crown on his own head)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Yes, sir….

(HENRY seated - CROMWELL standing behind him - ANNE watching from the shadows)

ENSEMBLE

Rome says no…

England says…?

Rome says no…

England says… yes…

(Blackout)

ACT V – (BREAKUP WITH GOD)

Setting: Parliamentary and doctrinal transformation space. Tables become legislative engines. Religious iconography shifts to reflect the emerging Church of England.

At Rise: COURTIERS, CLERK, LEGATE, PRIEST gather with urgency. Documents pass between hands. Authority reorganizes visibly as HENRY prepares to redefine spiritual sovereignty.

(Private chamber. Night. No courtiers. No Cromwell. Just HENRY and ANNE. Candles. Maps. A crown on a cushion like a bribe.)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

So.

We’re here.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

You say that like it’s a verdict.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

It is a verdict.

On Rome.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Rome doesn’t know it yet.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Rome doesn’t get a vote.

(He gestures to the crown.)

(spoken)

There it is.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

You’re pointing at it like it’s a sandwich.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

It’s better than a sandwich.

A sandwich doesn’t come with an army.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

A sandwich doesn’t come with ex-wives either.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Catherine will be… relocated.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

That’s a pretty word for “erased.”

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

She’ll have comfort.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

So did Wolsey.

Briefly.

(They circle the crown.)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You wanted legitimacy.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

I wanted daylight.

And a name that didn’t whisper.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You’ll have it. Queen Anne.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Say it again slower.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Queen… Anne.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Hmm.

Still sounds dangerous.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Everything worth wanting is dangerous.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

So is everything worth losing.

(She touches the crown but doesn’t lift it.)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

If I take this…

I take the target with it.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You take the kingdom.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Those are the same thing.

KING HENRY VIII

(He leans in.)

(spoken)

I will protect you.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

From what?

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

From them.

ANNE BOLEYN

(She looks at him.)

(spoken)

And from you?

KING HENRY VIII

(He smiles—too confidently.)

(spoken)

I am the “you.”

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

That’s not comforting.

(She finally lifts the crown.)

(spoken)

Once I wear this,

There’s no mistress door to hide behind.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You won’t need one.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

No.

I’ll need heirs.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

England needs a son.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

England needs a lot of things.

Sons are just the loudest.

(She sets the crown back down.)

(spoken)

I’ll be your queen.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You already are.

ANNE BOLEYN

No.

I’ll be your queen

When the law says so.

(She steps back.)

Not your secret.

Not your apology.

Not your experiment.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You’re my future.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Then make me official.

(They face each other like duelists.)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Tomorrow, Parliament.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Tomorrow, history.

(They clasp hands. It looks romantic. It is also a contract.)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You ready?

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

No.

(Smiles.)

(spoken)

Which is how I know it’s working.

(Blackout)

(Lights Up)

Setting: Parliament chamber. Benches. Desks. Parchment stacks. Wax seals. Quills.

(ENSEMBLE enters in rigid lines like an assembly line)

(Each performer carries one object -paper, stamp, quill)

(Movements are mechanical, repetitive)

(Rhythm built from stamping feet, slapping parchment, scratching quills)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Each word = one precise gesture)

Stamp.

Scratch.

Seal.

Sign.

Pass it left—

Make it law—

Make it mine.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Gentlemen.

Today we convert faith into paperwork.

Try not to spill ink on God.

(CROMWELL conducts the ENSEMBLE like an orchestra)

Welcome to the law factory—

(ENSEMBLE stamps in unison)

(ENSEMBLE forms a factory grid)

(CROMWELL paces the aisles like a foreman)

Where prayers become policy,

Where “holy” is a heading, And fear is democracy.

We got a bill—

Hot off the press,

Fresh justification for royal excess.

Call it unity, call it peace,

Call it “please don’t let the King release

His temper.”

ENSEMBLE

Yes!

(Fists slam desks)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Clause one: England is sovereign.

Clause two: Rome is not.

Clause three: If you disagree…

We forgot your name on purpose.

COURTIER 4

Is that legal?

THOMAS CROMWELL

If we write it, it is.

(ENSEMBLE nods vigorously)

ENSEMBLE

What’s the title?

THOMAS CROMWELL

—Act of Supremacy!

(Papers raised overhead like protest signs)

ENSEMBLE

Who’s supreme?

THOMAS CROMWELL

His Majesty!

ENSEMBLE

Who decides?

THOMAS CROMWELL

His Majesty!

Who objects?

ENSEMBLE

Not me!

THOMAS CROMWELL

Read the fine print—

Don’t read it out loud.

If you stumble on a conscience,

Swallow it with the crowd.

ENSEMBLE

Swallow it!

THOMAS CROMWELL

We’re redefining “Head,” we’re redefining “Church,”

We’re moving heaven’s office into earthly work.

No more foreign Pope, no imported blame—

We keep our sins in-house and brand the name.

I propose “Supreme Head”—

COURTIER 2

No, “Most Supreme Head”—

THOMAS CROMWELL

No, “Supreme-ish, but humble”—

COURTIER 3

Stop.

He’s not humble.

ENSEMBLE

Act of Supremacy—

Sign it clean, sign it fast,

Make the future out of fear,

Make the present out of past.

Act of Supremacy—

We don’t kneel, we don’t roam,

We don’t ask permission

From a city made of stone.

ENSEMBLE

Passed…..

(Everyone freezes)

(HENRY enters)

(Entire ENSEMBLE rises in a wave)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

So.

We are done asking.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Yes, Your Grace.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

God and I had a meeting.

(HENRY looks at crucifix and turns it face down)

He didn’t show.

They told me “wait.”

They told me “pray.”

They told me “Rome will find a way.”

I waited.

I prayed.

I paid in gold—

And still they dared to tell me “no.”

So here’s my answer, loud and clear:

If heaven won’t move, I move it here.

I’m Head of the Church,

(HENRY raises both hands - ENSEMBLE bows)

Hear the echo in the hall—

No Pope above me,

No foreign call.

I’m crown and cross,

I’m law and choir,

If you want salvation—

Go through my fire.

ENSEMBLE

Through his fire! Yes.

KING HENRY VIII

Through his fire!

They preached obedience, they preached restraint,

But I’m the man their paintings paint.

I’m God’s anointed—

That’s what they say—

So why does God keep out my way?

I don’t need blessing—

I need results.

I don’t need sermons—

I need adults.

If faith is a kingdom, then I’m the throne—

And England is mine to rule alone.

ENSEMBLE

Head of the Church—

KING HENRY VIII

Let the bells ring fast,

Let the old world break

So the new can last.

ENSEMBLE

Head of the Church—

KING HENRY VIII

If you won’t applaud,

You’ll learn the difference

Between king and God….

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Oath table rolls in)

(One quill, one ledger - Line forms automatically)

To serve England is to serve the King.

To serve the King is to serve the Church.

To serve the Church is to serve…

The King.

May God forgive us for the grammar.

(Nervous laughter ripples)

(COURTIER 1 signs quickly)

ENSEMBLE

He signed.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

It’s only words.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Words are how they build cages.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Thomas.

ENSEMBLE

At last.

My brilliant friend.

THOMAS MORE

(spoken)

Your Majesty.

HENRY & ENSEMBLE:

Sign the oath.

Let’s not pretend.

(HENRY slides quill toward MORE)

THOMAS MORE

(spoken)

I can’t.

(MORE doesn’t move)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You won’t.

THOMAS MORE

(spoken)

I cannot.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Same result.

KING HENRY VIII

You stood beside me.

You ate at my table.

You told me truth—

When truth was stable.

Now I ask one thing—

One ink-stained nod—

And you choose Rome over your God?

MORE & ENSEMBLE: I choose my conscience.

KING HENRY VIII

Conscience?

That’s a luxury for men without crowns.

CROMWELL & ENSEMBLE:

Sign, Sir Thomas.

And live to disagree later.

THOMAS MORE

Later is how men die quietly.

ENSEMBLE

Sign…

or die…

(ENSEMBLE steps closer)

Sign…

or die…

KING HENRY VIII

Then be stubborn.

(HENRY turns away)

Be pure.

Be memorable.

But don’t call it loyalty.

ENSEMBLE

I

THOMAS MORE

I served a king. I served a country.

I served the poor with what I had.

I wrote my prayers in quiet ink

While louder men went mad.

They tell me “Sign,” like signing ends it,

Like truth is something you can fold.

But truth is not a coat you wear—

It’s bone.

It doesn’t do what it is told.

I will not bend

(ENSEMBLE frozen like statues)

(MORE sings facing audience directly)

ENSEMBLE

Because the wind is strong.

THOMAS MORE

I will not bend

(MORE plants feet firmly)

ENSEMBLE

To make the crowd belong.

THOMAS MORE

If I must break,

Then let me break as me—

Not as a shadow of what fear demands I be.

They say the King is now the Church—

Then who will speak for God?

They say obedience is peace—

But peace built on a fraud

Is just a silence bought with blood

And paid for with applause.

So take my title.

Take my head.

Take my life if that’s the cost.

But you cannot take the thing inside

That tells me when I’m lost.

I will not bend.

ENSEMBLE

I will not bend.

THOMAS MORE

I will not bow.

ENSEMBLE

I will not teach my soul to lie.

THOMAS MORE

If this is what your kingdom is—

Then let my “no” be why.

THOMAS CROMWELL

We say it in English now.

(CROMWELL replaces Latin pages with English)

ENSEMBLE

So everyone understands?

THOMAS CROMWELL

So everyone complies.

CROMWELL & ENSEMBLE: God forgive me.

(ENSEMBLE does not move)

THOMAS CROMWELL

A new tongue for old prayers,

A new book for old hands,

A new church in new walls

Built on shifting sands.

We will sing in our language,

We will kneel where we stand—

Not to Rome, not to empire,

But to England’s command.

ENSEMBLE

Amen.

THOMAS CROMWELL

If faith is a candle,

Let it light, not burn—

But I feel the wax melting…

And I’m trying to learn.

Another head rolls,

(COURTIER 4 pulled out - Disappears upstage)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Another oath breaks,

Another name disappears

In the ink that it takes.

They said

CROMWELL & ENSEMBLE: “Sign,”

THOMAS CROMWELL

He said

CROMWELL & ENSEMBLE: “No,”

THOMAS CROMWELL

Now the scaffold says

CROMWELL & ENSEMBLE: “Go.”

THOMAS CROMWELL

And the crowd says

CROMWELL & ENSEMBLE: “Amen”

THOMAS CROMWELL

Like they’re watching a show.

ENSEMBLE

Next.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Another head rolls—

Not because he was wrong,

But because he was steady

When the world sang along.

MORE & ENSEMBLE: I die

THOMAS MORE

the King’s good servant—

But God’s first.

(MORE escorted out by GUARD)

(Everyone freezes)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Stamp, scratch, seal, sign—

Make a conscience into crime—

Bless the blade,

Praise the law—

Tell yourself it’s fine.

ENSEMBLE

Another

THOMAS CROMWELL

Another head…

Another head rolls.

Another head… rolls.

(HENRY seated - CROMWELL standing - MORE gone)

(Blackout)

ACT VI – (CROWNED BUT CORNERED)

Setting: Ceremonial grandeur of coronation and royal presentation. Platforms elevate monarchy and public spectacle. Celebration masks instability.

At Rise: Anne prepares to assume queenship. Courtiers construct the visual language of triumph. Celebration begins before legitimacy is secure.

(ENSEMBLE rushes in with banners and portraits)

(COURTIER 1 removes Catherine’s portrait; COURTIER 2 unveils Anne’s)

(Movements are brisk, corporate, impersonal)

(CROMWELL stands center, clapping time like a choreographer)

THOMAS CROMWELL

New portraits. New prayers.

New slogans. Same fear.

Same King.

Different woman.

(COURTIER 3 bows the wrong way repeatedly)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Take down the Spanish pomegranate.

Put up the falcon.

And someone—please—teach them which way to bow.

COURTIER 3

Your Majesty—

THOMAS CROMWELL

No, no—

COURTIER 4

Your Maj—uh—

(COURTIERS practice bows in unison - Keep bumping into each other)

COURTIER 2

Your Highness?

Your Anne-ness?

(ANNE raises eyebrow)

(COURTIERS freeze mid-bow)

ANNE BOLEYN

I’m not a menu item. Pick a title.

KING HENRY VIII

If I hear one more man mispronounce “Majesty,”

I’m making “silence” the national language.

(HENRY slashes the air)

(ENSEMBLE mimes zipping mouths)

Out with the old,

In with the new—

Say it like you mean it

Or the law will do it for you.

(CROMWELL stamps a seal)

(Everyone freezes)

ENSEMBLE

Queen energy—

(ENSEMBLE forms two lines like a runway)

(ANNE enters through them slowly, owning space)

KING HENRY VIII

Watch the room reset,

New face, same throne,

Same knives, new etiquette.

ENSEMBLE

Queen energy—

KING HENRY VIII

Let the bells ring true,

If the crown wants a woman,

Then the woman wants it too.

ANNE BOLEYN

Look at me now—

(ANNE pivots so each section of audience gets a look)

They used to whisper, now they chant,

They used to point, now they bow,

Like I’m the plan they always meant.

I walked through rumors like they were air,

I learned the court’s a hungry prayer,

I learned that love is leverage here—

So I leveraged love and made it clear:

No ring? No king.

I wrote the terms.

He signed in stares.

I watched him burn.

They said, “Be sweet.”

I said, “Be serious.”

They said, “Be quiet.”

I said, “Be curious.”

They wanted a girl who’d smile and wait—

I brought ambition dressed in lace.

COURTIER 1

Who’s she?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

The future.

(ENSEMBLE points to ANNE)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

What’s she wear?

ENSEMBLE

—A rumor.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

What’s she want?

ENSEMBLE

—A crown.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

What’s she cost?

ENSEMBLE

—A kingdom.

ANNE BOLEYN

Crown me—

(Crown lifted overhead - ENSEMBLE kneels halfway)

Not because I’m harmless,

Crown me

Because I’m hard to dismiss.

If power is a language,

I’m fluent in this.

This is what winning feels like?

(Crown lowers slowly)

(ANNE steadies it with both hands)

It’s... heavy.

ENSEMBLE

Queen energy—

THOMAS CROMWELL

Put the crown in place,

Smile like a saint,

Move like a blade.

ENSEMBLE

Queen energy—

THOMAS CROMWELL

Let them adore,

Because they’re already measuring

How fast you fall to the floor.

GUARD

By decree of His Majesty—

Catherine of Aragon is hereby discharged from the title of Queen.

(GUARD unfurls scroll)

(ENSEMBLE bows—not to CATHERINE, but to HENRY)

ENSEMBLE

Discharged...

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

Discharged?

(CATHERINE touches her crown)

ENSEMBLE

Discharged...

THOMAS CROMWELL

Like a soldier.

Like an illness.

Like a mistake.

(CATHERINE removes it herself – hands it to no one)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Catherine—

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

Do not soften it now.

You wanted a crown without a conscience.

ENSEMBLE

Congratulations.

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

(spoken)

May you survive what you demanded.

(CATHERINE and ANNE lock eyes)

(Court looks away)

(CATHERINE exits)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

So that’s the sound of a woman being erased.

(ENSEMBLE claps late - Stops abruptly)

ENSEMBLE

Next item.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

History doesn’t pause.

(CROMWELL snaps - Court resets instantly)

ENSEMBLE

(ENSEMBLE circles ANNE)

(Props: charts, calendars, hourglasses)

Congratulations

(Court bow too close - ANNE steps back)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Now do the job.

Produce a prince,

Or produce a sob.

You got the crown,

Now seal the deal,

Because a kingdom loves a woman

When a woman makes it real.

PHYSICIAN

She needs more rest.

PRIEST

She needs more prayer.

PHYSICIAN

She needs more—

Well, you know—

Air.

COURTIER 4

Heirs are made at night.

COURTIER 3

And announced at breakfast.

ENSEMBLE

Heir problem!

THOMAS CROMWELL

It’s a national hobby.

ENSEMBLE

Heir problem!

THOMAS CROMWELL

Everybody’s body’s somebody’s property.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

I’m standing right here.

(ANNE pushes through circle)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Exactly.

England needs a son.

(HENRY raises a single finger - ENSEMBLE mirrors)

HENRY & ENSEMBLE: I need a son.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

You need a son too—

ENSEMBLE

It’s romantic, see?

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Nothing says romance like national policy.

(ANNE curtsies sarcastically)

PHYSICIAN

Count the days, count the hours,

(PHYSICIAN produces scrolls -Court reacts like sports crowd)

Count the rumors, count the flowers,

If her belly doesn’t bloom—

ENSEMBLE

We will all feel doom.

PHYSICIAN

Figs.

ENSEMBLE

Warm milk.

PHYSICIAN

No stairs.

ENSEMBLE

Only stairs.

PRIEST

Saints.

ENSEMBLE

Heir problem!

Heir problem!

THOMAS CROMWELL

Smile and obey—

Because queens are loved

By what they make.

PHYSICIAN

Her Majesty has symptoms—

(ENSEMBLE leans forward)

COURTIER 1

A prince!

COURTIER 2

A prince!

COURTIER 1

A prince!

COURTIER 2

A prince!

COURTIER 1 & 2: A prince!

COURTIER 1 & 2: A prince!

COURTIER 1 & 2: A prince!

ENSEMBLE

Oh.

ANNE BOLEYN

I’m tired because you’re all in my lungs.

PHYSICIAN

We have charted her cycle—

ENSEMBLE

Charted!

ANNE BOLEYN

You charted my life like I’m a coastline.

(PHYSICIAN unrolls absurdly long map)

ENSEMBLE

There is... possibility.

ANNE BOLEYN

Possibility!

Possibility is not a prince.

PHYSICIAN & ENSEMBLE: We recommend patience.

ANNE BOLEYN

Patience?

I married a man who outlawed patience.

Not pregnant enough?

(ANNE slaps chart aside – ENSEMBLE circle collapses)

What does that mean?

Am I a queen

Or a public machine?

They crowned my head

Then claimed my skin—

Now every breath I take

Gets graded like sin.

PHYSICIAN & ENSEMBLE: We’re only concerned!

(ENSEMBLE fans her - ANNE bats them away)

ANNE BOLEYN

Concern is just cruelty wearing perfume.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

It’s done.

(HENRY gestures outward - ANNE doesn’t look)

KING HENRY VIII

Catherine is removed.

You are crowned.

ANNE BOLEYN

Say it again.

(ANNE steps closer - HENRY straightens)

KING HENRY VIII

You are Queen.

(They clasp hands.)

ANNE BOLEYN

Not “near.” Not “almost.”

Not “when Rome approves.”

Queen.

KING HENRY VIII

Queen.

ANNE BOLEYN

You promised protection.

KING HENRY VIII

You have it.

ANNE BOLEYN

From whom?

KING HENRY VIII

Everyone.

ANNE BOLEYN

Including you?

KING HENRY VIII

I broke the world for you.

ANNE BOLEYN

No

You broke it for a son.

I’m just the bridge you chose.

KING HENRY VIII

You wanted the crown.

ANNE BOLEYN

I wanted legitimacy.

KING HENRY VIII

The crown is what it cost.

ANNE BOLEYN

Then we agree?

HENRY & ANNE: We agree.

(HENRY leaves)

ANNE BOLEYN

(ANNE alone center & EMSEMBLE frozen like statues)

They wanted my silence,

I gave them a storm.

They wanted a girl,

I became the form.

They said “Don’t reach,”

So I reached higher.

They said “Don’t burn,”

So I lit the fire.

I watched a queen get erased with grace—

And learned this throne is a dangerous place.

But I didn’t climb here to disappear.

I didn’t fight fear to live in fear.

I’m still

ANNE & ENSEMBLE: standing.

(ANNE plants feet & ENSEMBLE sways like wind)

Even when the room leans in.

ENSEMBLE

Still standing.

ANNE BOLEYN

Even when the whispers win.

ENSEMBLE

Still standing—

ANNE BOLEYN

Crown on my head,

Truth in my chest,

And I’m not dead.

They measure my body like it’s the law—

Let them.

I’m more than what they saw.

I’m not a cradle, I’m a choice,

I’m not a rumor, I’m a voice.

And if I fall—

(ENSEMBLE tilts)

ANNE BOLEYN

I fall remembered.

Not reduced.

ENSEMBLE

Still standing.

(ANNE lifts chin)

Smile for the crowd—

(ENSEMBLE becomes paparazzi)

Hold your head high,

Wave like you’re loved,

Even if it’s a lie.

Smile for the crowd—

Turn, let them see,

They don’t want your truth,

They want your monarchy.

(HENRY enters and approaches ANNE)

KING HENRY VIII

Look at them—

They adore us.

ANNE BOLEYN

They adore the story.

ENSEMBLE

Left profile!

ANNE BOLEYN

Right profile!

ENSEMBLE

Right profile!

ANNE BOLEYN

Bless the baby we imagined!

Kiss the ring!

Touch the gown!

Make the nation understand it!

ENSEMBLE

Smile for the crowd—

ANNE BOLEYN

Because love is a lens,

And the moment you blink

They’ll replace you again.

So this is winning.

ENSEMBLE

Heir... *(repeat 12x)*

ANNE BOLEYN

Don’t crush me.

(ANNE touches crown)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(CROMWELL half in shadow watching)

Not yet.

BLACKOUT

ACT VII – (THE BOYS CLUB)

SETTING: Male-dominated council environment contrasted with isolated royal spaces. Strategic planning zones exist alongside private vulnerability.

AT RISE: PRIEST, LEGATE, GUARD, COURTIER 4 assemble in closed formation, controlling narrative direction. ANNE occupies a separate emotional and physical space, foreshadowing fracture.

(Council chamber. No Anne. Only men. Table like a poker game. Doors closed. Candles low.)

(Men enter in staggered lines, shutting doors behind them)

(Papers slapped to table like cards)

(CROMWELL stands slightly apart, observing)

GUARD

(spoken)

Close the door.

Lock the door.

Smile like it’s nothing.

Say “God save the Queen” like it tastes good.

(The men mime swallowing something bitter.)

PRIEST

(spoken)

She’s not in the room.

Finally.

(Men relax shoulders together except CROMWELL)

ENSEMBLE

A blessed silence.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Silence is never blessed.

It’s just useful.

(CROMWELL flips a coin; it lands on the table like a verdict)

ENSEMBLE

Men in a room,

THOMAS CROMWELL

Men in a room, making plans,

ENSEMBLE

Kings in the hall with trembling hands—

(Men circle table clockwise - Papers pass hand to hand)

THOMAS CROMWELL

When power gets nervous, it calls its friends,

ENSEMBLE

And friendship looks like sharp-tipped pens.

(Formation = locker-room huddle - Drinking mugs as props - Stomps on downbeats)

Welcome to the boys club—

(Men slap shoulders and laugh too loud)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Where feelings get fined,

ENSEMBLE

Where a woman speaks up

THOMAS CROMWELL

And we call her “unkind.”

ENSEMBLE

Welcome to the boys club—

THOMAS CROMWELL

Where “respect” means “obey,”

Where a crown on a woman

Feels like we lost our way.

ENSEMBLE

Welcome to the boys club—

GUARD

She walks like she owns the air.

PRIEST

She talks like she wrote the prayer.

ENSEMBLE

And don’t forget—

PRIEST

She’s got opinions.

ENSEMBLE

Opinions!

THOMAS CROMWELL

Gentlemen—please.

(CROMWELL claps once)

Let’s keep it civil.

PRIEST

Civil?

She’s the storm, Cromwell.

We’re the roof.

GUARD

(spoken)

What’s the problem?

PRIEST

(spoken)

No son.

(Men point to empty cradle mime)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Who gets blamed?

ENSEMBLE

That one.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Who’s too loud?

ENSEMBLE

That one.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Who’s too proud?

ENSEMBLE

That one.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Kings need heirs, not arguments.

PRIEST

Kings need peace, not “Queen Energy.”

ENSEMBLE

Kings need solutions.

THOMAS CROMWELL

You want the old order back?

Then stop wishing.

Start writing.

(CROMWELL pulls quill from pocket - Men mirror drawing quills)

ENSEMBLE

Writing?

THOMAS CROMWELL

A queen isn’t removed by gossip.

She’s removed by proof.

PRIEST

Proof?

THOMAS CROMWELL

Or something that looks like it...

In court.

ENSEMBLE

Boys club—

THOMAS CROMWELL

Raise your glass, raise your pen,

(Cups clink like blades)

To the quiet little secrets

We invent for other men.

ENSEMBLE

Boys club—

THOMAS CROMWELL

We don’t fight fair,

We fight smart,

And we call it “law”

When it’s really just art.

ENSEMBLE

Boys club—

THOMAS CROMWELL

Raise your glass, raise your pen,

(Cups clink like blades)

To the quiet little secrets

We invent for other men.

ENSEMBLE

Boys club—

THOMAS CROMWELL

We don’t fight fair,

We fight smart,

And we call it “law”

When it’s really just art.

(Pause)

(*Door opens. ANNE enters.)*

(Men snap to attention - papers hide behind backs)

(CROMWELL steps slightly in front of group)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Am I early?

(ANNE steps between two men - They instinctively step back)

Or am I “not invited”?

PRIEST

(spoken)

Your Majesty.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

That’s better.

Say it again like you mean it.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

We were discussing... matters of state.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

State?

Or *estate*?

Because it feels like you’re calculating what I’m worth.

Relax.

I don’t bite.

PRIEST

(spoken)

Respectfully...

Some say you do.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Some say the King is God.

And yet.

Carry on.

(She sits on table edge briefly - Men stand awkwardly)

I love hearing men explain my life to each other.

(ANNE exits.)

(Men exhale - One man wipes brow)

PRIEST

(spoken)

See?

Teeth.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Good.

She’s making it easier.

(CROMWELL nods once - Writes a note)

ENSEMBLE

(COURTIERS move in pairs, whispering while walking)

Whispers in the hall,

THOMAS CROMWELL

Soft like lace, sharp like law—

Say it once, say it twice,

Now it’s truth that you never saw.

ENSEMBLE

She’s too proud.

COURTIER 1

She’s too loud.

ENSEMBLE

She’s too loud.

PRIEST

She laughs at priests.

ENSEMBLE

She doesn’t know her place.

Whispers in the hall—

(Hands cup ears - Bodies lean in diagonals)

Watch ‘em crawl, watch ‘em climb,

A rumor’s just a seed

With the right kind of time.

COURTIER 1

She flirts.

ENSEMBLE

She fights.

PRIEST

She reads.

ENSEMBLE

At night.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Who said it?

ENSEMBLE

—Nobody.

(All point to different people)

Who spread it?

Everybody.

Who believes it?

The ones who need it.

Who pays for it?

THOMAS CROMWELL

She does.

Whispers in the hall—

Now it’s not just “mean,”

Now it’s “treason,”

Now it’s “bedroom,”

Now it’s “queen.”

(Pause)

(JANE SEYMOUR enters.)

(JANE moves slowly, straight lines -ANNE moves sharply, diagonals)

(HENRY turns head back and forth like ping-pong)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Who is that?

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Who’s that?

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Jane Seymour.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

She’s... quiet.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Yes, sir.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

That seems... restful.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Careful, Henry.

You sound like you’re shopping.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

I’m not—

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

No, you are.

You just think women come with return policies.

JANE SEYMOUR

(spoken)

Your Majesty.

(JANE curtsies - ANNE mirrors too late—sarcastically)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Which one?

(ANNE steps between HENRY and JANE - CROMWELL steps between ANNE and HENRY)

JANE SEYMOUR

(Hands folded - Minimal steps - Soft arm lines)

They tell me “speak softly,”

So I do.

They tell me “be grateful,”

So I’m true.

They tell me “don’t reach,”

ENSEMBLE

So I wait—

JANE SEYMOUR

Because patience looks holy

When it’s wrapped in fate.

ENSEMBLE

Good girl.

JANE SEYMOUR

I don’t argue,

I don’t demand,

I hold my hands

Like a prayer in my land.

ENSEMBLE

Good girl.

(Strong footwork - Angular arms - Occupies center)

They call that “good”

Because it’s easy to hold.

They call me “bad”

Because I won’t do what I’m told.

I fought for the crown—

Now you want me quiet?

You want me sweet

After I started a riot?

ENSEMBLE

Bad queen.

ANNE BOLEYN

They love a woman

When she’s smaller than fear.

They hate a woman

When she makes herself clear.

JANE SEYMOUR

(spoken)

I don’t want your place.

ANNE BOLEYN

No—

You want what my place produces.

ENSEMBLE

Good girl

Good girl

ANNE BOLEYN

One is calm, one is seen,

One is sugar, one is flame,

One is safe to say by name.

ENSEMBLE

Good girl, bad queen—

ANNE BOLEYN

In the court’s little machine,

If you want a perfect wife,

ENSEMBLE

Pick the one who disappears.

Good girl

Good girl

(Pause)

(CROMWELL and HENRY alone - Others freeze upstage- ANNE exits)

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

She embarrasses me.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

She challenges you.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Same thing.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Not to a king.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

I made her queen.

(HENRY points outward - CROMWELL steps closer)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

You made her possible.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

England still needs a son.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

And England will have one.

But first... England needs stability.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

What are you implying?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

I’m implying the Queen has enemies.

(CROMWELL produces folded paper - Opens it slowly)

And enemies leave... evidence.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Evidence?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Rumors.

Witnesses.

Letters.

All I need is permission to look.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Look.

(HENRY turns away - CROMWELL smiles faintly)

THOMAS CROMWELL

They think power is a person.

(CROMWELL center - ENSEMBLE kneels around him)

THOMAS CROMWELL

It’s not.

It’s a system.

(CROMWELL walks through kneeling bodies touches shoulders like selecting tools)

THOMAS CROMWELL

A chair with a name on it

And a crowd that will miss ‘em

For one day—

Two days—

Then they’re back to the rhythm

Of bowing to whoever

Keeps the bills from a schism.

I watched Wolsey fall—

Like a candle in rain.

I watched More stand tall—

Then the law took his name.

You think loyalty saves you?

That’s adorable, friend.

Loyalty’s a coat

That looks great till it ends.

Everyone’s disposable—

(COURTIER 1 is “removed” - Pulled offstage)

If the story says so.

Everyone’s replaceable—

If the paperwork flows.

A queen, a priest, a friend—

All the same in the end:

If the King needs a son,

Then the Queen needs... to go.

I don’t hate her.

I just solve problems.

ENSEMBLE

(Each word = one violent motion)

Stamp.

Scratch.

Seal.

Sign.

ENSEMBLE

Find a name—

Make it crime—

Make it mine.

THOMAS CROMWELL

We don’t need truth.

We need a narrative.

(CROMWELL holds up blank page - ENSEMBLE bows to it)

PRIEST

Who?

Who.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Men close to her.

Men who want favors.

Men who want revenge.

Men who want to live.

PRIEST

And the Queen?

THOMAS CROMWELL

She wants to breathe.

That’ll look suspicious soon enough.

ENSEMBLE

Whispers...

Whispers...

Whispers...

ANNE BOLEYN

(ANNE straightens crown - Stands tall)

Smile.

Breathe.

Stand.

THOMAS CROMWELL

The law loves a story.

Let’s give it one.

(CROMWELL snaps fingers - ENSEMBLE slams books shut)

ENSEMBLE

Good girl...

Bad queen...

Bad queen...

Bad queen...

(ANNE isolated in light - Men writing her fate in shadow.)

(Blackout)

ACT VIII – (WHISPERS IN THE GALLERY)

Setting: The Tower environment and public rumor sphere. Stark spatial contrasts between confinement and spectacle. Lighting and movement define psychological imprisonment.

At Rise: ANNE faces confinement while public voices expand outward. PRIEST, LEGATE, and GUARD circulate documentation and accusation as momentum toward trial accelerates.

(Lights Up)

(Anne’s chambers. Night. Candle low. Crown nearby.)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Smile.

Breathe.

Stand.

(Each word = posture reset - On “Stand,” she squares shoulders)

Repeat until it feels like truth.

(Knocking)

GUARD

(spoken)

Open in the King’s name!

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

He has a name of his own.

He should try it sometime.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Good evening, Your Majesty.

(CROMWELL remains still - GUARDS fan out symmetrically)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

It’s morning somewhere.

Is that where my innocence is?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

I have a warrant.

(CROMWELL unrolls parchment - GUARDS tighten formation)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

How romantic.

Most men bring flowers.

(ANNE mimics receiving bouquet - CROMWELL raises papers instead)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Paper lasts longer.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

What is this?

(ANNE reaches - GUARD blocks path gently)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Treason.

(All movement stops)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

That’s a big word for a small man.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Small men survive.

Big women... make history.

(ENSEMBLE enters as clerks - Papers passed rhythmically - ANNE slowly walks downstage)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Or get erased by it.

You’re arresting the Queen.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

No, Your Majesty.

ENSEMBLE

(Each word = sharp gesture – On “Sign” arm drops like guillotine)

Stamp.

Scratch.

Seal.

Sign.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Turn a whisper into a line.

Whispers made of law—

ENSEMBLE

Whispers made of law—

THOMAS CROMWELL

Hear the parchment roar,

When a rumor gets a seal

It doesn’t need “true”

CROMWELL & ENSEMBLE: anymore.

THOMAS CROMWELL

By order of the Crown—

And the Crown is now the Church—

ENSEMBLE

We name the sins, we frame the facts,

THOMAS CROMWELL

We make the record lurch.

ENSEMBLE

What’s the charge?

THOMAS CROMWELL

—Adultery!

(ENSEMBLE points at ANNE)

ENSEMBLE

With whom?

THOMAS CROMWELL

—With “men”!

ENSEMBLE

How many?

THOMAS CROMWELL

—Plenty!

ENSEMBLE

Since when?

THOMAS CROMWELL

—Whenever!

ANNE & ENSEMBLE: You don’t even know my schedule.

CROMWELL & ENSEMBLE:

We don’t need your schedule—

We wrote the calendar too.

Adultery—

THOMAS CROMWELL

A queen with wandering vows.

ENSEMBLE

Incest—

A sister who forgets her house.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Treason—

Plotting for the King to fall.

It’s not a charge, it’s a trilogy—

And you’re the lead in all.

ANNE BOLEYN

Incest?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Yes.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

With my brother?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Allegedly.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

That’s not “allegedly,” that’s insanity.

ENSEMBLE

Whispers made of law—

Now it’s ink and steel,

When the King wants a new wife

The old one starts to feel... unreal.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Chains?

For a rumor?

(Chains lifted slowly - Crown placed on table behind her)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

For your convenience.

If you run, you look guilty.

If you stay, you look obedient.

ENSEMBLE

Whispers made of law—

(ANNE pulled through line)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Adultery, incest, treason—

Three little words to fix a King

In the middle of a season.

ENSEMBLE

Whispers made of law—

THOMAS CROMWELL

Not justice, not truth—

Just a crown with an appetite

And a woman as the proof.

ENSEMBLE

Whispers made of law—

(Tower corridor.)

(COURTIERS line up, heads down - ANNE walks between them)

MAN

(*spoken)*

Your Majesty... I—

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Don’t bow.

It’s embarrassing for both of us.

MAN

They said if I sign, I live.

ENSEMBLE

They said that to Wolsey.

ANNE BOLEYN

They said that to More.

THOMAS CROMWELL

We’re not monsters.

We’re administrators.

(CROMWELL hands out papers like medical charts)

ANNE BOLEYN

Same job description. Different branding.

ENSEMBLE

Confess nicely—

(COURTIERS sign in air - Heads nod mechanically)

GUARD

Smile politely—

Make it neat, make it brief,

Make it match what we believe.

THOMAS CROMWELL

We already wrote it for you—

ENSEMBLE

Isn’t that kind?

THOMAS CROMWELL

All you have to do is sign it

And surrender your mind.

ENSEMBLE

Sign it.

ANNE BOLEYN

This is theatre.

(ANNE steps into spotlight - ENSEMBLE freezes mid-gesture)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Exactly.

And you’re improvising.

ENSEMBLE

If you’re guilty, press one.

If you’re innocent, press two.

THOMAS CROMWELL

If you’d like to speak to God,

Please hold—He’s busy too.

ANNE & ENSEMBLE: You can’t make innocence a punchline.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Of course I can.

I have Parliament.

MAN

I—

I—

I-

I committed adultery with the Queen.

ANNE & ENSEMBLE: You were never alone with me.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Memory is unreliable.

Ink is not.

ENSEMBLE

Where?

MAN

A corridor.

ENSEMBLE

When?

MAN

A Tuesday.

ENSEMBLE

How?

MAN

Discreetly.

ENSEMBLE

Why?

MAN & ENSEMBLE: Because...

MAN

she asked me.

ANNE BOLEYN

I asked for a son.

Not a scandal.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Scandals are easier to produce.

ENSEMBLE

Confess nicely—

Keep it tidy—

Adultery, incest, treason—

Pick a sin for every season!

(ENSEMBLE spins around ANNE)

Confess nicely—

THOMAS CROMWELL

Do it fast—

ENSEMBLE

Because the truth is heavy

THOMAS CROMWELL

And the lie is built to last.

ANNE BOLEYN

I will not sign your fiction.

(ANNE breaks ring - Steps forward)

I will not play your part.

You want a monster?

ANNE & ENSEMBLE: Draw one—

ANNE BOLEYN

But don’t use my heart.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Noted.

(CROMWELL stamps paper)

(Public square.)

(ENSEMBLE rushes in - Pamphlets tossed)

GUARD

The Queen stands accused—

Of adultery.

Of incest.

Of treason against the King.

ENSEMBLE

Incest?

COURTIER 1

(spoken)

With who?

(ENSEMBLE leans in waves - Pointing spreads like infection)

ENSEMBLE

Her brother?

COURTIER 2

(spoken)

I knew it.

I didn’t know it, but I knew it.

COURTIER 3

(spoken)

That explains her confidence.

COURTIER 1

(spoken)

That explains my taxes.

COURTIER 2

(spoken)

That explains why my soup was cold yesterday.

ENSEMBLE

Everyone knows—

(Hands raised - Pointing skyward)

THOMAS CROMWELL

That’s how it goes—

Truth is slow, but gossip flies

In its Sunday clothes.

CROMWELL & ENSEMBLE: Everyone knows—

THOMAS CROMWELL

We heard it twice—

From a man who heard a priest

Who heard a “very reliable” wife.

Is it true?

ENSEMBLE

Of course!

THOMAS CROMWELL

Did you see it?

ENSEMBLE

No!

THOMAS CROMWELL

Do you need proof?

ENSEMBLE

No!

THOMAS CROMWELL

Then why believe?

ENSEMBLE & CROMWELL: Because!

ANNE BOLEYN

You don’t know me.

(ANNE isolated in spotlight - ENSEMBLE never looks directly at her)

You know the version that makes you feel safe.

You want a villain so badly

You’ll take a woman in a gown

And call her a snake.

ENSEMBLE

Everyone knows—

(ENSEMBLE advances - ANNE steps back)

THOMAS CROMWELL

She’s too proud.

ENSEMBLE

Everyone knows—

THOMAS CROMWELL

She’s too loud.

ENSEMBLE

Everyone knows—

THOMAS CROMWELL

The King is good.

ENSEMBLE

Everyone knows—

THOMAS CROMWELL

She misunderstood.

ANNE BOLEYN

Misunderstood?

No.

I was understood perfectly.

That’s why they’re afraid.

ENSEMBLE

Everyone knows—

THOMAS CROMWELL

When a king needs a son,

ENSEMBLE

Everyone knows—

THOMAS CROMWELL

A queen becomes a problem

ENSEMBLE

Everyone knows—

THOMAS CROMWELL

And the problem gets... done.

CROMWELL & ENSEMBLE: Everyone knows—

THOMAS CROMWELL

We’ll cheer, we’ll cry,

ENSEMBLE

We’ll sell the story morning, noon,

THOMAS CROMWELL

And watch her die.

(Henry’s chamber.)

(JANE stands upstage - HENRY downstage - CROMWELL between)

KING HENRY VIII

Are you telling me...

My wife—

My Queen—

Is guilty of—

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

The evidence suggests it, sir.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

Evidence.

(HENRY lifts paper)

Or your handwriting?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Your Majesty...

England needs stability.

And—

A male heir.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

She couldn’t give me a son.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

No one blames you for that.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

They should.

I’m the one who keeps trying

What if she’s innocent?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Then God will know.

And England will be relieved.

(Quill extended)

(JANE turns slightly away)

KING HENRY VIII

It’s not my fault—

(HENRY paces box pattern – points outward)

(ENSEMBLE frozen silhouettes)

KING HENRY VIII

I’m just the King.

I can’t control

What my kingdom sings.

They wanted a son,

They wanted a future,

They wanted a bloodline

That doesn’t rupture.

And I tried—

God, I tried—

I broke the church, I broke the rules,

I broke my sleep in two.

But she—

She didn’t give me what I need.

So tell me why I’m the villain

When the crown is the one that bleeds?

I’m not cruel—

I’m decisive.

I’m not weak—

I’m realistic.

If love is a ladder,

Then love is a climb—

And she slipped.

Not me.

Time.

And there’s a girl who looks like peace,

Who doesn’t fight, who doesn’t speak,

Who doesn’t make the air in rooms

Feel like a trial every week.

So if I choose calm over flame,

That doesn’t make me wrong—

It makes me...

Human.

(Pause)

(Formal hall)

GUARD

In the year of Our Lord—Fifteen Thirty Six—

Anne Boleyn stands accused:

Adultery—

with multiple men—

(Each charge = stamp sound - ENSEMBLE bows head)

Incest—

with her brother—

Treason—

plotting against the King’s life—

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

If I wanted the King dead,

I would’ve let him marry for love.

GUARD

(spoken)

The trial will proceed.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Trial?

(ANNE steps forward - GUARD stops her)

You mean the performance where the ending is already printed.

THOMAS CROMWELL

You had everything.

A crown.

A stage.

A nation watching.

ANNE BOLEYN

And you had patience.

So you waited until I was useful to kill.

So this is what a rumor sounds like in armor.

(ENSEMBLE raises shields and reflects light into audience)

ENSEMBLE

Stamp.

Scratch.

Seal.

Sign.

Adultery

Incest

Treason...

Oh,Oh,Oh Oh, Oh

Adultery

Incest

Treason...Treason

(Blackout)

ENSEMBLE

Adultery

Incest

Treason...

ACT IX – (TRIAL BY SCRIPT)

Setting: Formal tribunal of judgment. Elevated seating suggests authority over fate. Spatial rigidity reinforces inevitability.

At Rise: The entire ENSEMBLE convenes in ritual order. ANNE is presented within a structure designed to decide rather than deliberate. COURTIERS gather as witnesses to performance.

(Tribunal hall. Desks like pews. GUARDS like ushers. Gallery full.)

LEGATE

Seats filled.

Quills sharp.

Silence, please—

The show can start.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(CROMWELL snaps fingers)

Welcome, gentlemen...

To justice.

(ENSEMBLE bows—not to God, to CROMWELL)

(ANNE is brought in last, walking alone)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

I’ve seen better staging.

(ANNE surveys room like a critic - ENSEMBLE freezes mid-bow)

(ANNE placed dead center)

ENSEMBLE

Order in the court—

THOMAS CROMWELL

Where the truth wears costume,

Where a lie gets a robe

And a halo of perfume.

ENSEMBLE

Order in the court—

THOMAS CROMWELL

All rise for the plot,

We wrote it last night

(ENSEMBLE turns pages like sheet music)

And we like it a lot.

Read the charges.

LEGATE

Adultery!

ENSEMBLE

Incest!

Treason!

(Three stomps, three points at ANNE - ANNE remains still)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Ambitious.

You went for the trilogy.

(ANNE steps forward - Points back at them)

COURTIER 1

I saw her smile.

(COURTIER 1 mimes exaggerated gesture)

I saw her wink

I saw her think—

Which means she sinned.

ENSEMBLE

She walked by me

COURTIER 2

On a Thursday.

ANNE BOLEYN

Scandal.

COURTIER 3

She touched her brother’s sleeve.

ANNE & ENSEMBLE: Arrest the fabric.

(ANNE plucks at sleeve - ENSEMBLE recoils)

COURTIER 4

She said the King was mortal.

ENSEMBLE

Mortal!

Yes.

ANNE BOLEYN

We all are.

It’s very trendy.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Stick to the script.

ENSEMBLE

Script! Script! Script!

(CROMWELL raises one finger - ENSEMBLE freezes, then resumes)

COURTIER 1

I heard a song.

I saw a look.

I found a line

Inside a book.

ANNE & ENSEMBLE:

You found a metaphor.

Congratulations on your literacy.

THOMAS CROMWELL

If we say it

ENSEMBLE

loud enough

(ENSEMBLE leans toward ANNE who steps back once)

THOMAS CROMWELL

It becomes a scene,

If we write it

ENSEMBLE

down in ink

THOMAS CROMWELL

It becomes a queen.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Where is my husband?

GUARD

(spoken)

The King sends his... regards.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

He sent a pen.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

His presence would prejudice the jury.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

So will your handwriting.

ANNE BOLEYN

Is she here to take notes?

(JANE glimpsed upstage - Steps back into shadow)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

She’s here to learn.

(spoken)

We don’t need your version,

(CROMWELL gestures outward)

We need a better one.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Better for who?

(ANNE and CROMWELL circle like duelists)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

For England.

For the King.

For history.

ANNE BOLEYN

History is just gossip

With a pension plan.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Confess, and you’ll be spared the poetry.

ANNE BOLEYN

Poetry is all I have left.

You want a story?

(They mirror movements)

THOMAS CROMWELL

I want a spine.

ANNE BOLEYN

You want a scandal?

THOMAS CROMWELL

I want my time.

ANNE BOLEYN

You want a villain

Dressed in lace—

I want my name

Without your face.

ENSEMBLE

The law loves symmetry

ANNE BOLEYN

Then balance this

A king who changed God

Can’t stand a woman

Who changed her mind.

(BROTHER pushed in - GUARDS hold him - ANNE reaches)

BROTHER

(spoken)

Anne—

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Don’t say it.

BROTHER

(spoken)

They said—

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

They say many things.

Try silence. It’s safer.

(ANNE places finger to lips - BROTHER nods)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Did you lie with your sister?

BROTHER & ENSEMBLE: No!

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Did she ask you to kill the King?

BROTHER & ENSEMBLE: No!

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

Write that down.

Then change it.

(CLERK erases name - Rewrites quickly)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

If this is justice,

It’s afraid of paper cuts.

ANNE BOLEYN

(Lights isolate ANNE - ENSEMBLE frozen like statues)

I stand accused

(ANNE plants feet)

By echoes and ink,

By men who confuse

A woman who thinks

With a crime.

They call me unfaithful—

I was loyal to fire.

They call me a traitor—

I married their liar.

They call me immoral—

I asked for a crown.

They call me incest—

Because blood is around.

But hear me:

I did not touch treason.

I did not touch sin.

I touched a kingdom

That didn’t want me in.

If wanting a voice is a crime,

(ANNE raises one hand - ENSEMBLE slowly kneels)

Then sentence me loud.

If wanting a son was your dream,

Don’t wake me with doubt.

I loved a king

Who loved a mirror,

And mirrors don’t make good laws.

They just repeat

What power draws.

(Pause)

(ENSEMBLE rises as one)

LEGATE

We find the accused...

ENSEMBLE

Guilty.

(Stamp – Stamp – Stamp)

Guilty.

Guilty.

LEGATE

Guilty.

COURTIER 1

Guilty.

LEGATE

Guilty.

Guilty.

ANNE BOLEYN

Of what?

(ANNE steps forward - GUARD blocks)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Of being in the way.

(ENSEMBLE rocks side to side like hymn - ANNE center, unmoving)

ENSEMBLE

Guilty in the key of fear,

Guilty in the rhyme of need,

Guilty because the future wants

A different woman’s seed.

ANNE & ENSEMBLE:

Guilty in the book of men,

Guilty in the court of doubt,

When a crown is hungry

Someone always gets cut out.

ANNE BOLEYN

You can take my head—

You cannot take the moment

(ANNE lifts chin)

When a woman said “No”

To a kingdom built on it.

(Pause)

THOMAS CROMWELL

(CROMWELL reads from scroll)

Anne Boleyn,

You shall be taken to the Tower Green

And there be beheaded.

ANNE BOLEYN

Is that all?

THOMAS CROMWELL

It’s the law.

ANNE BOLEYN

Then tell the law...

It’s very small.

(ANNE spreads arms slightly)

I go innocent to God,

And louder to history.

(Procession forms - ENSEMBLE sings while walking backward)

(ANNE walks forward alone)

ENSEMBLE

Make a path.

Make it clean.

For the crime of being Queen.

ANNE BOLEYN

I wore a crown

(ANNE mimics placing crown - Lets it fall from hands)

Like a question mark,

I lit a match

In a room of dark.

ENSEMBLE

If this is the end

You wanted to see—

ANNE BOLEYN

Remember:

You needed me.

ENSEMBLE

Another head rolls—

(Guillotine arm motion)

THOMAS CROMWELL

But the story stays,

ENSEMBLE

Another lie wins

THOMAS CROMWELL

For a few more days.

ENSEMBLE

Another head rolls

Another head rolls

(ANNE exits - ENSEMBLE turns away - CROMWELL alone)

(Blackout)

ACT X (REMEMBER HER)

Setting: Tower Green transitioning to royal court renewal and symbolic legacy space. Minimalism emphasizes mortality while later staging expands toward historical continuity.

At Rise: Execution solemnity fills the environment. Following transition, celebratory royal imagery replaces absence. ELIZABETH emerges as living consequence of the narrative.

(Tower Green. Dawn. Pale light. Simple platform.)

(ENSEMBLE enters in slow procession, heads bowed - Form a semicircle)

(Each “Morning” = one step forward - Stop in unison)

ANNE BOLEYN

Morning.

ENSEMBLE

Not Morning.

ANNE BOLEYN

Morning.

ENSEMBLE

Not Morning.

ANNE BOLEYN

So this is the end of the

ENSEMBLE

Not Morning.

(Each “Morning” = one step forward - Stop in unison)

ENSEMBLE

So this is the end of the story

They wrote for me.

(ANNE steps onto platform - Touches neck lightly)

I hope they spell my name right.

They dressed me in silence,

(ANNE removes imaginary cloak - Lets it fall)

They fed me their lies,

They cut down my future

And called it “advice.”

They said I was wicked,

They said I was proud,

They said I was dangerous

Out loud.

But hear me—

I loved like a storm,

I ruled like a spark,

I walked into fire

And lit up the dark.

If loving too loudly

Was part of my crime,

(ANNE opens arms)

Then write it in ink

In the margin of time.

I was not your sin,

I was not your shame,

I was just a woman

Who wanted her name.

History, darling—

Don’t blink.

(ANNE locks eyes with audience - ENSEMBLE lowers heads)

EXECUTIONER

(EXECUTIONER approaches in slow, measured steps)

ANNE BOLEYN

Do your job well.

(ANNE kneels - Hands placed calmly)

Men have failed me enough already.

ENSEMBLE

Lord Jesus, receive my soul.

And please—

ANNE BOLEYN

Don’t let England forget my mouth.

EXECUTIONER

(EXECUTIONER raises arm - Lights snap out before strike)

ENSEMBLE

(ENSEMBLE turns back sharply - Red silk unfurls across stage floor as a blood image)

(Silk passed hand to hand like a story)

Cut to the crown,

(Crown lifted - Then dropped center)

Cut to the name,

Cut to the woman

Who started the flame.

Cut to the law,

Cut to the lie,

Cut to the silence

ANNE & ENSEMBLE: Right after the cry.

ANNE BOLEYN

Another head falls

(Guillotine arm motion - Bodies dip then rise)

So the story can bend,

But blood is a sentence

That doesn’t defend.

(Pause – Lights out / Lights up)

(Court again. Bright. Wedding banners. JANE SEYMOUR in white.)

(ENSEMBLE rushes in with banners to form wedding aisle)

THOMAS CROMWELL

New queen.

New dress.

New prayers.

Same King.

KING HENRY VIII

(HENRY steps forward)

God bless this union.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Brand new queen,

(Wedding dance—too cheerful - ENSEMBLE claps)

Fresh and clean,

Press repeat on “what might’ve been.”

Brand new vows,

Brand new bed,

Brand new woman,

Same old head.

JANE SEYMOUR

I will be quiet.

(JANE folds hands)

I will be kind.

I will be everything

She left behind.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Good girl.

KING HENRY VIII

I will be holy.

(HENRY raises arms - ENSEMBLE mirrors briefly)

I will be right.

I will not think

About her tonight.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Good King.

ENSEMBLE

Brand new queen,

Brand new start—

Put a son

Where there was a heart.

Brand new queen,

Brand new start—

Put a son

Where there was a heart.

(Pause)

(ELIZABETH appears upstage.)

(Spotlight isolates child - ENSEMBLE slowly turns toward her - HENRY does not)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

Elizabeth was not the son.

(ENSEMBLE gestures “no”)

ANNE BOLEYN

She was not the plan.

She was just a girl

With a future no one ran.

ENSEMBLE

She walks in the shadow

Of a broken crown,

ANNE BOLEYN

With a mother erased

And a kingdom wound down.

ELIZABETH I

They say I look like her.

(Child touches face - ANNE’s silhouette appears faintly upstage)

ENSEMBLE

Yes.

And one day

They will sound like you.

ANNE BOLEYN

She is the echo

(ENSEMBLE raises arms behind ELIZABETH- Shape resembles crown)

ANNE BOLEYN

They couldn’t kill,

The aftershock

Of a woman’s will.

ENSEMBLE

Remember her

(ENSEMBLE steps forward in lines)

When the crown looks clean,

Remember her

ANNE BOLEYN

When they praise their King.

ENSEMBLE

Remember her

(Hands point downward to the grave - Then outward to the future)

ANNE BOLEYN

When they rewrite sin,

When the men who lose

Still pretend they win.

They cut off my head,

(ANNE steps out of shadow)

But they kept my name,

They buried my body

But not my flame.

KING HENRY VIII

(spoken)

I wanted a son.

(HENRY reaches forward - Pulls back empty-handed)

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

You got a story.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(spoken)

I wanted order.

ANNE BOLEYN

(spoken)

You got memory.

ANNE BOLEYN

Who tells the tale?

(ENSEMBLE lifts open imaginary books)

ANNE BOLEYN

Who signs the page?

Who names the villain

Of every age?

I was your answer

To fear and doubt,

You needed a voice

So you cut mine out.

But listen—

History doesn’t kneel,

(ANNE stands tall - ENSEMBLE kneels instead)

It just waits

For a better reveal.

ENSEMBLE

Remember her—

Not as a crime,

But as the woman

Who challenged her time.

Remember her—

(Crown lifted by ensemble-Offered to ANNE-She does NOT take it)

Not as a fall,

But as the spark

That started it all.

ELIZABETH I

My mother taught me

How to stand.

(ELIZABETH steps beside ANNE - They mirror posture)

ANNE BOLEYN

Then stand.

ENSEMBLE

When a king meets a woman

(HENRY kneels involuntarily)

ENSEMBLE

Who won’t bow,

The crown may win—

But the truth lives now.

Remember her.

Remember her.

ANNE BOLEYN

Who won’t bow,

The crown may win—

But the truth lives now.

Remember her.

Remember her.

(Crown placed on floor - ANNE and ELIZABETH center - All others in shadow)

(Blackout)

ACT FINALE (LONG LIVE THE HEADLINES)

Setting: Full company.

At Rise: The entire cast’s role is revisited.

(Full company rushes onstage from both wings)

(Form two diagonal lines crossing center)

(Snap-turn to face audience)

THOMAS CROMWELL

Ladies and gents, if you liked the plot,

Here’s the speed-run version of what we got:

A King, six wives, one stubborn Pope,

(HENRY center - Six wives fan behind him)

A church split wide just to keep his hope.

KING HENRY VIII

I ruled for thirty-eight long years,

(HENRY struts forward)

Had six attempts at wedding cheers,

Broke with Rome, rewrote the rules,

Made England Anglican—sorry, Jules.

ENSEMBLE

Divorced!

(Divorced” = tear paper)

Beheaded!

(Beheaded” = chop arm)

Died!

Divorced!

Beheaded!

Beheaded!

Survived!

KING HENRY VIII

I wanted sons, I wanted heirs,

I wanted God on my affairs,

So when the Pope said “No annul,”

I said, “Congrats—new church, I rule.”

ENSEMBLE

When Henry wanted something bad,

He fired Popes and married mad!

CATHERINE OF ARAGON

Twenty years and still no boy,

(CATHERINE crosses arms)

I got replaced by French couture.

ANNE BOLEYN

I said, “Crown me or walk away,”

(ANNE grabs crown - Puts it on herself)

He said, “Cool—

ENSEMBLE

Also, you’re in the way.”

JANE SEYMOUR

I gave him what he wanted most—

Then died, because Tudor men are cursed.

ANNE OF CLEVES

I am Anne of Cleves –

ENSEMBLE

Wife Number 4.

ANNE OF CLEVES

He saw my portrait.

(ANNE OF CLEVES holds fake portrait)

ENSEMBLE

Liked the paint.

ANNE OF CLEVES

Met me in person...

ENSEMBLE

We annulled by lunch, it ain’t.

CATHERINE HOWARD

Wife Number 5 Catherine Howard.

I was young,

He was old,

We both made choices...

Mine got cold.

ENSEMBLE

Catherine Parr,

CATHERINE PARR

Wife Number 6.

ENSEMBLE

Wife Number 6.

CATHERINE PARR

I outlived him, read my books,

Taught his kids, and fixed their hooks.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Six wives,

ENSEMBLE

one crown,

(Wives circle HENRY)

THOMAS CROMWELL

No therapy,

Just laws and heads and theology.

ANNE & ENSEMBLE: They cut me down at twenty-nine,

(ANNE steps forward)

THOMAS CROMWELL

But listen close—this bloodline shines.

ELIZABETH & ENSEMBLE: They said I Elizabeth was born illegitimate,

(ELIZABETH steps out)

ELIZABETH I

Two years old, mom gone

ENSEMBLE

Yeah, that’s intimate.

ELIZABETH I

Lost my title, lost my house,

Learned Latin instead of learning to pout.

Locked in towers, watched them burn,

Saw what power does when it’s scared to learn.

Mary tried to make me kneel,

I learned how steel and patience feel.

ENSEMBLE

She rose from loss,

From fear,

From flame—

ELIZABETH I

At twenty-five I took the throne,

(ELIZABETH steps center)

Said, “I’ll rule England on my own.”

No king, no ring, no last name change,

Just forty years of boss-range range.

Beat Spain’s Armada, built the arts,

Made Shakespeare rich and broke some hearts,

ENSEMBLE

Virgin Queen!

(All bow out of respect to ELIZABETH)

Forty years!

Golden age from blood and tears!

KING HENRY VIII

So...

You’re welcome.

(HENRY bows)

ENSEMBLE

Sit down.

(ENSEMBLE gently pushes HENRY into chair)

THOMAS CROMWELL

From one dead queen to one who reigned,

(ANNE on one side, ELIZABETH on the other - They walk toward each other)

(They meet center - Hold hands)

THOMAS CROMWELL

From scandal’s ink to history’s name,

From Rome’s control to England’s way,

From “No” to “Watch me,” here we stay.

ENSEMBLE

Remember her!

THOMAS CROMWELL

Remember them!

ENSEMBLE

The wives, the crown,

THOMAS CROMWELL

The mayhem!

ANNE & ENSEMBLE:

Remember how a woman’s fall

Built England’s greatest rise of all!

ANNE BOLEYN

When a king meets a woman

(HENRY kneels)

ANNE BOLEYN

Who won’t bow,

The crown may fall

But the truth lives now.

ENSEMBLE

Long live the headlines,

Long live the flame,

Long live the girl

(ENSEMBLE bow toward ANNE)

ENSEMBLE

They tried to unname.

Long live the kingdom

Born from the fight,

Long live the past

That still owns the night.

(ANNE raises ELIZABETH's hand)

KING HENRY VIII

So...

Any questions?

(End of Show)

ACT CURTAIN CALL

ACT CURTAIN CALL

Bow 1 - Full Company

(Lights snap up)

(Full Company runs in from both wings)

(Two diagonal lines form across stage)

(On the downbeat, everyone spins to face the audience)

(Big synchronized bow}

(Full Company spreads to sides to create a corridor)

And Now -

Ladies and Gentleman -

Here is Our Full Cast and Company of Crowned the Musical.

Bow 2 – Court/Supporting Roles

(COURTIERS, ARCHBISHOP, PRIEST, GUARD, CLERKS, LEGATE, BROTHER)

(Exaggerated royal bow)

The Court and all supporting roles

The Court

(Exit - Supporting cast exits skipping or spinning outward)

Bow 3 – The six wives

(All six wives enter in a line)

(CATHERINE OF ARRAGON – proud Spanish curtsey)

(ANNE BOLEYN – confident snap-turn bow)

(JANE SEYMOUR – gentle nod)

(ANNE OF CLEVES – comedic shrug)

(CATHERINE HOWARD– playful twirl)

(CATHERINE PARR – book-raise bow)

(All six bow together)

The six wives of Henry

Six Wives OF Henry

Bow 4 – Catherine of Arragon

(CATHERINE steps forward alone)

Catherine

Catherine

(Regal curtsey & Exit)

Bow 5 – Jane Seymour

(JANE enters softly)

Jane Seymour

Jane Seymour

(Graceful nod & Exit)

Bow 6 – More/Wosely

(They accidentally bow into each other)

(Exit together)

Thomas More and Wolsey

Thomas More and Wolsey

Bow 7 – Elizabeth

(ELIZABETH enters upstage center)

(Queenly bow)

Elizabeth

Elizabeth

Bow 8 – Cromwell

(CROMWELL strides out adjusting imaginary paperwork)

(Sharp businesslike bow)

Cromwell

Cromwell

(Exit)

Bow 9 – Henry VIII

(HENRY bursts out dramatically)

(He spreads arms proudly)

(Big exaggerated kingly bow)

Henry the 8th

Henry the 8th

Bow 10 – Anne Boleyn

(ANNE enters with a spotlight center)

(Queenly Bow)

Anne Boleyn

Anne Boleyn

Bow 11 – Full Company Finale

(Entire cast floods stage again)

Our Full Company

(ANNE and ELIZABETH center)

(HENRY stage left)

(CROMWELL stage right)

(ENSEMBLE behind forming a crown shape)

(ANNE and ELIZABETH lift hands)

Thank You For Coming

Thank You For Coming

(Curtain)