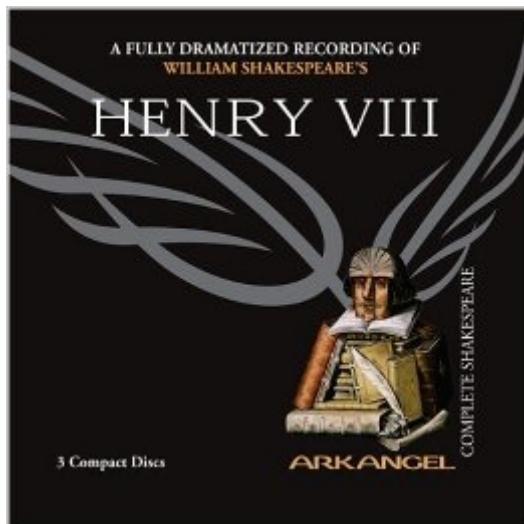


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Henry VIII (Arkangel Shakespeare)



Synopsis

[Full-Cast Audio Theater Dramatization. Paul Jesson plays Henry VIII, and Jane Lapotaire plays Queen Katherine. Timothy West is Cardinal Wolsey.] This colorful history play, possibly written in collaboration with John Fletcher, comes from the very end of Shakespeare's dramatic career. King Henry is married to Katherine of Aragon, but he has been smitten by the charms of the queen's maid of honor, Anne Bullen (Boleyn), and is tempted to divorce his dignified and noble wife. Meanwhile, the lords of England resent the influence of Henry's trusted advisor, Cardinal Wolsey, who is gradually drawing power into his own hands. As Katherine and Wolsey suffer their tragic falls, new figures rise to fill their places, but they, too, will be brought low by the inexorable sweep of time and fortune.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Like "The two Noble Kinsmen," many people felt that the great Shakespeare only wrote part of "Henry VIII" while John Fletcher wrote the rest. The problem I have with this is that while we know that Fletcher assisted with "Two Noble Kinsmen," the case for "Henry VIII" was much weaker. The possibility did not come up until over 200 years after the play was written. Some recent trends claim Shakespeare as the sole author, and I lean this way. While King Henry VIII had his faults, Nicholas Best put it well when he said: "henry VIII was actually an outstanding king. The country felt an enormous loss when he died." Winston Chrchill said in his "History of the English Speaking People: "Yet his subjects did not turn from him...He succeeded in maintaining order amidst the turmoil of Europe without army or police...A century of religious wars went by without the English taking up

arms to fight their fellow country men for their faith. We must credit Henry VIII for laying the basis of sea power, with a revival of parliamentary institutions, with giving the English Bible to her people, and above all, strengthening the popular monarchy under which succeeding generations worked together for the greatness of England."Well, onto the play. This play takes place about 35 years after "Richard III" ends. The Prologue warns us that there will be sadness in this play. We meet Buckingham (whose father was killed by Richard III). We soon see that Cardinal Wolsey and Buckingham do not like each other. Wolsey puts King Henry VIII under the impression that Buckingham is seeking the crown.If we know that Henry VIII's father ended the War of the Roses (which started mostly because of disputed succession), we can understand that Henry VIII naturally wants to prevent a repeat of history.

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