**Anne Boleyn**

**Adapted by Herbert E Martin**

The ghost of Anne Boleyn arrives, carrying a blood-stained bag containing her severed head and a copy of Tyndale's Bible, and addresses the audience. The action moves to 1603, where James I arrives in London for his English coronation and finds a chest containing Anne Boleyn's coronation dress. Searching the chest's secret compartments, he finds Anne's copies of the Tyndale Bible and The Obedience of a Christian Man. He and his lover George Villiers go to search the palace for Anne's ghost. The action shifts to Anne Boleyn at the English court, where Henry VIII meets her, falls in love with her and acquiesces to her demands to postpone their first sex until she can be his wife. Henry begins the divorce proceedings against Catherine of Aragon, with both Cardinal Wolsey and Wolsey's advisor manoeuvring for position.

Anne goes secretly to meet with William Tyndale and he gives her a copy of the forbidden text The Obedience of a Christian Man. She entrusts this to her ladies in waiting, but two of Wolsey's servants seize it from the ladies and take it to Wolsey, who is delighted to use it to discredit Anne with the king. Anne goes to Cromwell for advice and finds that he, like her, is a secret Protestant. Anne then takes Cromwell's advice and pre-empts Wolsey's action – in so doing she not only gets the book back but brings about Wolsey's fall. She also partially convinces Henry to accept the book's argument that the head of the church in England is not the pope but the king himself. The action then moves forward to winter 1532 in Calais, at a conference with Francis I of France, where Anne and Henry make love for the first time, with the divorce from Catherine and their marriage imminent.

The action returns to James's reign, where he attempts to calm the Reformation that Anne's actions and Henry's divorce had unleashed, by holding the Hampton Court Conference between the Puritan and Anglican wings of the Church of England. The Puritan faction is led by John Reynolds and the Anglican one by Lancelot Andrews, both of them moderates. However, extremists on both sides such as Henry Barrowe cause the debate to drag on for over five hours, only ending when James angrily quashes any thoughts of making the Church of England presbyterian rather than episcopal - his struggles with presbyterianism in the Church of Scotland have led him to believe it threatens the king's position as Supreme Head of the Church of England and supreme secular ruler by divine right. He then meets with Reynolds and Andrews privately for further discussions, which end in a compromise agreement to produce an Authorised Version of the Bible with an Anglican slant but based on the Puritan-favoured Tyndale translation.

The action shifts back to Anne and the birth of the future Elizabeth I of England. She then goes to Tyndale with an offer from Cromwell of a place on the Privy Council for the better advancement of the Protestant cause, but he refuses it and tells her that he opposes Henry's divorce and does not recognise her as Henry's true wife. Some time later Anne miscarries a male child, which bruises but does not destroy her relationship with Henry, still hopeful for a son. However, Henry then takes Anne's lady in waiting Jane Seymour as a mistress and his relationship with Anne is finally wrecked when she is imprisoned by Cromwell. Anne is then kept from communicating with Henry in the lead-up to her execution, in a pre-emptive strike by Cromwell to avoid her telling Henry of Cromwell's embezzlement of funds from dissolved monasteries. The play then ends in 1603, where Anne's ghost talks with James about the Protestant Reformation she unleashed and then addresses the audience before departing.