

# Henry VIII

## Cast

*King Henry VIII* ..... *Paul Jesson*  
*Queen Katherine* ..... *Jane Lapotaire*  
*Cardinal Wolsey* ..... *Timothy West*  
*Duke of Norfolk* ..... *Anton Lesser*  
*Duke of Buckingham* ..... *David Yelland*  
*Gardiner* ..... *Steve Hodson*  
*Duke of Suffolk* ..... *Ian Gelder*  
*Cranmer* ..... *Michael N. Harbour*  
*Lord Chamberlain* ..... *David Shaw Parker*  
*Cardinal Campeius* ..... *Anthony Jackson*  
*Prologue/Epilogue* ..... *Sean Baker*  
*Cromwell* ..... *Nicholas Murchie*  
*Anne Bullen* ..... *Katharine Schlesinger*  
*Old Lady* ..... *Maria Charles*  
*Lord Abergavenny* ..... *Alan Westaway*  
*Earl of Surrey* ..... *Stephen Mangan*  
*Doctor Butts* ..... *John McAndrew*  
*Bishop of Lincoln* ..... *Alan Cox*  
*Lovell* ..... *Nicholas Rowe*

## Play description

### ACT I

Scene 1. The Duke of Norfolk tells the Duke of Buckingham and his son-in-law, Lord Abergavenny, of the recent sumptuous meeting between King Henry and Francis I of France. They are, however, unimpressed and speak bitterly of the arrogance and ambition of the Lord Chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey, who brokered the French alliance. Buckingham is arrested for high treason.

Scene 2. As Henry waits to hear the case against Buckingham, Queen Katherine enters and makes a plea for a reduction of the high taxes imposed by Wolsey upon the country's clothiers. This is granted, though Wolsey ensures that he is credited for the dispensation. Buckingham's surveyor claims that the Duke desires the crown for himself. Katherine reminds the King that the surveyor was dismissed by Buckingham, but Henry remains convinced by the allegations.

Scene 3. Chamberlain, Sandys and Lovell discuss the French fashions that have swept through the court. They set off together for dinner with Wolsey.

Scene 4. At Wolsey's banquet, Henry is smitten with Anne Bullen.

### ACT II

Scene 1. Buckingham has been found guilty. He makes a dignified and impassioned statement of his innocence before being led away to his death. It is rumored that Henry and Katherine have separated and that it was Wolsey who turned him against her.

Scene 2. According to Norfolk, Wolsey has persuaded Henry to question the legality of his marriage to Katherine. (She was previously engaged to his brother Arthur, and married Henry having obtained a papal dispensation.) Wolsey, allegedly to avenge a slight from Katherine's nephew, the Emperor Charles, has suggested that Henry divorce her and marry the French King's sister. Cardinal Campeius has been brought from Rome to judge the case. Henry is deeply unhappy with the situation, but follows Wolsey's lead nonetheless.

Scene 3. When Anne Bullen insists that she has no desire for high position, the Old Lady who attends her is skeptical. Chamberlain arrives with the news that Henry intends to make Anne the Marchioness of Pembroke, and to give her a generous income.

Scene 4. At the court at Blackfriars the King, Queen, and various dignitaries assemble to decide the legitimacy of the royal marriage. Katherine speaks of 20 years' of loyalty and refuses to accept Wolsey as her judge. Wolsey insists that he bears her no ill will, but she denounces him as arrogant and cunning. She announces her intention of appealing to the Pope and leaves the court. Henry

defends Wolsey; he fears that the death of all their male children is a sign of God's disapproval of his marriage to Katherine. Cardinal Campeius refuses to proceed in the Queen's absence.

### ACT III

Scene 1. Wolsey and Campeius attempt to persuade Katherine to put herself under the King's protection, but she refuses to cooperate.

Scene 2. Wolsey makes the fatal mistake of leaving an inventory of his wealth amongst some papers he gives to Henry. Furthermore, a letter to the Pope, in which Wolsey urges him to delay his decision about the royal marriage, has found its way to the King. Thus Henry is at last alerted to Wolsey's greed, ambition and hypocrisy. Under orders from the King, Norfolk commands the Cardinal to surrender the great seal, but he refuses. Surrey berates him for his offences against Buckingham and others. Finally, Suffolk tells him that Henry requires him to give up all his lands and belongings. Wolsey is broken, reflecting "how wretched/Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favors!" His servant, Cromwell, reports that Sir Thomas More has been appointed Lord Chancellor, Cranmer made Archbishop of Canterbury, and that Henry has been secretly married to Anne.

### ACT IV

Scene 1. Two gentlemen watch Anne's coronation procession, and discuss Katherine, now Princess Dowager, who is reported ill.

Scene 2. Hearing of Wolsey's death, Katherine speaks bitterly of him, but Griffith is more generous, remembering his good qualities. Katherine sleeps and has a vision in which six figures, dressed in white, appear before her and execute a solemn dance. As her strength fails her, Capuchius, an emissary from the emperor, arrives with warm commendations from Henry. She sends a letter in return, urging him to take good care of their daughter and of Katherine's attendants and servants.

### ACT V

Scene 1. Lovell tells Gardiner that Anne is in labor, and they agree that she, Cranmer and Cromwell would be better dead. Although the King has allowed complaints against Cranmer to be heard at a council meeting, he is nonetheless confident that the Archbishop is an honest man and shows his support by giving him a ring. Anne has given birth to a girl, the princess who is later to become Queen Elizabeth.

Scene 2. Cranmer is kept waiting outside the council chamber. The King is angered by this and eavesdrops on the meeting.

Scene 3. The Lord Chancellor and Gardiner accuse Cranmer of spreading heresy but will not allow him to reply. Cranmer is then ordered to the Tower, but produces the King's ring. Henry reveals himself and reprimands the council for their discourtesy to Cranmer, before asking the Archbishop to be godfather to his new daughter.

Scene 4. A great crowd of people struggle for a glimpse of the christening.

Scene 5. At the christening of Princess Elizabeth, Cranmer blesses her, prophesying that her reign will be long, peaceful, and prosperous.

## *Track list*

#### Disc 1

Track 1	Prologue
Track 2	Act I Scene i
Track 3	Act I Scene ii
Track 4	Act I Scene iii
Track 5	Act I Scene iv
Track 6	Act II Scene i
Track 7	Act II Scene ii
Track 8	Act II Scene iii

#### Disk 2

Track 1	Act II Scene iv
Track 2	Act III Scene i
Track 3	Act III Scene ii

#### Disk 3

Track 1	Act IV Scene i
Track 2	Act IV Scene ii
Track 3	Act V Scene i
Track 4	Act V Scene ii
Track 5	Act V Scene iii
Track 6	Act V Scene iv
Track 7	Act V Scene v
Track 8	Epilogue