

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE PAST



Immersive drama for Hampton Court Palace

By

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March- August 2016

Commissioned by Historic Royal Palaces

Song in Base Court: *Back and Bare*

Tudor Prologue [Great Hall]

Flowing through the minutes, hour on hour unwinds the river
Carrying the centuries ever downstream from the Tower –
We're here to make them live again, the Fool, the King, the lover –
Two Queens play cat and mouse with Brereton the courtier –
Nicholas Carew - politician, agitator;
Imperial ambassador, Chapuys, the power-player;
John Heywood, wit; and I sing!
Doctor of divinity, Cambridge thinker Thomas Cranmer;
Silk-woman Mistress Margery, parcels hidden in the linen
That could blow apart a kingdom. Anne Boleyn
Huntress, and white falcon, with the king's heart in her fist
(New love that splits like lightning in the chamber of the heart
New faith kicks down the statues, splits a continent apart) -
Alone and fierce and fighting, Queen Katherine so rejected
Of all the ladies in the court most woeful and dejected.
King Henry of the Tudors - monument or monster?
(Blood drifting in the water flowing downstream from the Tower)
Mighty once, a great Colossus, the Prince set on the stage -
Rooms now dust and whispers where once the monarch raged.
And rich or poor, or slave or lord, their bones lie down together
(Quiet flows the river, ever downstream from the Tower)
Jane the Fool, she sees it all, the merriment - the sadness,
The Fool knows all the secrets; in jokes she speaks the madness.
Quiet flows the river ever downstream hour by bour

Bloodstains in the water drifting downstream from the Tower.

[SONG leads audience from Great Hall into Great Watching Chamber]

Prologue to Scene One, Making Shirts for Henry (Heywood)

Our play begins! With what? The King!

This story is quite true.

Of Anne, the shirts and Katherine –

The old way or the new?

King Henry married Katherine

The widow of his brother –

But with no son appearing –

He starts to want another.

Anne Boleyn, the King's new love,

She sits with him at dinner

While Katherine, fraught with grief and rage

Grows paler yet and thinner.

Anne walks with Henry, rides with him –

Whiles away the days –

A-bed together? No – not yet –

His wife in other ways.

With no divorce the King is trapped

Between the old and new.

Love and rage and jealousy –

They're just like me and you.

Scene One: Making Shirts for Henry

(Great Watching Chamber)

Anne Boleyn and her musicians, are in the Great Watching Chamber. William Brereton, Groom of the Privy Chamber enters, carrying bundles of linen, striding purposefully down the Watching Chamber; Anne watches him, and then decides to call him back.

ANNE: Sir!

I say, fellow!

Has the man a problem with his hearing?

Good sir!

GROOM: *(turning with some reluctance)* My Lady?

ANNE: Ah, so you do have ears?

GROOM: Yes, my Lady.

Rather too prominent, indeed.

ANNE: But you wear a fine pearl, there. You can't be so ashamed of them if you draw attention with a jewel.

A present from your lady love?

GROOM: No madam.

ANNE: You have no lady love?

GROOM: Not yet, my Lady.

ANNE: What a crime against womankind. We must see how we can help you.

GROOM: Thank you, my Lady.

ANNE: Do you know who I am?

GROOM: Yes, indeed, madam.

ANNE: Who then?

GROOM: You are the Lady Anne Boleyn, madam.

ANNE: How strange that you should know me, and yet I do not know you.

GROOM: Not strange, I'd say, my lady, as I am very humble, and you are the King's . . .

ANNE: The King's what?

GROOM: You are the Lady Anne Boleyn.

ANNE: And you are - ?

GROOM: William Brereton, madam, Groom of the Privy Chamber.

ANNE: And how do you like it at court, Good Master William?

GROOM: I like it very well, madam.

ANNE: Despite the many tasks! And so you carry these fine silks – or is it linen –

GROOM: - linen, Madam –

ANNE: To whom do you carry it?

GROOM: Please you, I must not detain you further, my lady, as you are engaged in such pleasant pastimes – so I bid you good day –

ANNE: Your ears again, are playing up! To whom do you carry it Master William?

GROOM: I am instructed to carry it to the queen, my lady.

ANNE: The queen of now or the queen of later?

A little riddle for you, pay no mind.

GROOM: Queen Katherine, madam, our queen of England.

ANNE: What think you, then, am I? To good King Henry?

GROOM: Most favoured of His Majesty. Forgive me, madam – my instructions are to carry the linen to -

ANNE: I know, you said. Queen Katherine. The Spaniard. No matter!

I have heard it said that it were best should all Spaniards sink to the bottom of the sea.

(Courtiers laugh gently)

I myself could never say such a thing.

GROOM: No, madam.

ANNE: Let me see the stuff.

Bring it here, let me see it.

Would you deny me?

(WILLIAM brings the linen towards Anne and she inspects it; feels the quality).

This is fine linen. What does she intend with it?

WILLIAM: I believe, madam - that she may make a shirt for his Majesty the King.

ANNE: Of course! She wields the wifely needle!

She would stitch herself into the throne if she could

(She wrests the bundle of linen from him)

ANNE: You may inform her that his Majesty's shirts shall be the concern of those most nearly connected to his happiness and well-being.

WILLIAM: 'Twas the direct order of the King –

I may not countermand or disobey a direct instruction.

I may lose my position.

ANNE: We all may lose all. Would you not dare on my behalf?

WILLIAM: If I were free to dare on any lady's behalf it would be on yours, but I am bound by ties of loyalty, to carry the linen to its appointed place – Madam, I beg you -

(Enter Queen Katherine – she has a heavy Spanish accent)

KATHERINE: What's all this? Who speaks of linen?

WILLIAM: *(bowing)* Your Majesty.

KATHERINE: Ah, so the shipment has arrived – Is it the Flemish stuff that was to come from Harwich this week?

WILLIAM: Madam, it has come

KATHERINE: You may bring it now – I have naught else to distract me but my needle so I may as well be busy.

WILLIAM: Yes my lady.

Queen Katherine would have me take the linen now

ANNE: You shall not.

He shall not.

The linen is for me.

KATHERINE: Madam?

ANNE: The linen is for me. It shall stay with me. You may leave us, man.

KATHERINE: I crave my lady's pardon but you are mistaken. The order was made in my name, and the commission to make the shirts came as always from his grace my husband King Henry. Tis my custom of old, the making of the King's shirts, there is none can please him as I do in the business and so I repeat, sirrah, take up the swatch and bring it to my chamber.

ANNE: But I am newly commissioned. The King has made known his preference for needlework in the French style which I studied whilst abroad –And so pardon me, madam, but the linen shall remain with me

KATHERINE: Enough of this. Do you not hear me, fellow? Take up the linen quick sharp and come this way before –

ANNE: *(To William)* Would you disobey me –

KATHERINE: *(To Anne)* Would you countermand a queen?

ANNE: Where the pleasure of the king requires it, yes, madam.

KATHERINE: The pleasure of the king is that the shirts are made by me I know how to cut and hem to the niceties of his taste -- where most he likes the button-hole, how much to gather at the shoulder and what embroidery at the wrist best pleases –

ANNE: These are old fads – you speak of yesterday, madam - His taste hath changed, your Majesty!

KATHERINE: Don't trespass on this task that of all brings me a taste of joy in a life that has become of late scarcely tolerable -

ANNE: Tis proper that this favour pass from yesterday's custom to what may please the king today

KATHERINE: William, take up the linen, I shall not stay to be further insulted –

ANNE: Take not one step, I command you Master William, on pain of King Henry's displeasure!

(Enter HENRY with Nicholas Carew)

HENRY: Who speaks of my displeasure without consulting me?

ANNE: Your Majesty

KATHERINE: Your Majesty!

ANNE: 'Tis a trivial dispute – a matter hardly fit for your ears.

HENRY: Anne, that sourness will put crows' feet round your eyes – don't let petty irritations mar what God has made so perfect.

KATHERINE: Your shirts, my lord –

ANNE: The linen has come for your shirts. I am very happy for the task to be mine, for as you know I am an excellent needlewoman– which gentle offer seems to have enraged the Queen though I do all for her sake that she may not strain her eyes with fine-work!

KATHERINE: My lord, it has long been my custom to make your shirts and I would continue as we have done for many years.

My lady Anne is mistaken if she thinks I would be rid of the task.

ANNE: But madam, the fashion now is all quite different from what it was! A lady of your years cannot be expected to judge soundly. I know more nearly what may please a man of current times, and so my lady need not exert herself, as I shall make the shirts with pleasure – all the more that I have saved you the trouble and the labour –

KATHERINE: Ah yes, yes, what trouble and labour you would save me, my lady Anne! A woman of my years may not be so easily fooled!

Sir, I shall stay no more to be a burden on your time.

(Exit KATHERINE, muttering in Spanish)

ANNE: When we are wed, my lord, you shall lie on sheets that I have laboured over, and wear nothing that I have not made for you, though my fingers bleed from the needle's point. . .

HENRY: Take the linen to Katherine. She shall make the shirts.

WILLIAM: Yes, your Majesty. *(GROOM takes up the linen bundle and is about to go ...)*

ANNE: No! Sir, I protest -

HENRY: We may leave the Queen to make shirts, Anne, it is a petty matter -

ANNE: I don't see why.

HENRY: Must you triumph in everything, Anne?

ANNE: Must she always have her way just to soothe your conscience?

She plays you for a fool my Lord.

Whenever you come into dispute with the Queen, she has the upper hand!

Majesty -

I am sick with waiting! I am wasting my time and my youth – to no purpose! Might I not have been comforted with a child, a son, by now, had I not been bound by your royal favour?

She was never your wife! Never!

HENRY: I will have my shirts made by whomsoever I please. Take the linen to the Queen, without further delay!

(GROOM leaves).

I will not countermand my own order.

And neither will you.

On pain of my displeasure.

(EXIT Henry. MUSICIANS sing; ANNE leaves.)

EPILOGUE TO SCENE ONE (PHIL):

Anne's impatient; Henry struggles to be free.

But what will Katherine's next move be?

Come to the Council Chamber - and we will see.

AUDIENCE ARE LED TO COUNCIL CHAMBER

(Annabelle plays flute in council Chamber.

UMAR– *as Brereton - organises the audience, and speaks the Prologue)*

November 1529.

And we are in the throes of the King's Great Matter –

By which we mean, King Henry's battle to annul his marriage, and be wed a-new to Anne Boleyn.

The court is split between the two sides – on one side, those loyal to Queen Katherine and to the Church of Rome

And on the other - those who root for Anne, and see this as a chance to defy the Pope.

Eustace Chapuys – Imperial Ambassador – is at Hampton Court. He works for the Emperor, Charles the Fifth – and Charles the Fifth is Katherine’s nephew.

She’s really well-connected.

Chapuys is a lawyer, judge, strategic thinker.

He’s gathering support for Katherine about the English court, but Katherine needs to -

We’re out of time – I’ll show you – here they are –

SCENE 2: The Abandoned Wife

Katharine enters, followed by Eustace Chapuys, the Imperial Ambassador. They come in and close the door, as this is a private conversation which they don’t wish to be overheard

KATHERINE: But why may I not visit her, Monsieur Chapuys? It is inhumane, is it not? – when she is so sick, my sweet Mary –

CHAPUYS: I agree, *bien sur*, your Majesty, but as you know, there are sensitivities –

KATHERINE: She is my daughter - and they will not even let me travel to be with her for one day –

Mary has always been so devout, Chapuys, and the knowledge that he will burn in hell for defying our holy father – it tortures her, I know –

CHAPUYS: The Princess Mary is very sensitive – the King fears that you and she may raise a faction to stop the divorce proceedings.

KATHERINE: But Ambassador, I ask you, what could we do – two women?

CHAPUYS: The King is full of fears, for all he roars like a lion -

KATHERINE: Oh God

He will succeed in this divorce and then what shall become of us, Monsieur Chapuys?

CHAPUYS: Madam, we must not despair. Success for the King is far from certain. There are many who support you – powerful factions. And not just here at court. You have the people’s hearts.

KATHERINE: You say this, Chapuys, but how can it be true? I am a foreigner here, how do I have their hearts?

CHAPUYS: The people see you as their queen you, and no other – why only last week I’ve heard that when the minister of Austin Friars called for prayers for the Concubine –

KATHERINE: For Anne Boleyn, Monsiuer Chapuys –

CHAPUYS: - indeed – well, as he called for prayer - half the congregation got up and left in protest! They are calling it a ‘wicked project’, madam, this denial of your marriage. The women especially, madam – there is not a woman in the land who does not pity and honour you.

KATHERINE: What does my nephew say to all of this?

CHAPUYS: The Emperor is gravely shocked by Henry’s actions, madam, and condemns the business utterly

KATHERINE: But Henry thinks of nothing but Anne! Always Anne, and what a new marriage may bring!

Did you see what happened when we played at cards last night? Did you hear what she said?

I turned up the Ace and Queen and the turn passed to her.

Whereupon she turned up three kings in a row. I said, surely that must be enough Kings even for you, Mistress Boleyn?

At which she did not even blush but looked me straight in the eye and said ‘Indeed madam, I have my king of flesh and blood. These paper dreams I leave to your hand.’ And leaves as if ‘twas I that caused insult.

CHAPUYS: She will live to regret this arrogance. I have ears at court, madam, as you know, and there are many who tire of her -

KATHERINE: Who do you mean, sir?

CHAPUYS: Nicholas Carew – Exeter, the Duke of Buckingham, a score of others who would move against the Boleyn plot

KATHERINE: Can you be sure of this M’siuer Chapuys? It would be such a comfort – not to be alone -

CHAPUYS: Then be comforted, madam! My informants tell me that just the other day, Sir Nicholas Carew was asking -

(Enter Henry)

HENRY: Madam – you asked to see me?

KATHERINE: No, my lord – I made no suit - though it is always my pleasure –

HENRY: Strange. I had heard I was to join you here.

Monsieur Chapuys.

CHAPUYS: Majesty.

HENRY: Shall you dine with us tonight, Ambassador?

CHAPUYS: Majesty, if it is your pleasure –

HENRY: I think it is, Chapuys. I like to keep an eye on you and keep you close. Troublesome fellow like you.

CHAPUYS: Majesty, I hope I cause you no trouble.

HENRY: So do I, Chapuys, so do I.

CHAPUYS: Would you have me –

HENRY: An audience with her Majesty the Queen. Alone, if you please.

(Exit Chapuys – but then -)

KATH: No. Let him stay, please you, your Majesty.

HENRY: You are so attached to our Imperial Ambassador?

KATH: Monsieur Chapuys has been of great comfort to me, sir. In these hard times.

HENRY: Katherine – you know I hold you in great esteem and tenderness -

KATH: Just not as your wife.

HENRY: You never were my wife –

KATH: Lies – lies – infamy – I never will accept it –

HENRY: Madam – you know very well the words of Leviticus –

KATH: We had a papal dispensation from our holy father! Do you deny the Pope's law?

HENRY: The law of Leviticus says no man shall lie with his brother's wife – I sinned, Katherine, we sinned together –

KATH: I came to you a true and untouched maid, my lord – must we go over it again and again?

You would call the holy father an apostate and a blasphemer?

HENRY: He is a man like any other and may be mistaken!

KATH: My lord!

I was a maid on our wedding night.

You are my first, my only, my true husband!

My lord, we have had children, we have loved and lost and suffered, we have a daughter – a daughter who grieves and suffers! - And now you call all this unlawful, whilst you run to your whore and call it holy!

I will live and die in the state of matrimony to which God has called me, and may God forgive me if I ever waver in this certainty!

HENRY: Katherine. You are a true daughter of the Church but I have seen the error of what we did. If God had seen our union as a true marriage, he'd have blessed us with a son.

KATHERINE: He blessed our union with a daughter. Why is that not enough for you?

HENRY: No woman can sit on the throne as monarch. The lady Mary is my dear child but –

KATHERINE: The Princess Mary!

HENRY: She is a bastard.

KATHERINE: O holy Mary, our blessed Virgin, give me patience to bear -

HENRY: Katherine – calm yourself - don't make this worse –

KATH: How could I make this worse? I have long been suffering the pains of Purgatory on earth! Made only bearable by your dear presence!

Why won't you come to my rooms? Why do you forsake me?

HENRY: I have been busy with affairs of state.

KATH: I had a dinner prepared for you, sir. I had your favourite dishes prepared by your cook to perfection and I waited for you to come to me!

Til midnight when I went to bed alone as any widow.

HENRY: I was busy with affairs of state.

KATH: A-bed with that concubine Anne!

HENRY: She is a gentlewoman!

KATH: I am the daughter of a king!

HENRY: I never was your legitimate husband!

KATH: You are rewriting history according to your whim!

HENRY: No – according to God’s law as set down in his holy book!

KATHERINE: I never – never – will accept that I was nothing more than your mistress! I have long been your wife, and I desire to know wherein I have offended you -

HENRY: Katherine – please – you have not offended – we have offended -

KATHERINE: I beg you, cast off these notions – put them from you – you have been counselled by devils, by those who would lead you astray –

This flame with Anne burns so bright but how can so bright a flame last, my lord?

She approaches thirty. How do you know this son and heir will be forthcoming?

And all you will have lost sir!

Your wife. Your daughter. Your immortal soul.

HENRY: Get away from me, Katherine!

Get away from me! It’s you who leads me astray!

You lead me deeper into sin when I am struggling to put right the sin we made together!

And I will call that Pope a heretic who does not do my bidding.

And I will marry whom I please!

(Exit Henry. Katherine, distraught, turns to Chapuys for comfort.)

KATHERINE: Mr Chapuys.

CHAPUYS: Madam, madam, it is a kind of madness. . . he is maddened by this woman. . . He cannot succeed in this -

KATHERINE: But a king’s madness can bend the whole world to its purpose!

I must pray. . .

I must pray to our Lady. . .

I will pray for Henry’s soul.

(CHAPUYS speak some bridging lines, over KATHERINE, praying)

CHAPUYS: Katherine died in 1536. Her last letter to Henry, written a few weeks before her death, ends, ‘I make this vow, that mine eyes desire you above all things.’

Neither Henry VIII nor Anne Boleyn went to her funeral, and Henry refused to allow her daughter Mary to attend it either.

During her lifetime Katherine was admired for her work to relieve the poor, as a patron of Renaissance humanism and as an advocate for women's education.

A service in her memory is still held every year at Peterborough Cathedral where she is buried. Her tomb is always freshly decorated with flowers, and with pomegranates, her heraldic symbol.

It reads Katherine Queen of England.

(MUSIC ENDS. APPLAUSE. ACTORS BOW.)

During the applause Jane the Fool produces a pomegranate from her bag.

JANE THE FOOL: Pomegranate anyone?

Who likes pomegranates?

My name is Jane, and I'm the Fool – a natural fool! Pomegranate? Or . . . - ?

(She produces a banana from her bag)

. . . - what about a banana? Only if you can answer this question.

Why did the banana go to the doctor?

Because it wasn't peeling well!

For all courts must have their wise men, and their fools –

But how to tell the one from the other – now there's a teaser!!

Here's another one.

What fruit teases you the most?

A Ba – na –na –na –na – na!

You can see I'm a natural. There are natural fools, and artificial – and I'm a natural. . .

Which is why I like fruit.

What's the fruitiest school subject?

History – because it’s full of dates?

What do baby apes sleep in?

Apri – cots!

More fruit anyone?

Anyone want more fruit?

Or maybe -

What about a scene? (*finds her laminated magic arrow*)

Follow me this way!

Or is it this way?

Or this way?

Nobody knows!

There are spies at court and if you want to watch them, they are watching each other, guess what room?

Guess what room where all the spies are watching?

The great Watching Chamber – obviously!

Follow me! Follow me!

This way!!

(Jane the Fool – some jokes and music to lead the crowd back to the Watching Chamber.

Heywood sings – picks up the song, and Jane sits with the children at front.

UMAR accompanying Heywood’s singing on guitar?)

UMAR: John Heywood!

He’s a singer – he’s a wit in Henry’s court. He writes plays, composes songs – and he’s the inventor of such wise proverbs and sayings as -

HEYWOOD: Love me, love my dog!

UMAR: Nice one. *Better late than never.* Did you really make that up?

HEYWOOD: Yes, I did. *Haste maketh waste.* Mine.

UMAR: *The more the merrier.* That's a good one.

HEYWOOD: Also mine: *Would ye both eat your cake and have your cake?*

UMAR: Tricky question. Here's one I like -

A penny for your thought!

HEYWOOD: No thank you - my thoughts are my own!

UMAR: Well, I have heard that Sir Nicholas Carew, the Master of the Horse, and eminent courtier, would like to hear your thoughts on the matter of the King's divorce.

He might offer you more than a penny.

Here he comes now.

HEYWOOD: Even a worm will turn.

UMAR: Is that yours too, Master Heywood?

HEYWOOD: Ay. Even the smallest worm will turn again if you tread on its tail.

UMAR: Very apt! Carew comes to tread on your tail –

Here he is!

Scene 3 – Heywood and Carew – Great Watching Chamber

ENTER CAREW

NICHOLAS: Forgive me! I thought the chamber empty – I would just have a minute to catch my breath.

HEYWOOD: You have come from the tilt-yard?

NICHOLAS: No – I have come from the presence chamber. . .

(NICHOLAS CAREW unravels a letter and starts reading it)

HEYWOOD: Sit, sir, by all means.

(JOHN HEYWOOD continues practising and singing.)

NICHOLAS: A very pretty air. Did you compose it?

HEYWOOD: Not I. 'Tis the King's composition.

NICHOLAS: He has a fine ear for a sweet tune.

HEYWOOD: And would hear it played tonight. I'm under particular instructions to con it.

NICHOLAS: Indeed?

You had better be perfect in it, if tis Henry's own composing.

HEYWOOD: Too true.

And more - the song is dedicated to the Lady Anne.

NICHOLAS: The Lady Anne?

Then I must let you practise or your neck will be on the block for a mere stumble!

HEYWOOD: Aye, I would believe it.

NICHOLAS: The creature fills the king's waking hours.

HEYWOOD: She does.

NICHOLAS: Is that love then, think you?

HEYWOOD: How would I know?

NICHOLAS: You are a minstrel. Surely if any should know about love it must be you?

HEYWOOD: Not enough to understand the heart of a king.

NICHOLAS: That is a mystery indeed.

I have heard that your heart is with Queen Katherine. And you are a loyal defender of the old church and the Pope's authority.

HEYWOOD: No sir. Not at all! You are in the wrong. How would I dare to venture an opinion? That's a business for great ones. Let you gentlemen wrangle as ye please. I keep my thoughts to myself.

NICHOLAS: Very wise. But sometimes we must share our thoughts if we wish to work together to stop mischief in its tracks. No?

There are spies a-foot. You are right to be circumspect.

HEYWOOD: So how may I trust you, sir? How may I know you would not betray me instantly to the King and I'd be for the Tower with my neck on the block before I even finish the first chorus?

NICHOLAS: I think you have known me long enough, John. We are old friends, no? Have we not grown up together?

You need not open your heart to me but I will open mine to you –

I think -

I think this woman Anne Boleyn will tear down the kingdom. To our certain ruin.

What say you?

HEYWOOD: I say nothing, my lord.

NICHOLAS: Why not?

HEYWOOD: 'Tis better for we low folk to be circumspect and hold our tongues. So I have found and observed to be the case. I would rather keep my tongue in my head and my neck on my shoulders.

NICHOLAS: Fair answer.

HEYWOOD: The heart of a king must always be a mystery to poor and common folk.

NICHOLAS: No mystery, surely. The Queen cannot give him a son; that hope has gone. And without a son Henry has no heir. And that's the Achilles heel that gives Anne this power as the focus of the King's lust.

Simple, no?

HEYWOOD: Perhaps. But then –

NICHOLAS: Then what?

HEYWOOD: There is the princess Mary.

NICHOLAS: What of her?

HEYWOOD: Is she not her father's heir? She is the daughter of the King and queen.

NICHOLAS: A woman?

The King says she's a bastard.

HEYWOOD: The King says many things.

NICHOLAS: The king says a female cannot sit upon the throne and hold the reins of the kingdom. A woman can only marry and thereby put a foreign tyrant on the throne! Imagine – a Spaniard! Is that what you would have?

HEYWOOD: The Princess Mary is a godly daughter of the church, and clever like her mother the queen.

Rather a Spaniard on the throne than a heretic!

NICHOLAS: So now you speak freely!

HEYWOOD: I speak nothing. God save the King.

NICHOLAS: God save the King.

I love the man, I have loved Henry like a brother, man and boy. In sport and on the tilt-yard – in comradeship – he has my heart. I would follow him to the moon, if he asked. My king will always be my king.

But this Anne Boleyn –

This upstart maid of Kent –

She's no dullard – I'll give her that. She has played an impeccable hand. He woos and she with-holds – year on year – she maddens him with her refusal to get a-bed – and now crows that she will wear the crown of England, by virtue of her teasing.

Well, I am sick of it. I am sick of her arrogance and her apostasy!

HEYWOOD: Aye. There's many say the same.

NICHOLAS: Are you among their number?

JOHN doesn't answer but sings a phrase of the song he is practising.

Perhaps NICHOLAS speaks over his playing.

NICHOLAS: You know she's reading heretic books from abroad? – the kind of stuff that's pouring out of Wittenberg and Antwerp and Worms – this continental Lutheran nonsense – and she's filling Henry's head with it!

How she gets the books into court nobody has quite worked out – she must have spies or conspirators at all the ports, smuggling them in somehow from the continent.

And Henry's advisers are just as bad – Cranmer and Gardiner - These Cambridge thinkers will have us set adrift from Rome before you know it!

An entire nation ex-communicated! And for what? For the King's lust?

For the ambition and pride of lady Anne?

For love?

(John stops playing.)

HEYWOOD: These are shocking times.

NICHOLAS: It is unthinkable.

HEYWOOD: Not if the King has thought it.

NICHOLAS: I think you have it perfectly.

HEYWOOD: Let's hope so, or I lose my head. *(He goes to go, perhaps?)*

NICHOLAS: I have a list of names – a list of those who are with us – all manner of men throughout the court - those who would stand against the King's divorce.

Will you join us?

John. Can I add your name to the list?

HEYWOOD: I am fearful, sir.

NICHOLAS: It goes nowhere. I take the list to Monsieur Chapuys, the imperial ambassador, who counsels the Queen. Chapuys and I will judge when and how we move. Come on, man. Join us.

HEYWOOD: I – wish –

I wish I had more courage, sir.

I play the King's music; I cannot be his judge.

Forgive me, sir.

(John Heywood leaves. Nicholas watches him go.)

UMAR: Even the smallest worm will turn if you tread on its tail!

CAREW: What?

What did you say?

UMAR: Nothing.

(Exit UMAR playing music)

CAREW: *(to Jane the Fool in the audience)* What did he mean?

JANE: He was talking about worms.

Something John Heywood said. Tread on a worm and it'll turn again.

CAREW: Good day to you, Jane the Fool. *(EXIT CAREW)*

JANE: What is life like for a wood worm?

Boring!

What's yellow, wiggles and is dangerous?
A maggot with attitude!

Why was the glow worm unhappy?
Because her children weren't that bright!

What do you get if you cross a worm and an elephant?
Very big worm holes in your garden!

What reads and lives in an apple?
A bookworm!

What happened to the glow worm who was squashed? He was de-lighted!

What did the woodworm say to the chair?
It's been nice gnawing you!

What is the best advice to give to worm?
Sleep late!

What's the difference between a worm and an apple?
Have you ever tried worm pie?

What do you get if you cross a glow worm with some beer?
Light ale!

What do you get if you cross a King with the Pope?

Oh!

I mustn't talk about that.

Nobody's allowed to talk about that.

I saw Mistress Margery Vaughan whispering with my Lady Anne Boleyn.

They're in Brick Court! This way! Come on!

(Exit Jane telling more jokes.... These can be provided!)

Prologue to Hidden in the Linen:

UMAR:

Scene 4 – Hidden in the Linen

Jane, in her 20s, is practising a magic trick.

Margery, in her 40s, bustles in carrying a large bundle of silk.

JANE: Look here, Mistress Vaughan – see this!

Watch! (*shows her her new magic trick*)

Do you like it?

MARGERY: A very pretty new trick, Jane.

JANE: Will the Lady Anne like it, think ye?

MARGERY: I'm sure she will . . . Why should she not?

JANE: She can be so cross. And then other times she is gentle.

MARGERY: She has a lot of cares. But you make her happy, don't you.

JANE: I make her sing and laugh, that's my proper part!

Ah! I have one for you. What has a face but never smiles?

MARGERY: I don't know, Jane the Fool, what has a face but never smiles?

JANE: A clock, of course! But there's another answer do you know what it is -

MARGERY: What has a face but never smiles . . . I don't know. Tell me.

ANNE: Lady Anne when the King goes to visit Queen Katherine.

MARGERY: Hush now, Jane, you will get us all in trouble.

JANE: Are you very busy, Mistress Margery the silk-woman?

MARGERY: Busy enough, my dear

JANE: Where are you taking that, Mistress Margery?

MARGERY: To my lady Anne Boleyn's chamber.

JANE: Let me help you.

MARGERY: It's very heavy and troublesome, never you mind with that –

JANE: Very well. Here's another. What thing can Mistress Margery sit upon that no one else may sit on but you?

MARGERY: I know this one. My arse! God forgive me!

JANE: For saying arse?

MARGERY: Stop it –

JANE: I'm sure God doesn't mind us saying arse as it was God himself that invented arses.

MARGERY: 'Tis is a very tired old riddle, Jane. . .

JANE: Try this.

A man rides into town on Friday. . . He stays for two days, and then leaves on Friday.

What do you say to that?

MARGERY: Lord save us, I've no time for this riddling and time-wasting - I must take the silk to my lady –

JANE: Let me help you then –

MARGERY: I told you no, you'll spoil them, now mind your business! Begone!

Where is your Keeper? Who is looking after you?

JANE: Man rides into town on Friday stays for two days and then leaves on Friday for his horse's name is Friday.

MARGERY: Of course. I didn't mean to be cross, I just – you don't understand – these are heavy times -

JANE: What's invisible to mortal eye and smells of carrot?

MARGERY: I don't know.

JANE: The fart of a rabbit!

MARGERY: You are naughty, Mistress Jane, you are very -

Jane tickles her

MARGERY: Get off now – get off! You'll be the death of me!

(Enter Thomas Cranmer.)

CRANMER: Mistress Vaughan! The very woman I was looking for -

MARGERY: Oh! Doctor Cranmer!

Good day to ye CRANMER: Good day to you – and to you, Jane –

JANE: And to you Doctor Cranmer.

CRANMER: Is this is the Harwich delivery we lately spoke of? The Brussels lace and so forth that my lady Anne Boleyn has ordered to be brought from the continent?

MARGERY: Yes, father, I'm taking it straight to my lady's chamber –

JANE: Are you really a doctor?

CRANMER: I am a doctor of divinity.

JANE: Do you make people well?

CRANMER: I make their souls well.

JANE: Then I have sore need of you myself. I have a very poorly soul.

CRANMER: Oh dear. [*To MARGERY*] And is all as we had hoped?

MARGERY: This is the lavender silk from Antwerp.

CRANMER: Quite so.

And is it. . .?

Is the shipment – complete? As we discussed?

JANE: My soul is tired, and worn, doctor.

CRANMER: Dear dear.

MARGERY: All is as it should be, Doctor.

JANE: What's more I have eyes that cannot see. And a tongue that cannot talk.

And I have a soul but I cannot find love!

Can you cure me? What is the best cure for a soul?

CRANMER: Fervent prayer, my child.

JANE: Of course!

Let us kneel and pray together, Doctor Cranmer, come now, yes, kneeling is best – for my problem lies close to the floor.

CRANMER: Close to the floor? [*to MARGERY*] You have seen the volume yourself?

MARGERY: No sir but I trust –

CRANMER: So - nobody has stopped you or meddled in any way?

MARGERY: Would you see for yourself, sir? Just to ensure its safe arrival?

CRANMER: Here? Now?

MARGERY: There is nobody about. . . they are all gone to the tilt-yard for the joust.

CRANMER: Quickly then.

(Margery rummages for the book in the silk)

JANE: Can you see it, reverend father Cranmer?

CRANMER: I see nothing!

JANE: *(showing her boot)* See here, the eyes that are quite blind and the tongue that doesn't talk. . . and as for my poor sole!

Pray for me, father, for a new pair of shoes for Jane!

MARGERY: Come now, Jane, that's enough play for today. There are some matters we must discuss!

JANE: Crave pardon, Mistress Margery.

MARGERY: *(handing the book to Cranmer)* Is it – what you expected, sir?

CRANMER: *Obedience of a Christian Man.* By Brother Tyndale. Most excellent.

MARGERY: Can I see?

CRANMER: Oh this is a powerful and a wondrous work.

MARGERY: Oh God be thanked –

That has granted the words of thy servant safe passage across the sea to England.

CRANMER: Amen, to that Mistress Vaughan. .

Oh this may move the king most powerfully –

MARGERY: Pray God that it does.

CRANMER: Tell your mistress Anne Boleyn that she must persuade the King to read it! For her marriage can only be secured in defiance of Rome.

Has she the nerve think you?

MARGERY: She is as brave as a lion!

CRANMER: Hie thee, Mistress Vaughan, and take this to Mistress Anne before any should try to stop thee – stop for no body but get straight to her chamber and put it in her hands

(They bundle up the silk and hide the book again)

MARGERY: I will my lord.

JANE: Can I not come with you and help with the silks, Mistress Margery? I am fearful bored.

MARGERY: No poppet. Stay here with Dr Cranmer. Get him to mend thy soul. I will be back before you know it -

JANE: I know what ye are about!

CRANMER: Come, come, Jane, we are about nothing but our daily business.

MARGERY: That's right, Jane. There are no secrets here.

JANE: Your daily business is making secrets.

CRANMER: What can you know of our daily business?

JANE: Your daily business is helping the King be rid of his wife.

Though if the Pope say no, then how may a King proceed?

CRANMER: There are those that say, Jane, that a King may also be the Pope in his own person.

JANE: A King may be king and Pope in one person?

CRANMER: Quite so. In his country, a king may be the pope.

MARGERY: My lord this is too subtle for her –

JANE: So he is - a king with a pope in his belly? That's like a riddle.

CRANMER: Quite so. A king with a pope in his belly.

A very apt image, Jane the Fool.

But remember, you must not say a word!

JANE: I remember. Sssssshhhhh!

Here's my kenning for you. What is broken the minute someone says its name?

(They think)

MARGERY: Silence.

JANE: Silence. *(shouts)* Silence!

MARGERY: Hush now, Jane! Stop that naughty mouth.

CRANMER: God be with you Mistress Margery.

MARGERY: And also with you.

(Margery leaves with the bundle of silk)

CRANMER: Well my dear, I must about my -

JANE: Holy father – I have a simple understanding but -

CRANMER: I am no holy father. I am plain Thomas Cranmer – no better than you. No better than any man or woman.

JANE: Plain Thomas Cranmer, then - here's a question for you.

I have a heart that never beats

I have a home but never sleep

I can take a man's house

And build many others

And I love to play games

With my many brothers

I am a king among fools.

Who am I?

CRANMER: A king among fools . . . Your questions are too hard for me.

(JANE does something clever with a pack of cards, gets Cranmer to take a card – he is left holding a King).

JANE: There!

CRANMER: I still don't quite understand this riddle -

JANE: God be with you, doctor of divinity, and your simple understanding!

CRANMER: And also with you Jane the Fool.

JANE: Jane the Not-So-Fool!

Goodbye!

(She goes. Cranmer looks at his card)

CRANMER: A heart that never beats. . . a king among fools.

The King in a pack of cards!

I am a simple man indeed.

Ends with company singing 'Hey ho'

Curtain Call

END OF TUDOR SECTION.

The Mousetrap

Hamlet, Horatio and Marcellus arrive on the Gallery, and look out for a while.

HAMLET: The air bites shrewdly, it is very cold.

HORATIO: It is a nipping and an eager air.

HAMLET: What hour now?

HORATIO: I think it lacks of twelve.

MARCELLUS: No, it is struck

HORATIO: Indeed? I heard it not.

Eerie (violin?) sounds of GHOST arriving –

The GHOST, in armour, walks through the Great Hall

HORATIO: Look my lord, it comes.

HAMLET: Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

Be thou a spirit of health or a goblin damned,

Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,

Be thy intents wicked or charitable,

Thou com'st in such a questionable shape

That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,

King, father, royal Dane. O answer me!

The Ghost beckons Hamlet.

HORATIO: It beckons you to go away with it,

As if it some impartment did desire

To you alone.

MARCELLUS: Look with what courteous action

It wafts you to a more removed ground.

But do not go with it.

HORATIO: No, by no means.

HAMLET: It will not speak. Then will I follow it.

HORATIO: Do not, my lord.

HAMLET: Why what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee!

It wafts me still. – Go on, I'll follow thee!

MARCELLUS: You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET: Hold off your hand.

HORATIO: Be ruled, you shall not go

HAMLET: My fate cries out!

The Ghost beckons

HAMLET: Still am I called. Unhand me gentlemen.

By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me.

I say, away! - Go on, I'll follow thee.

Exit HAMLET from the gallery, running down the stairs to join Ghost in the Great Hall.

HORATIO: He waxes desperate with imagination.

MARCELLUS: Let's follow. 'Tis not fit thus to obey him.

HORATIO: To what issue will this come?

MARCELLUS: Something is rotten in the state of Denmark –

HORATIO: Heaven will direct it!

MARCELLUS: Nay, let's follow him -

Enter GHOST and HAMLET to the main hall

HAMLET: Where wilt thou lead me? Speak; I'll go no further.

GHOST : Mark me.

HAMLET: I will.

GHOST: My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

HAMLET: Alas, poor ghost!

GHOST: Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

HAMLET: Speak; I am bound to hear.

GHOST: So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET: What?

GHOST: I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love--

HAMLET: O God!

GHOST: Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET: Murder!

GHOST: Murder most foul, as in the best it is;

But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

HAMLET: Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift

As meditation or the thoughts of love,

May sweep to my revenge.

JAMES I and ANNE have entered by this point, and interrupt the rehearsal

JAMES: What's going on?

GHOST: Your majesty!

ANNE: Ah, a play rehearsal. Excellent. Where's Mr. Shakespeare?

The GHOST pulls off his helmet, to reveal WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE underneath.

He bows deeply – gesturing to the other actors to do the same

GHOST: Will Shakespeare, Your Majesties -

JAMES: Master Shakespeare! A thousand welcomes! And what piece do you give us?

SHAKESPEARE: *The tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, your Majesty. We are at rehearsal that this evening's performance should surpass all your most regal expectations!

ANNE: Charming, but why are you in this get up?

SHAKESPEARE: I'm playing Hamlet's father, the Ghost of Old Hamlet, who has been murdered.

ANNE: Murdered! The very word doth chill the blood.

JAMES: Let's see some more!

ANNE: Oh yes!

SHAKESPEARE: What – now?

JAMES: Yes, now, why not? – This taste has whetted my appetite!

SHAKESPEARE: We're still rehearsing – the entrances and exits are a little different from the Globe -

JAMES: I love to watch a rehearsal – they get it all wrong and make mistakes, and it’s very entertaining. More so than the actual performance, often.

Don’t mind us, we’ll just keep out of your way!

ANNE: On you go!

SHAKESPEARE: Very good, your Majesty! We’ll try Act 3 scene 2 – as it leads into the closet scene with Hamlet and Gertrude, so if we have everyone in place for the court – Claudius – Gertrude – Hamlet and Ophelia, yonder, on that bench - players down here in the playing space –

Player King? Where’s the Player King?

OPHELIA: Oh Master Thomas is sick -

SHAKES:!!If it’s not the pestilence then he should be here! Never mind. Horatio - master Nicholas - can you take the part for now?

HORATIO: Gladly master Shakespeare!

SHAKES: Thank ye - good! And we’ll take it from the end of the scene , from the line 'this mixture rank' that’s you Poisoner – and -

BOY POISONER: ‘Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected

With Hecat’s ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,

Thy natural magic and dire property

On wholesome life usurp immediately -

HAMLET: He poisons him i’th’garden for’s estate! You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago’s wife!

OPHELIA: The King rises!

HAMLET: What, frightened with false fire?

GERTRUDE: How fares my lord?

CLAUDIUS: Give o’er the play. Give me some light. Away! Lights! Give o’er the play –

The Play begins to break up in confusion -

CLAUDIUS: Give o’er the play!

JAMES: No – no, carry on! Do carry on with what you’re doing! We want to watch the rehearsal -

CLAUDIUS: Give o’er the play. Give me some light. Away! Lights! Give o’er the play –

JAMES: No, no - do go on – didn't you hear what I said? Don't let us interrupt you!

CLAUDIUS: Give o'er the play! Away!

JAMES: No – fellow – are you deaf? I said – go on!

CLAUDIUS: No, your Majesty, you see, I'm the King –

JAMES: Knave! Be careful . You o'er-reach yourself! *We are* the King. And I say go on -

CLAUDIUS: Yes, indeed your majesty, it's just that I am the King in the Play, and in the play King Claudius -

SHAKESPEARE: Well – let's go back a bit shall we? Perhaps I should explain, your majesty – forgive me! You see, in this scene, Majesties, King Claudius and Queen Gertrude and the entire court in fact is watching a play which young Hamlet has organised to test the King, to establish from his reaction whether he is in fact guilty of murder

ANNE: Gosh.

SHAKESPEARE: – so let's go back to the beginning - from Hamlet's line – 'They are coming to the play, I must be idle' –

(The Players all re-position themselves and prepare to do the scene again)

HAMLET: They are coming to the play. I must be idle. Get you a place.

MUSIC

A Danish march. A flourish of trumpets. Enter players playing the parts of Claudius, Gertrude, and Ophelia.

CLAUDIUS: How fares our cousin Hamlet?

HAMLET: Excellent, i'faith!

GERTRUDE: Come hither, my good Hamlet, sit by me.

HAMLET: No good mother, here's metal more attractive.

He joins Ophelia.

HAMLET: Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

OPHELIA: No, my lord.

HAMLET: I mean, my head upon your lap.

OPHELIA: Ay my lord.

HAMLET: Do you think I meant country matters?

OPHELIA: I think nothing, my lord.

HAMLET: No – thing? There’s a fair thought to lie between a maid’s legs.

OPHELIA: You are merry my lord.

HAMLET: Who – I?

OPHELIA: Ay, my lord.

HAMLET: What should a man do but be merry? For look you how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father’s died within’s two hours.

OPHELIA: Nay ‘tis twice two months, my lord.

HAMLET: So long? O heavens, die two months ago and not forgotten yet! Then there’s hope a great man’s memory may outlive his life half a year.

There is music and the PLAYERS act out the Dumb Show (showing the King and Queen in love; the King lying down, being poisoned; Poisoner takes his crown and pours poison in his ear; the Queen returns and finds the King dead, laments. The Poisoner comes in, woos her – she accepts his love.)

OPHELIA: What means this my lord?

HAMLET: Marry, this is miching malicho. That means mischief.

Enter Prologue (Poisoner Boy Player)

OPHELIA: Will he tell us what this show meant?

HAMLET: Ay, or any show that you show him

OPHELIA: You are naught, you are naught! I’ll mark the play.

PROLOGUE (BOY PLAYER POISONER): *For us and for our tragedy*

Here stooping to your clemency

We beg your hearing patiently.

HAMLET: Is this a Prologue, or the posy of a ring?

OPHELIA: ‘Tis brief my lord.

HAMLET: As woman’s love.

Enter Player King and Player Queen.

PLAYER KING: Full thirty times hath Phoebus cart gone round

Neptune’s salt wash and Tellus’ orb’d ground,

And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

PLAYER QUEEN: So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done.
But woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer, and from your former state,
That I distrust you.

PLAYER KING: Faith I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do.
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honoured, beloved and, haply, one as kind
For husband shalt thou –

PLAYER QUEEN: - O confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast.
In second husband let me be accurst;
None wed the second but who killed the first.

HAMLET: Wormwood, wormwood.

PLAYER QUEEN: The instances that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.
A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.

PLAYER KING: I do believe you think what now you speak;

But what we do determine oft we break.

This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange

That even our loves should with our fortunes change;

So think thou wilt no second husband wed;

But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

PLAYER QUEEN: Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light,

Sport and repose lock from day and night;

Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,

If once a widow, ever I be wife!

HAMLET: If she should break it now—

PLAYER KING: 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile.

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile

The tedious day with sleep.

He sleeps.

PLAYER QUEEN: Sleep rock thy brain

And never come mischance between us twain!

HAMLET: Madam, how like you this play?

GERTRUDE: The lady protests too much methinks

HAMLET: Oh but she'll keep her word

CLAUDIUS: Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in it?

HAMLET: No, no they do but jest, poison in jest. No offence in the world.

CLAUDIUS: What do you call the play?

HAMLET: *The Mousetrap*. - But what o'that? Your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not.

Enter the BOY PLAYER POISONER.

HAMLET: This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King.

OPHELIA: You are as good as a Chorus, my lord.

HAMLET: Begin, murderer. Pox, leave thy damnable faces and begin.

BOY POISONER: 'Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing,
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected
With Hecat's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

He pours the poison in the Player King's ears.

HAMLET: He poisons him i'th'garden for's estate! You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife!

Both CLAUDIUS and JAMES are getting distressed and upset by this point

OPHELIA: The King rises!

HAMLET: What, frightened with false fire?

QUEEN GERTRUDE: How fares my lord?

KING CLAUDIUS: Give o'er the play. Give me some light: away!

ALL: Lights, lights, lights!

Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO

HAMLET: Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalled play;

For some must watch, while some must sleep:

So runs the world away.

Would not this get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

HORATIO: Half a share.

HAMLET: O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

HORATIO: Very well, my lord.

HAMLET: Upon the talk of the poisoning?

HORATIO: I did very well note him.

HAMLET: Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the recorders!

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music!

Players return to sing and play

JAMES: Just a wee minute there – do I really understand this play correctly?

ANNE: How fares your Majesty?

JAMES: Stop right there – Stop the play! So do I understand from what I've seen so far, Master Shakespeare, that this *Hamlet* play of yours is about a widow who marries the man who killed her first husband?

SHAKESPEARE: Yes, that is an aspect of the plot –

JAMES: I see!

I too was the son of a dear father murdered! Did you think of that?

SHAKESPEARE: Ah.

JAMES: Just like your Hamlet here. It was rumoured that my mother's second husband killed my father.

SHAKESPEARE: Your Majesty... Thoughts of your own family tragedy in Scotland. could not have been further from my mind!

James begins to weep

ANNE: My Lord! What ist my lord?

JAMES: 'Tis most strange –

For as you played just now - thoughts of my poor father - and my mother- did rise most powerfully in my breast – my mother, that most delicate and beauteous lady! – and my father, killed so wrongfully –

I perceive now that their ghosts still walk in my heart

And I see in this troubled young Prince – an image of my younger self

HAMLET: Your Majesty, 'tis true – as Master Shakespeare has expressed it in this very piece – “the purpose of playing was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.”

ANNE: “To hold the mirror up to nature” Very good.

JAMES: The mirror. Yes.

ANNE: Your Majesty – we can command another play? Not *Hamlet* - something different?

One that will not trouble you?

JAMES: No.

I do not fear the mirror; I am no King Claudius.

No more interruptions - let's have *Hamlet* played tonight. Continue!

JAMES and ANNE exit.

PLAYER KING: Where do you want us to go from, Master Shakespeare?

SHAKESPEARE: Shall we practise the dance?

THEY DANCE – bow – exeunt! END SCENE

Georgian Scenes

PROLOGUE

Queen Anne is dead. Poor thing. Long live the King!
It's George of Hanover – oh let us sing
His praises from the rooftops – if we can –
An honest Blockhead – solid sort of man,
Not lazy really, just a little dull.
Speaks any English? Nein. Oh dear. Oh well.
Two mistresses? Good heavens. Where's the Queen?
Adultery! She's locked up – never seen!
Incarcerated! And the lover too?
They say George murdered him. It can't be true!
A king who killed a man sit on the throne?
(We blush to say it – such a thing's been known.)
And for the rest? Prince George and Caroline?
His temper's hot and hasty. She has a mind –
Likes science and philosophy, loves wits
And intellectuals – friends with Leibnitz!
But what about the Court? All change since Anne!
The new regime requires the new man -
Courtiers jostle for each appointment –
Get in there quick, avoid all disappointment!
So, raise your glasses – gaily toast and clink
To King and country! We're all Georgians now!
These stories all are true, and show you how
'Neath corset, wig and costume, all's the same -
Power, sex, persuasion – that's the game.

Audience are led into the Queen's Drawing Room

MARY W. MONTAGU: Let's turn the clock back these three hundred years –

And sailing down the Thames to friendly cheers

See Caroline and George, and all their court

Looking to make merry, dance and sport!

It's seventeen-sixteen – the summer sun

Shines down on Hampton Court and everyone

Flocks here for cards, for frizelation and for fun.

While George the King to Hanover has gone.

WALPOLE: And these fine ladies? Henrietta Howard -

Though married to a bully, she's no coward.

Bedchamber Woman to the Princess! Nice.

While Mary Cowper – eagle-eyed, precise –

Lady in Waiting – one rung just above –

Lord Townsend, too - in all the push and shove,

He gained a post of prominence and weight:

He's now the King's first Secretary of State

MARY: Now that the King, the cat, has gone away,

What games the naughty mice will want to play!

Scene One: Summer Fun (July 1716)

LADY MARY COWPER (31) comes in and start setting up card tables, and chairs – rearranging the room. There is a pack of cards and a chess set. Enter HENRIETTA HOWARD carrying a bowl of fruit.

COWPER: Is it to be cards, again, do you know, Mrs Howard? Or will the gentlemen prefer chess?

HOWARD: The Princess has suggested Mouche. Lady Cowper – may I ask -

COWPER: Will they be long?

HOWARD: No, they are just leaving the rose garden now, I believe. I ran ahead because our mistress is suffering from her cravings again, and wanted figs and clementines from the kitchen --

COWPER: Figs! But fruit of any kind from the six month onward can be very hazardous -

HOWARD: Yes – but the Prince says she is to have whatever she desires.

COWPER: And what does the Royal Physician say?

HOWARD: He agrees with the Prince.

COWPER: Of course he does.

HOWARD: So should I let her have them?

COWPER: Just one or two of each, and we will tell the Princess that that was all the kitchen could find.

HOWARD: I'll hide the rest.

Lady, Cowper, before the Princess comes, I wanted to ask you –

COWPER: What is it, Mrs Howard?

HOWARD: Just now, in the Maze – the Prince of Wales was most – free with me –

COWPER: In what way?

HOWARD: We were having a race. Just a foolish diversion. All the ladies had to start in the centre of the Maze and try to get out while all the gentlemen had to start at the outside and try to make their way in. And of course the tangle and the muddle that ensued – and the catching – and – well, it was most wicked.

COWPER: Oh indeed? What wickedness?

HOWARD: The Gentlemen kept 'surprising' us in hidden little corners of the Maze.

I only managed to avoid Lord Townshend's fumbings by a whisker, by darting around two corners in quick succession.

COPWER: Oh yes?

HOWARD: But as for the Prince, I'm afraid I could not avoid him at all. He caught me in a dead end, and offered such freedoms I would blush had the Princess seen. Though fortunately her delicate condition prevented her taking part.

Lady Cowper, what should I do? I would not offend the Prince by rejecting him.

COWPER: Prince George is not very subtle in his advances. Take care our mistress does not become insulted.

Or an opportunity could become a liability.

HOWARD: An opportunity?

COWPER: If conducted discreetly, a royal affair could be -.

HOWARD: But I am married!

COWPER: And what would Mr Howard make of it?

HOWARD: He'd probably see it as a promotion. He would turn it to his advantage, I'm sure.

COWPER: So that's no obstacle.

HOWARD: But what of Princess Caroline? She would surely -

COWPER: Princess Caroline knows that there will always be a royal mistress.

HOWARD: Do you not sometimes resent these hours we must spend away from our own little ones, Lady Cowper?

COWPER: A little. But doesn't the knowledge of royal favour, and security bring some comfort?

HOWARD: Security? I know no security. There have been days in our dingy little lodging in town that I have felt quite weak with hunger.

Charles lives so beyond our means. Whatever we have earned he drizzles away in the gaming house – or worse. Those women of ill repute have pocketed any pitiful leftovers that my husband has managed not to drink or lose at the table.

COWPER: My poor dear Mrs H. . . All the more reason to play your cards right in this matter of the Prince.

(Enter Prince George, Princess Caroline and Lord Townshend.)

GEORGE: Bravo! Lady Cowper has prepared all. Shall we play Townshend?

TOWNSHEND: Certainly let's play! Though my losses this week to the fair sex have been somewhat shocking, I live in perpetual hope that I shall repair my fortunes with every game. Do you play, Mrs Howard? And Lady Cowper?

CAROLINE: Ah but you must, naturlich! - don't leave me at the mercy of these beasts!

COWPER: Of course, madam!

CAROLINE: And where is my fruit?

HOWARD: Here, madam.

CAROLINE: Is that all?

HOWARD: It was all the kitchen had, Ma'am.

CAROLINE: (Swears in German)Oh - I am *so durstig* –

GEORGE: 'Parched' one can say -

HOWARD: Shall I bring you water, Madam?

CAROLINE: Heavens, no, too much *wasser* and I shall burst! Let us start this game or we will never finish!

(They begin to play cards.)

TOWNSHEND: Am I the Tallier?

PRINCE; You are always the Tallier, Townshend.

(Townshend deals.)

CAROLINE: He likes to get his little handies on the money. Don't you, my lord?

GEORGE: Such a pity about the Pavilion. . . it was by far the most attractive place to play.

CAROLINE: Ja, but it would be very unkind of us to play there now – my poor lady Buckenburgh would think it very - unfreundlich – after her accident

GEORGE: Ah the Countess! She should have looked where she was going!

CAROLINE: Her ankle is quite aus den Fugen - and so swollen – I was really very frightened for her -

TOWNSHEND: What happened?

GEORGE: She was celebrating after her victory at the table!

CAROLINE: We had been playing bowls on the green, and then went for our normal game in the Pavilion –

GEORGE: And the Countess had the most successful night – how much did she take from you, Lady Cowper?

COWPER: Eight guineas, your Highness.

CAROLINE: She was *uberglücklich* ?? –

TOWNSHEND: Overjoyed?

CAROLINE: Ah so – und she was drinking a few glasses -

GEORGE: - Calling for more and more sweet Malmsey –

COWPER: That's her favorite tippel –

CAROLINE: But then at about half-past ten, was it, my lady Cowper? And the rain came down very suddenly and we all hurried back across the bowling green – It was very - schlupflig – how do you say? So –

COWPER: Slippery, madam?

CAROLINE: Ach so, ja, sehr 'slippery' – my foots was nearly – schloops!! many times but then – oh, Lady Cowper, you tell the story, mein Englisch – I am too tired -

COWPER: The rain came lashing down and there was a crack of lightning and then some thunder - and all of a sudden there's a terrible squawk and the Countess has gone right over, her poor legs waving in the air –

MRS HOWARD: - almost comical –

COWPER: - if it hadn't been so serious –

MRS HOWARD: The Physician said nothing was broken but the ankle was dislocated and getting it back in was a horrible thing –

CAROLINE: The poor Countess screamed and screamed und dann - we heard the -
(MAKES NOISE OF A CLICK) -

MRS HOWARD: Shocking!

TOWNSHEND: My poor dear Mrs Howard – are you faint?

MRS HOWARD: Oh it was horrible!

CAROLINE: And now – Lord Townshend - she is confined to her chair in her Chamber and we have vowed not to play in the Pavilion until she is well.

GEORGE: Very noble, but it's the most – what can one say? The most jolly place to play.

Don't you find Mrs Howard?

HOWARD: Exceeding jolly, your Highness.

GEORGE: There's a girl.

TOWNSHEND: Isn't she!

CAROLINE: George– I would have thought you might have paid a little more attention to my health, George. That slippery wet grass - imagine if it had been me instead of poor Countess Buckenburgh,

GEORGE: Of course dear. But then this is number five, liebchen!

We have an heir and several to spare as the English say.

CAROLINE: No boys to spare, sir.

GEORGE: But young Frederick is quite “hale und hearty” as you say.

CAROLINE: Is he? How do we know?

GEORGE: You know he is getting on very well in Hanover. His tutors speak highly of his progress.

CAROLINE: His tutors are not his mother. Can we not bring him to England soon? He is our son; he needs his family.

GEORGE: Frederick has family. He is spending the summer with his grandfather.

CAROLINE: His grandfather! The King! With respect, my lord, the King is no companion for a young boy. He has no time for children. Nor for adults neither, he has no wit, no conversation, no interest in anybody whatsoever – unless they are women he can get into the bed. Then he has some use for them!

GEORGE: Madam. Please restrain yourself.

CAROLINE: May I not speak my mind?

GEORGE: You know we may not, madam. Every word we speak or write may be leaked back to King George. My father has his spies everywhere.

CAROLINE: Ja, Ich weisse - I’m convinced my letters have been tampered with.

That one I showed you today – I could see that the edges had come loose as if they had been picked at.

GEORGE: Also [German for ‘so’] - be careful what you put in your letters and possibly lower your voice a little?

They will hear us in the garden!

CAROLINE: The windows are closed sir, I doubt it very much.

GEORGE: Gut, aber if they were open I might have a mind to jump out with all this complaining.

CAROLINE: Please, sir, don't let me stand in your way. Bitte! (go ahead!) Ich wiess nicht warum Sie müssen in every way set out to upset me! Frau Howard, wo is die Obst - und die Feige –

HOWARD: The figs, madam? This is all the kitchen could find, I'm afraid.

CAROLINE: Damn and blast, as the Englisch say!

GEORGE: My wife is always like this when she is- schwanger –

COWPER: Expecting.

GEORGE: Exactly.

(Pause)

TOWNSHEND: Rather a jolly game in the Maze tonight, didn't you think, Mrs H?

HOWARD: Oh indeed! The Maze is an inexhaustible source of fun. I don't know what we should do without it!

TOWNSHEND: Have you ever become completely lost in it?

HOWARD: Frequently! I find it's easy to get in. But getting out is much more difficult.

TOWNSHEND: That's true of so many things in life.

HOWARD: Have you, Lady Cowper? Ever got lost in the Maze?

COWPER: No, never. But then, one of the under-gardeners told me the secret.

TOWNSHEND: Do tell. I adore secrets.

HOWARD: Oh, do, Lady Cowper!

COWPER: I promised not to. And in any case it would spoil your fun.

TOWNSHEND: That's true! And I like to get lost occasionally. Don't you think, Mrs H?

GEORGE: How is your hand, Mrs Howard?

HOWARD: 'Tis a fair hand. . .

TOWNSHEND: It certainly is.

GEORGE: And very bold play, madam.

HOWARD: I am not averse to a little risk, my lord.

TOWNSHEND: Glad to hear it.

(Pause)

CAROLINE: How is your husband these days, Mrs Howard?

HOWARD: Very much his normal self, madam. He attends the King in Hanover.

CAROLINE: And your son, der liebe Henry? What age is he now?

HOWARD: Nine, madam. . I haven't seen him for some time. But I am assured that he is well.

CAROLINE: Ah, the pains of motherhood.

HOWARD: Indeed, madam.

TOWNSHEND: Is that your bet, Lady Cowper?

COWPER: It is my lord

TOWNSHEND: You play very low, madam.

COWPER: With four children, sir, I hope nobody would think ill of me for desiring to save my money, when I do nothing that is mean, dishonest or dishonorable.

TOWNSHEND: Very prettily spoke, madam.

CAROLINE: I commend you, Lady Cowper. Surely the principal Duty of a Woman is to take care of her children. When she is permitted to.

(*She rises.*)

GEORGE: Go you to bed, madam?

CAROLINE: Ich bin mude.

GEORGE: Good night then.

CAROLINE: Would you care to accompany me, sir?

GEORGE: I am not yet sleepy.

CAROLINE: Might I request, sir, that you give me your arm on the stairs up to my chamber? I don't ask you to stay.

GEORGE: Ah so.

Gute nacht.

CAROLINE: Good night.

And bring the fruit bowl, if you please, Mrs Howard, in case I wake hungry.

(Exit Caroline and George. Mrs HOWARD follows at a respectful distance.

Lady COWPER and LORD TOWNSHEND are left to tidy away the cards.)

TOWNSHEND: Most delightful.

COWPER: What is?

TOWNSHEND: This whole Hampton Court summer. I must say, Kingston suits me very well. The air is so fresh out of town, no?

COWPER: Yes my lord.

TOWNSHEND: Oh the chess set. Would that Walpole were here! I quite fancy a game. Feeling in the mood.

COWPER: I'll play.

TOWNSHEND: Really?

COWPER: Black or white?

TOWNSHEND: I didn't know you played.

COWPER: I play when it suits me. Black or white?

TOWNSHEND: Ladies first.

(She turns the chess board so she plays black).

TOWNSHEND: White, then.

Very well. Let's see what you're made of.

(He moves first. They play chess throughout the following).

e4 e5

COWPER: I would have a care though.

TOWNSHEND: I am sorry?

COWPER: You're not going to further your interest by insulting the Princess.

TOWNSHEND: **f4** How have I insulted the Princess?

COWPER: By paying these attentions to Mrs Howard under her nose. **d5**

TOWNSHEND: I am sure I cannot understand you Lady Cowper. **g4**

COWPER: Not to mention the fact that your attentions to Mrs Howard do not please his Highness either.

Qh4+ Check.

TOWNSHEND: What?

COWPER: Lord Townshend. Let me speak in plain language then. It does not serve your interest nor your Advantage to play these wanton little games with Howard.

TOWNSHEND: She's a bed-chamber woman. What are these people for?

COWPER: I thought you a man of more delicacy, sir.

TOWNSHEND: Come, Lady Cowper – a jest! So what if I offer Mrs Howard a little thoughtful gallantry? **Ke2**

COWPER: Your strategy is very clear. You think – quite rightly – that as a Woman of the Bedchamber Mrs Howard is most intimate with the Princess, and therefore is privy to many of her secrets. And if you have access to the Princess and her secrets - **exf4**

You have access to the Prince's secrets too.

TOWNSHEND: Tush tush – very pleasant poppycock – we men are simply made for the hunt. **d3**

COWPER: If you can mould the views of the bed-chamber woman, you may mould the views of the Prince. **Bc5**

TOWNSHEND: You should have been born a man Lady Cowper, you are quite the politician. **Ne3**

COWPER: I see what I see.

TOWNSHEND: What do you see?

COWPER: The Prince of Wales has a natural honesty of temper that lays all his motivations bare. I am surprised you cannot see that your 'gallant' conduct towards Mrs Howard irks the Prince of Wales as well as his wife.

TOWNSHEND: What are you insinuating?

COWPER: I don't insinuate. I simply warn you, as a friend and colleague. Stay at a little distance where Mrs H is concerned, particularly when the Prince of Wales is watching.

Even if you have little concern for your honour and reputation. . . and those of your wife. . . It doesn't serve your interest, sir. Despite what you think. It is not to your Advantage.

TOWNSHEND: I see.

COWPER: I thought you would. **Qf2#**

Checkmate.

COWPER: Good night Lord Townshend

(She leaves) (Lord Townshend pockets the money left on the card table – and leaves.)

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU:

The glorious summer of 1716 couldn't last forever. King George returned from Hanover, and the tension between him and his son soon exploded into a bitter quarrel over who should be the godparents to George and Caroline's new baby.

But that's the subject of the next part of the story

It's in the Queen's Gallery – this way!

(Lady Mary WM leads audience to the room for the Christening scene.)

WALPOLE: Among King George's favourite courtiers was Mohammed – Keeper of the King's Closet. Mohammed was the son of a General in the Turkish Ottoman army. Captured as a child by a Hanoverian officer, Mohammed had worked his way into a position of intimacy and favour with the King.

The closeness and trust between Mohammed and the King was in stark contrast to his relationship with his son, Prince George – who was still estranged from his father by the terrible dispute over the christening of his new-born son. [1 extra line about being separated from children]

Scene Two: The Christening Row (1717)

Prince GEORGE is waiting. MEHEMET enters and observes him.

GEORGE: Well?

 What does my father say?

MEHEMET: His Majesty King George cannot see you, sir.

GEORGE: He 'cannot'?

 What does that mean?

 He cannot'?

 Is he busy? Or indisposed? In Privy Council? At his close-stool?

 Why 'cannot' the King see me?

 Are those his very words? He 'cannot' see me?

MEHEMET: He does not wish to see you, sir.

GEORGE: He "cannot" see me, or he "does not wish" to see me?

Which is it?

MEHEMET: Both.

(George has a moment)

GEORGE: I have stopped waiting for my father to show me kindness. I thought for the sake of my wife he might agree to negotiate.

The princess Caroline is in very great distress.

Could you please return to His Majesty the King and tell him that his son the Prince of Wales most humbly requests the honour of an audience with him?

I'll wait, if necessary.

Go and tell him.

MEHEMET: I have done so and he has answered, sir.

GEORGE: Listen to me. Our drawing-room is very sought after. We have loyal followers. One day my father will die, and I will be king. I just have to live long enough.

This can't go on. Caroline is a mother. She has only been delivered of the baby a few weeks.

Mohammed.

We can't continue like this.

MEHEMET: The King regrets -

GEORGE: The king regrets – my arse!

I need to see the King.

We need to find a way –

We need our children back.

What is his reason for refusing to see me?

This is ridiculous.

MEHEMET: Sir, I really can do nothing.

GEORGE: This whole thing is a total nonsense, the King simply doesn't understand.

The Duke of Newcastle at the King's command attended the christening of our son.

He's there, against my wishes, eyeing my wife's breasts. So I take the Duke to one side and tell his stupid English insinuating face that godfather or no, if he comes near my wife or my child again I will have something to say to him – I will seek him out and give him a tongue-lashing in the language of his choosing!

MEHEMET: You shook your fist in his face.

GEROGE: I did not.

MEHEMET: You were seen to shake your fist.

GEORGE: I may have shaken my fist - I was angry and what I said to him was 'I vill Fint (*find*) you!'

At which the Duke goes as white as a plate and rushes squawking from the room. . .

So that's that.

The next day we are at cards and a fellow comes in from Kensington Palace to say the King is furious to hear that I have challenged the Duke of Newcastle to a duel!

A duel? I am totally nonplussed!

We are told to pack up in disgrace and leave St James's Palace –

But there was no duel threatened! I said nothing to him of a duel - I said I will FIND you and when I FIND you I will – I don't know! - SHOUT at you...! Shake my fist at you!

Finden! Suchen! Not fight!

Probably needs his stupid stuffed English ears syringed! I'm German, I have an accent when I talk in English– well, I'll take a tutor if I have to!

But to banish us and take our children away –

It's madness!

Do you see, Mohammed?

Do you see what I am up against?

Please – please – you can help me! He loves you – he trusts you -

(Mehemet shrugs and turns away.)

GEORGE: You -

How dare you! How dare you turn your back on me!

How dare you insult me! I am the Prince of Wales!

MEHEMET: I do not insult you sir. I am simply the messenger, and my job is to deliver the message.

GEORGE: You – you Mohammed - you think because you tend the King at his chamber-pot and wash his soiled night-shirts that that makes you his chosen advisor? You are a chamber-maid.

MEHEMET: I am his Majesty's loyal servant and I do his bidding. Which is to return the answer that no negotiation is possible with you today. Sir.

And my name is not Mohammed. It is Georg! Georg Ernst Maximilian von Konigstreu.

GEORGE: Konigstreu?

MOHAMMED: I chose it myself. An honour for services rendered.

GEORGE: *(George laughs, nearly cries, shouts, recovers)* So you've actually taken his name? Georg Ernst Maximilian True-to-the-King.

You are a queer fish, Mohammed.

Georg, I mean. How on earth do you tolerate him?

His filthy lascivious ways! His pomposity! His cruelty!

Not even my mother could bear him!

Von Konigstreu!

I don't know how you stand it.

MOHAMMED: Stand what?

GEORGE: This pretence at being German.

MOHAMMED: I imagine the same way that you stand it.

GEORGE: Stand what?

MOHAMMED: This pretence at being English. We have both had to become something new, no?

You know, I was raised in a palace too? But my mine was a palace of white stone – so bright that it hurt to look at it when the sun shone. And the sky was blue every day, and the sea filled the air with salt. And in that palace I washed no nightshirts – there were people who washed mine. The sky of Greece, the sea – I have never returned. But I think of it every day – and it's not even my homeland.

You would believe all their stories, the Greeks - that gods and goddesses lived there, and fought, and loved, and fell from the sky with their wings on fire. You would die for that place.

And of course my father did. He was a pasha in the Ottoman army and was killed during the siege. And my brothers – and my sister. They took my mother – I heard her screams but I don't know –

She might still be alive.

The day it happened - there was a captain, with a bayonet, he came into my room so I hid beneath the bed and I saw just his polished boots go past and towards the door but when I heard my sister calling from the other room, I couldn't stay quiet anymore, and he dragged me out -

I just remember I was screaming Papa – papa – no – no -

He should have killed me, but he didn't and he threw me in in a cart with the other prisoners –

Then they rattled my bones all the way across Europe - I just hid and made myself as small as possible and ate any scraps I could find – Until we were in a city and there was strange sweet piercing music, and the people smelt so strange, and their clothes were so comical, like clowns – and a woman with a painted face and waxen hair leaned down to me and said, 'Wie gefällt Ihnen Vienna?'

They brought me into their temple and put water on my head and said I belonged to Jesus now, so I served for the next ten years in the captain's house, before I moved to Hanover. I was a very good servant to my captain and his painted wife. I did extremely well. When I came of age he said I could ask him anything I wished, and I asked him why he hadn't killed me. He said, 'Because you called me Papa.'

I didn't tell him he was mistaken in his arrogance – I never called him papa. I always knew who my true father was, and that they had killed him.

GEORGE: A sorry tale to match my own.

MEHEMET: We survive.

GEORGE: We do.

MEHEMET: I can reassure you, sir, that your children are all perfectly well.

GEORGE: How is the baby?

MEHEMET: He is well cared for. The princesses Anne and Amelia want for nothing.

GEROGE: How is their English coming along?

MEHEMET: They speak it like the natives. The princesses are in perfect health.

GEROGE: What of our little Caroline?

Does she miss her mother? Does she speak of me?

MEHEMET: She does. She wonders why you don't come to visit more often.

GEORGE: The King forbids us. Will you tell her that, please.

That we long to visit – that we petition –

I would be loved by my children.

I would have my children love their father.

MEHEMET: I will tell them.

GEORGE: Thank you.

(As Mehemet walks away, music starts. Curtain Call)

WALPOLE: Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Our next part of the story takes place in the Cartoon Gallery in 5 minutes. See you there.

(Audience are led into the Cartoon Gallery)

HENRIETTA HOWARD: Lady Mary Wortley Montague – courtier and renowned society beauty – survives smallpox. ..

LADY MARY WM: But I am so disfigured by scarring that many assume my career at court is over.

So the next year in 1716, I travel to Turkey with my husband the Ambassador and my small children. While in Constantinople I saw local women 'inoculating' whole families with a pin-prick of smallpox pus. I waste no time and have our son inoculated.

Eventually we return to London and I have a little girl. I decide to have her inoculated too.

It's 1721, and there has been an unusually warm winter. Smallpox rages like a destroying angel and Princess Caroline is desperate to inoculate the royal children.

Scene Three: Smallpox

1722. PRINCESS CAROLINE is waiting.

Enter LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU. She is announced by LADY HOWARD

LADY HOWARD: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, your Highness!

CAROLINE: Ah, Lady Mary -

MARY: Your Highness –

CAROLINE: So good of you to come so quickly – the Royal Physician is attending a patient in Hampstead but he has agreed to meet me this morning as a matter of urgency, and I suddenly felt that I don't wish to tackle him alone –

MARY: You can depend on my support, Madam.

CAROLINE: Well, after what I saw at your house, Lady Mary, there can be none so persuasive in this matter as yourself. Coffee?

MARY: Most definitely.

(MRS HOWARD exits to get coffee)

CAROLINE: Gott im Himmel, I have no words, my lady – I am sprachlos – about your little one. Es ist ein Wunder!

How is she today?

MARY: Better than ever! There are one or two small pocks left, but they are falling away quite easily –

CAROLINE: Leaving no scar?

MARY: None at all! She is perfectly well. She has taken all her dolls out of the doll's-house and has put them into beds. She is the doctor and has inoculated all of them! I heard her saying, "Now Miss Millicent, you will never be sick again!"

CAROLINE: And the fever is gone?

MARY: Entirely! That scarcely lasted a day – a day and a half, perhaps?

CAROLINE: Extraordinary –

MARY: It was the same with my son in Constantinople,. Seven or eight days after the engrafting there is a slight fever, , then the pocks come up,– some may flow a little but that only eases the passing of the fever. . . and then a few days later they come away and the patient is entirely well.

CAROLINE: I am of your opinion, Lady Mary – but Doctor Sloane will need some persuading, I fear, before he will recommend it to the King and his Royal Highness for the royal children –

MARY: What more persuasion does he need? We had three learned physicians of the college, all Gentlemen of the Honour, as Dr Maitland insisted – and of the three who observed, two have already demanded that Maitland engraft their own children.

CAROLINE: Indeed without further proofs –

CAROLINE: it's extraordinary how little proof you need when you have already lost two sons to smallpox! James Keith, you know, with the practise near Covent Garden – has written to Dr Maitland to lose no time and engraft the only son he has left – little Peter who is but four years old.

CAROLINE: Oh it's wretched. I'm desperate to have the children inoculated. Thank God our dear Anne was spared to us, but it could so easily have been different. And the scarring is a daily reminder – as you know only too well, madam. But the King and the Prince of Wales will not give permission until we have official endorsement from the Royal College - that's the only proof they will recognise!

MARY: I blame the physicians madam! How will they make a living if there is no more smallpox? They will have to find some other disease to give us.

CAROLINE: Doctor Sloane is a rational man. But it's easy to find objection to discoveries made by women.

MARY: And discoveries made by women in Turkey -! Even worse!

CAROLINE: Did you see what Reverend Wagstaffe published yesterday?

George thrust it beneath my face at breakfast this morning and demanded that I read it'who could place their trust in a medical procedure cry'd up by non-physicians, originating from a country inferior in its climate and the capacity of the inhabitants –

MARY: I could tell the Reverend Wagstaffe that the climate of Turkey is infinitely preferable to the climate of England – the wretched damp of this kingdom gets into my bones

CAROLINE: 'This inoculation must be, one can only surmise, a vehicle for Poison intended as an artful means of de-populating the Country - introduced by a sanguine Traveller from Turkey, a Lady clearly affected by an overexposure to the Turkish sun.'

MARY: I shall take that as a compliment!

CAROLINE: the sad fact is, Lady Mary, that if we are to have our way we must get rid of all these feminine, and Turkish associations. It must look as though the King, the Prince and the physicians have come up with it all themselves . . . We need the Royal College on our side, and that's why I've asked Sir Hans here today. I have an idea – a scheme that I think Sir Hans Sloane will be interested in. If we can stage a proper experiment - a public experiment

observed and written about in as many medical journals as they wish – then I think we may entice Sir Hans, to our side. I have this most wunderbar idea –

LADY HOWARD announces

LADY HOWARD: Your Highness - Sir Hans Sloane!

CAROLINE: Sir Hans!

SLOANE: Your Royal Highness!

CAROLINE: So good of you to come at short notice!

SLOANE: My pleasure, entirely!

I trust you are well, madam?

CAROLINE: Very well indeed.

SLOANE: And the children?

CAROLINE: Yes, they are all perfectly well, for the moment, thank goodness. Doctor Sloane, do you know Lady Mary, the wife of the Ambassador to Constantinople?

SLOANE: Wortley Montagu? Yes of course – Lady Mary, your servant –

MARY: And yours, sir.

SLOANE: Of course I have heard tell of your adventures in Turkey. London must be rather insipid after the excitement of the Orient?

MARY: Oh there is far too much scandal for it ever to be dull, Dr Sloane!

SLOANE: You ladies love your scandal!

CAROLINE: Indeed we do! But there is another matter, Sir Hans, that we would like to discuss with you.

SLOANE: Women's troubles?

CAROLINE: In a way. Dr Sloane, I want to have the royal children engrafted for the smallpox.

SLOANE: Ah. Madam, this is a delicate area, we are speaking of the future heirs to the throne and the King will never give his permission for such a procedure until there is –

CAROLINE: Until there is what?

SLOANE: Adequate proof of the efficacy and safety of the procedure. The King would insist there to be official validation by the Royal College of Physicians –

MARY: Could we not seek official validation from the Royal College, through you, Dr Sloan, as you are its President?

SLOANE: Hypothetically, yes – but given that all we have at the moment is hearsay and what some would call, women’s gossip, persuading the Royal College will not be so straightforward.

MARY: Have you seen my little Mary, Dr Sloane, who was engrafted within this fortnight, and is now in the pink of health?

SLOANE: I have heard all the stories madam, how she plays prettily about the room, cheerfully displaying her one or two little pocks to the admiring Crowd –

MARY: Yes and she has been in contact with sufferers of the disease and has come to no harm whatsoever.

SLOANE: I had heard as much, yes.

MARY: And have you also heard how two of **your** physicians from the Royal College came in to observe the procedure, and that they have now urgently requested Dr Maitland to inoculate their own children?

SLOANE: No, I had not heard this –

MARY: I can assure you it’s true!

SLOANE: Whatever private arrangements these men may have made for their families, that is entirely their business. But no physician of the College has publicly made any recommendation –

MARY: Of course they are too nervous to go public! Lest they be tarred with the brush of Turkish - or even worse, female, quackery – I’m sure that’s it, wouldn’t you say, Dr Sloane?

SLOANE: I won’t deny that the associations around inoculation – do your cause no favours.

CAROLINE: Then let us change the associations! I have a proposal for you, Doctor Sloane. Why don’t we – or rather, you, under the auspices of the Royal College – carry out a very rational and empirical experiment, quite publicly observed and regulated by as many eminent Physicians as you wish – under the most modern, rigorous and scientific conditions possible – to test the efficacy and the safety of inoculation?

SLOANE: What, on a living person? It’s quite impossible madam. What person of repute would offer themselves to go on public display to be poked and prodded like a corpse on the dissection table?

Besides, one person hardly makes a convincing case – we would need –

CAROLINE: Six – what about six persons? Three of either sex?

SLOANE: That would be closer to acceptable.

But, as I say, where would you find six such publicly-spirited men and women?

CAROLINE: What about at Newgate Prison, Sir Hans? Amongst those condemned convicts awaiting execution!

Where else do we go for medical experiments? And why not in this case? We find six adult persons who are condemned to hang, three male and three female, whose lives are already in the hands of the state. We offer them the chance to be inoculated. We observe the results.

If they die - they die.

MARY: And if they live? Which they will.

CAROLINE: We grant them a royal pardon for their services and release them.

What do you say?

SLOANE: We would need approval from his Majesty King George.

CAROLINE: Of course.

SLOANE: And then from both the Attorney General and the Solicitor General.

CAROLINE: Yes. But if you, as Royal Physician, were in favour of the proposal - if it even came from you? - do you think they would be persuaded?

SLOANE: Without flattering myself – yes, I think so.

CAROLINE: And we will have the experiment rigorously documented by a committee of your most eminent physicians - ja?

SLOANE: I shall see to it personally, your Highness.

CAROLINE: And then surely, the King will permit us to inoculate our children!

SLOANE: Madam, I would just urge you restraint. In this enlightened age, of course, we are tempted towards ever more ambitious medical practices – but to risk the life of an heir to the throne would not just be irrational but immoral –

MARY: Doctor Sloane, do you think I would have risked the lives of my children? Had I not sincerely believed that the greater risk was in denying them inoculation?

SLOANE: A mother may take the risks she thinks appropriate with her children. But as Royal Physician with responsibility for the health of the royal family, I must act on something more than maternal instinct. Neither can we rely on the magic of the Orient or on old wives' tales! We need proper medical evidence.

CAROLINE: Which is what we shall have if we carry out this Newgate experiment, Doctor! And for your agreement and support in this matter, I am truly, truly grateful.

Ach so! Can I rely on you, Sir Hans, to take the next steps with all due alacrity?

SLOANE: I shall bring the matter to the attention of the King and the Privy Council immediately, and seek all requisite permissions.

CAROLINE: Thank you, Sir Hans.

Then I believe that is all.

SLOANE: Your Highness -

(He goes to go)

CAROLINE: Doctor Sloane! (I am just curious...)

Will you inoculate your children?

SLOANE: My daughters are grown and the matter is no longer my concern.

MARY: But will you inoculate your grandchildren?

SLOANE: I already have.

(He leaves)

MRS HOWARD:

The Newgate experiment, driven forward by Princess Caroline, was a resounding success and the lives of all six convicts were saved – both from smallpox and the noose!

Princess Caroline had the little Princesses inoculated – at her own risk – in April 1722. (Doctor Sloane agreed that while he could not officially advise her to inoculate – he could not advise her NOT to inoculate – and so she went ahead.)

In 1980 the World Health Organization declared that smallpox had been eradicated.

Princess Caroline and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu were crucial to the fight against smallpox, although as women their role has been significantly undervalued and overlooked.

SOMETHING HERE TO GET US TO QUEEN'S GUARD CHAMBER

Once audience in place, Alice begins playing her violin

TOBY as BOY:

To be or not to be that is the question –

Whether tis nobler in the mind –

Et cetera et cetera. There's Colley Cibber -

Actor, poet, memoirist – no fibber!

He's newly come off stage – he'll want his water

And that's my cue – excuse me, but I oughta -

Scene Four: Harry the Eighth at Hampton Court.

CIBBER has just come off-stage from performing Shakespeare's KING HENRY THE EIGHTH in the Great Hall in front of George I.

CIBBER: Water! My dear boy, some water, I am quite parched!

BOY: Yes sir.

CIBBER: I don't know what it is - perhaps 'tis the dust in the tapestries, but at Hampton court I am always gasping after a performance! A most drying Atmosphere!

My Wolsey was a little coarse-grained today, was he not? Too much the butcher's cur from Ipswich, I fear . . . The Cardinal should always be – more fox than wolf, as they say, and today, I veered a little too much toward the wolf.

Did you think?

BOY: I don't really know sir -

CIBBER: Water again, I pray!

BOY: Here we are sir

CIBBER: Oh Lord – and did you see? – the wretched Cardinal's hat came loose in act four and I had to hold it upon my head with my hand for the entirety of the scene – all because that slut of a wardrobe girl did not fix in the pin as I had directed her to do!

Water – come -

Thank ye kindly –

I suppose it could have gone worse -

How was I, do you think?

BOY: Beg pardon, Mister Cibber?

CIBBER: How was my performance tonight?

BOY: Most wondrous loud, sir.

CIBBER: Was I? Did I boom?

BOY: Oh yes sir.

CIBBER: In a good way?

BOY: In a very good way, sir.

CIBBER: The wretched echo! One would never think the Great Hall was designed for plays - it has such a distorting resonance, the lines can lose all meaning -

Let fly a fart and it's as though a thunderstorm has commenced!

What did His Majesty think? Did he look pleased?

BOY: He looked a little in pain at one point but I believe it was the indigestion sir. They had a very hearty meal before the performance.

CIBBER: Can you help me with this Button, boy?

BOY: I think the Shakespeare is terrible hard for the Germans sir.

CIBBER: Then why in God's name did King George commission it? He could have had some pantomime nonsense full of firecrackers and acrobatics!

But no, he most particularly requested Hamlet and Henry the Eighth – then he sits there rather boggling at us with those blue eyes of his bulging and a look on his face as though he were trying to pass a puffball.

Though – while I would not flatter myself - I rather thought he was somewhat moved during the Prologue – did you not think, boy?

BOY: What bit was that sir?

CIBBER: The Prologue, boy – when I come on in my first gown – I wear the peacock blue with the ostrich feather, and I give those rousing lines of *Harry the Eighth's* Prologue:

....*'think ye see*

*The very persons of our noble story
As they were living; think you see them great,
And follow'd with the general throng and sweat
Of thousand friends; then in a moment, see
How soon this mightiness meets misery'*

I am sure I saw a tear, and heard a sob of wry recognition escape his lips, no?

BOY: I think that was a belch, sir. As I say 'twas a heavy supper.

CIBBER: Really? I thought he was reflecting with mingled humour and sorrow on how unhappy is the head that wears the crown.

BOY: More the pilchard mousse repeating on him, I believe sir.

CIBBER: Oh dear.

BOY: Don't be cast down, sir. There was them as liked the play mightily. Not a lady in the house who didn't shed many a tear when that poor Queen Katherine of Aragon got shown the door by King Henry. 'To think they treated a queen and a lady in that manner! And here at Hampton Court an' all. . . no wonder her ghost do fly about the place, they say. Poor lady all the way from Spain and far from her homeland' Oh, they were proper cut up about it.

CIBBER: Ah boy – thou hast gladdened my heart! (And I shall tell Mistress Oldfield. She is very fine in that Character, for all she insists she is still young enough to play Anne Bullen.) One's public, you see, one's public! To move a simple soul to honest tears is worth all the hollow compliments of courtiers!

Though a few more compliments would not go amiss, it must be said.

And the applause was very thin I thought. Did not you?

Though one must remember we are at Court and that is very different from the common Theatre.

(Help me with these damnable Boots, boy, would you?)

You see, boy, in the common Theatre – at Drury Lane and such like –

Have you been to a play at Drury Lane?

BOY: Yes sir. Once or twice, sir.

CIBBER: Bene, bene. You see dear boy, at the common theatre, such as Drury Lane - the Guests – by which I mean the Audience - are at home

But here at Court, they are under the restraint of a Circle where Laughter or Applause, rais'd higher than a Whisper, would be star'd at.

The damnable thing is though - that this Coldness at Court can have a very melancholy Effect on the impatient Vanity of some of our Actors, who can become inconsolable when some of their flashiest Endeavours pass – so they feel - unheeded.

And thence the Actor sinks into a Flatness in his Performance – And thereby you see, the Audience has robbed themselves of something more that they might have had, had they simply given the Actor his due deserts in terms of rapturous, or at least, semi-rapturous, Applause!

Well. I shall not tire you further, boy, but suffice it to say the path of the thespian is crowded with thorns, and far be it from me to –

(Enter Sir Robert Walpole)

CIBBER: Good heavens!

Sir Robert Walpole!

Welcome, Sir Robert!

Were you at the Play, sir? In the Great Hall sir?

WALPOLE: But of course Master Cibber! How could I miss such a treat? Marvellous! Very affecting! You were absolutely - ! Very, very – loud!

CIBBER: And does the King come back with you sir? Is he coming back? (Quickly, boy, my make-up – pass me that pancake! And the feather for my hat -)

SIR ROBERT: Sadly, Master Cibber, the King sends his regrets –

CIBBER: Oh! Oh! Most disappointing! He's not coming back -

WALPOLE: - a mild Indisposition of the gut prevents him joining us – but he asks me to pass on his mightiest congratulations for a quite captivating performance as Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, Master Cibber!

CIBBER: Ah we aim to please, we aim to please!

Do you think we did? Is he sincere?

Did he praise me?

WALPOLE: Oh indeed and especially the magnitude of your Volume! And that of Henry the Eighth – please pass on our admiration to the entire company!

CIBBER: Thank heaven for that!

WALPOLE: In truth your plays here at Hampton Court hath pleased him so mightily that I may tell you, he intends to give the Managers Two Hundred Pounds more for your particular Trouble -

CIBBER: Oh but Sir Robert! That is far too generous. Why the agreed Fee for a Play acted is but Twenty Pounds – in addition to the Day's Pay for each Actor, and the travelling Charges –

WALPOLE: Reason not the need, Cibber! There is necessity. And there is Royal Favour. Your loyal service to his Majesty does not go unnoticed.

CIBBER: I am his Majesty's servant, and I am truly honoured and most humbly grateful.

WALPOLE: Though I must put a little word in your ear that in fact - 'twas I who did procure the sum –

CIBBER: You! Sir Robert!

WALPOLE: - yes, I myself it was, that whispered in the King's ear and suggested that this extra two hundred pounds would be a most proper sum to reward your services, Master Cibber. But pray don't spread it around the place – my part in it, I mean! Discretion is the better part of valour.

Rest assured, Master Cibber, we value our trusted servants, and your loyalty to the King could never go unnoticed.

CIBBER: Well, Sir Robert, I am quite –

WALPOLE: Likewise, your unswerving loyalty to the Whig party and to my administration.

CIBBER: Thank you Sir Robert.

WALPOLE: That too shall not go unrewarded. We shall be looking for a Poet Laureate, within a decade or so, no doubt.

CIBBER: Sir Robert! I must say like Juliet, 'Tis an honour, my lord, that I dream not of!

WALPOLE: Come, don't be coy, Master Cibber! Colley Cibber, actor, playwright, manager of Drury Lane and Poet Laureate – has something of a ring does it not?

CIBBER: Ye Gods it does.

WALPOLE: And frankly, Master Cibber, were ye not an Actor, from your portrayal of Thomas Wolsey I would say you could have had another career as a politician.

CIBBER: Indeed, none knows better than Shakespeare the machinations of power!!

I marked especially tonight the King's enjoyment of that place where Cardinal Wolsey has it whispered about the place that it is HE in fact who procured the King's letter of pardon— that it is Wolsey's good deed, rather than the King's —

WALPOLE: Ah yes, I marked the King had something more than a smile on his face!

CIBBER: I saw that that provoked the King to great mirth — evidently reflecting on how his own Ministers so frequently manipulate events so that they take the credit for the King's actions!

WALPOLE: God forbid there be such ministers here at court!

CIBBER: God forbid!

WALPOLE: Well, Master Cibber — Poet Laureate in waiting — who knows? Best keep it under your hat.

CIBBER: Certainly, Sir Robert, oh certainly!

WALPOLE: And congratulations again on a most — resonant performance!

CIBBER: I thank you, sir — an honour!

WALPOLE: All mine!

(They bow and Walpole leaves).

CIBBER: Well, boy, I believe I have had enough of Courts for today, and shall away to my Chair . Here's threepence for your pains!

Or

Well, boy, I believe Master Wilks has ordered beer and calf's-foot jelly for his dressing-room, and I am minded to go and verify the matter! Here's threepence for your pains!

BOY: Thank you sir. I have been thinking, sir — that I would like to be a player upon the stage!

CIBBER: We are all players, dear boy! Who strut and fret our hour upon the stage - and then are heard no more.

BOY: I would play — Harry the Eighth! Before the lords and ladies at Hampton Court!

CIBBER: And who knows but that one day you may, dear Boy, one day you may!

Adieu!

(Exit Cibber.) (The Boy tries on King Henry's hat – tries out a line –)

BOY: Who speaks of my displeasure without consulting me?

(as Henry VIII, to echo his first line) Who speaks of my displeasure without consulting me?

The Company join Toby for the final song and Curtain Call

The End