

WOLF HALL

Episode One

"Three Card Trick"

Written by

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INT. YORK PLACE - UPPER ROOM - NIGHT

The palace of CARDINAL WOLSEY.

Rain drives against a window. A MAN in a dark cloak stands staring out to the grounds beyond. He has his back to us, but there's something about that powerful frame, something alert in the tilt of his head... something *formidable*.

EXT. YORK PLACE - LONDON - NIGHT

Two RIDERS are approaching the palace, guards riding behind.

INT. YORK PLACE - UPPER ROOM - NIGHT

The MAN stands motionless, watching the approaching men, straining to identify them...

Then he's moving - fast and silent, out of the room, heading straight towards the heart of a fight.

Titles: York Place, London. October, 1529

INT. YORK PLACE - MOMENTS LATER

The York Place servants scatter and scurry before the two visitors as they stride through the palace leaving a trail of mud and water. They are the DUKE OF NORFOLK - lean, flint-faced - and the burly DUKE OF SUFFOLK: two of the most powerful noblemen in England.

INT. YORK PLACE - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

The man in the dark cloak descends. Servants flatten themselves against the wall as he passes, gliding towards the centre of the palace.

INT. YORK PLACE - CONTINUOUS

The two Dukes sweep through the series of eight antechambers...

INT. YORK PLACE - AUDIENCE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

CARDINAL WOLSEY lowers himself into his chair, listening to the approach of the two noblemen. He settles his robe around himself, doing his best to present a picture of composure, but as he smooths the scarlet brocade of his sleeve he notices his hand is trembling...

INT. YORK PLACE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The man in the dark proceeds through narrow corridors - the kind of passageways known only to servants - snaking closer to the audience chamber...

INT. YORK PLACE - AUDIENCE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Wolsey braces himself...

Then the door is bursting open and Norfolk and Suffolk are thundering towards him.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
My Lords Norfolk and Suffolk.

DUKE OF NORFOLK
Wolsey, you're out!

Suffolk tries for a little more formality.

DUKE OF SUFFOLK
Cardinal Wolsey. You're dismissed as Lord Chancellor. By the king's orders. You're to return to us the Great Seal.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
(Beat)
You'll have supper?

Norfolk steps in close, bone thin and ferocious, looking a little mad in his delight.

DUKE OF NORFOLK
You wanted all to rule yourself, didn't you? And you'd have the lords, like schoolboys, creeping in here for a whipping? Well now I'm here and I will chew you up, sir. Bones, flesh and gristle!

Even Suffolk seems a little uncomfortable at Norfolk's vitriol and steps forward to intercede.

DUKE OF SUFFOLK
You're to hand over the Great Seal.

Wolsey's smile weakens. Then, magically, the man in the dark cloak materialises beside Wolsey, come from God knows what hidden doorway. As he steps from the shadows we see him clearly for the first time: THOMAS CROMWELL, early forties, a brawler's physique, sharp intelligence in the eyes.

Wolsey senses him at his elbow, feels his courage return. Cromwell bends, whispers something.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

(Beat)

Apparently, a written request from the King is necessary. Have you one?

Norfolk, thrown, looks to Suffolk, who looks blankly back.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)

No? Oh. That's careless of you.

Norfolk turns his glare on Cromwell.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)

(Introductions)

My lawyer, Thomas Cromwell.

DUKE OF SUFFOLK

You want us to ride back to Windsor? For a piece of paper?
(Beat) In the rain?

Cromwell bends and whispers again.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Actually, my lawyer here says I can't give you the Seal, written request or not. He says that properly speaking I should only hand it to the Master of the Rolls. So you better come back with him.

Suffolk stares at him, incredulous.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)

(Sweetly)

Be glad we told you, my lords. Otherwise it would have been three trips, wouldn't it?

Norfolk gives Cromwell a murderous grin.

DUKE OF NORFOLK

Am obliged, master.

He sweeps out of the room, Suffolk hesitates, then follows. Wolsey listens for a moment to the receding boots.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
You made that up, didn't you?

Cromwell stares after the Lords.

THOMAS CROMWELL
They'll be back in a day.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
These days twenty-four hours feels
like a victory.

INT. YORK PLACE - DAY

Cromwell is walking through the opulent rooms of the palace. Everywhere he looks men are stripping the cardinal of his possessions - emptying letters from chests, books from shelves, stacking gold plate...

Wolsey appears beside him, wearing a borrowed travelling cloak.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
Have we refreshments for our
guests?

THOMAS CROMWELL
Served on what? They've taken the
plate.

He notices the cloak.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
Borrowed. They've confiscated my
wardrobe and you know how I feel
the cold. (Looking about) This will
be Lady Anne's, I think. The king
wants her to have a London
residence.

THOMAS CROMWELL
This palace belongs to the
archdiocese of York. When was Lady
Anne made an archbishop?

CARDINAL WOLSEY
Now Thomas. Everything I have, I
have from the King. If it pleases
him to take York Place fully
furnished, I'm sure we'll find some
other roof to shelter under. So I
forbid you to hit anyone.

They notice NORFOLK in the next room, looking through the crates of possessions, almost gingerly.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)
 (of Norfolk)
 He expects to find a wax figure of
 himself with a pin through it.

Norfolk looks up, sees them watching. Wolsey walks away but Cromwell holds the Duke's gaze. Norfolk leaves the room, walking past him. As he does so, he pauses, gives him a sly sidelong glance.

DUKE OF NORFOLK
 Come and see me.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 Why, my Lord?

Norfolk's expression darkens at the impudence.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
 When?

DUKE OF NORFOLK
 When you've mended your manners.

He walks away.

AUDIENCE CHAMBER - LATER

Members of the HOUSEHOLD are gathered together: a dismayed GEORGE CAVENDISH, the cardinal's gentleman usher, WILLIAM GASCOIGNE, the cardinal's treasurer, other SERVANTS, all unsure of their fate. Cromwell and Wolsey walk in.

GASCOIGNE
 I hear Your Grace is to go straight
 to the Tower?

Everyone in the room seems to freeze and turn to stare. Cromwell looks like he'd like to hit him.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 Sir William Gascoigne what do you
 suppose I've done that would make
 the King want to send me to the
 Tower?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 (To Gascoigne)
 Is that all the comfort you've got
 to offer?

He turns to the watching household.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
 Nobody's going to the Tower. We are
 going...(mind whirring) to Esher.

CAVENDISH

(Anxious)

But... Esher's an empty house. We haven't a pot, a knife, a spit... And, and how shall we get there?

THOMAS CROMWELL

They haven't seized Lord Cardinal's barge yet, have they? Nor the horses? We go upriver, as many as the barge will take. The rest take the horses. We'll meet at... Putney.

Cavendish looks doubtful.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)

Were you ever a military man George Cavendish?

CAVENDISH

No.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Well, then this is your first campaign. Find some fire irons and soup kettles. The rest we'll... go looting for.

He claps him on the back, hoping to instil some *esprit de corps*. Cavendish straightens a little.

CAVENDISH

I'll order up the barge.

He hurries off. Thomas turns to find Wolsey watching him with a sad smile.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Putney?

EXT. RIVER THAMES - EVENING

The patter of rain, the dip of oars. Crowds of people watching from the darkness of the banks. As the barge passes they hoot and boo. Wolsey listens, stricken.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Do the people hate me so much? You remember when the apprentices rioted? On my knees, begging the King to spare them...

CAVENDISH

(Gloomily)

What it is to serve a prince.

Cromwell fires him a sharp look. The Cardinal has tears in his eyes.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

The gentlest wisest prince in Christendom. I'll not hear a word against Henry from any man.

CAVENDISH

Do you think it's something about the English? They never see a great man set up but they have to pull him down?

THOMAS CROMWELL

It's not the English. (Beat) It's just... people.

Wolsey closes his eyes, beginning to weep. Cromwell watches him, heart breaking. Cavendish is surrendering to a lugubrious relish.

CARVENDISH

Fortune is fickle. Fickle, inconstant, mutable...

He is silenced by Cromwell making a strangling motion to him. The barge glides on, the catcalls and obscenities drifting from the banks. Cromwell looks over the side to dark flowing water below...

FRAGMENTS OF MEMORIES:

THE SEA - **THE PAST**

Looking down at the water, flowing past the prow of a ship...

INT. PUTNEY INN - 1500 - **THE PAST**

A boy - YOUNG THOMAS CROMWELL - leans in a doorway, beaten, head swollen and bloody, barely alive. His older married sister KAT hugs him carefully. She takes a HOLY MEDAL from around her neck, slips it carefully over his head.

KAT

For protection.

EXT. SHIP - DAY - **THE PAST**

Young Thomas, face still bruised, stands on-board the ship, sailing away from England for the first time. He looks over the edge, the water rushing past the prow... He holds out his hand, lets the HOLY MEDAL slip through his fingers, watches it disappear into the surge below.

EXT. THAMES - BARGE - PUTNEY - EVENING

We're back in 1529.

Cromwell stands scanning the quiet banks as the barge pulls up to the moorings. An anxious Cavendish arrives beside him.

CAVENDISH

No more shouting. Is Putney loyal to him, do you think?

THOMAS CROMWELL

No. They just haven't heard yet.

EXT. PUTNEY - EVENING

Rain drives down as the party trudge through mud, making their way towards where the horses wait for them. Cromwell supports a weakened Wolsey, who is trying to sound bright for those around him.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

This is your childhood home, isn't it Thomas? (To Cavendish) Can you imagine Mater Cromwell as a young ruffian, running through these very fields? Setting fires, defiling virgins?

CAVENDISH

Yes.

THOMAS CROMWELL

There aren't any virgins in Putney.

They reach the cardinal's mule, and find beside it his fool PATCH.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)

(Muttering)

What in Christ's name is he doing here?

Patch whispers something to Wolsey who laughs.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Very good, Patch. Now help me up.

Patch struggles to heave the cardinal up but can't manage it.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(To Patch)

Hold Christopher's head. George, help me here.

Cavendish joins him. Patch, pretending not to understand, grabs one of the servants in a headlock.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
 (Gritted teeth)
 Christopher is the mule. Get out of
 the fucking way...

Cromwell and Cavendish are about to hoist the Cardinal up when they hear the sound of hooves - a lone HORSEMAN gallops downhill towards them.

CAVENDISH
 Saints protect us! An arrest!

THOMAS CROMWELL
 By one man? (Watching the rider
 approach)It's Harry Norris.

The fashionable Norris, one of the king's closest friends, reigns in his horse and dismounts.

HARRY NORRIS
 Your Grace, the king commanded me
 to ride after you and give you this
 token of his friendship.

He holds out a ring on his gloved hand. The Cardinal slithers through the mud towards Norris, takes the ring and falls to his knees, kissing it. Norris hesitates and then, with some distaste, kneels next to him.

HARRY NORRIS (CONT'D)
 The King knows you have enemies,
 but he is not one of them, your
 Grace. All of this is but a show to
 placate those enemies. There will
 be recompense.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 (weeping)
 Thank you! Thank you Sir Henry! I
 have nothing to give him. I have
 nothing of value to give the king!

Norris is already standing, wiping the mud from himself. Cromwell takes him aside.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 About this recompense?

HARRY NORRIS
 I think it might be figurative.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 I think it might be too.

HARRY NORRIS
 I have always admired your Master.
 I hope that in his adversity he
 will remember that.

THOMAS CROMWELL
I thought that he wasn't in
adversity. According to you.

They stare at each other for a moment.

HARRY NORRIS
You should take him out of the
rain. I'll tell the king how I
found him.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Tell him how you knelt in the mud
together. He might be amused.

HARRY NORRIS
Yes. You never know what'll do it.

They are both suddenly distracted by the sound of Patch
screaming. He is being carried towards Norris' by four of the
cardinal's men. The cardinal trails beside him, trying to
soothe him.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
Hush, Patch, hush. It's for the
best. I can't keep you now. And the
king will cherish you. He is the
kindest soul in Christendom. To
Norris) My gift to the king. Patch
is the best fool and worth a
thousand pounds.

Cromwell and Cavendish watch as Patch is tied, kicking and
wailing onto the mule.

THOMAS CROMWELL
See what happens to a man when he
draws too much attention to
himself?

CAVENDISH
(Shaken)
My God. How did it come to this?

INT. WINDSOR CASTLE - EVENING

Titles: WINDSOR CASTLE - 1521

Eight years earlier. A court masque. The women are dressed as
Virtues. We pass a vivacious blonde - MARY BOLEYN - and find
a young dancer, her sister - early twenties, face masked, a
thin touch-me-not-smile. This is ANNE BOLEYN.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (V.O.)
We brought the Lady Anne back from
France to marry into Ireland, sir.
(MORE)

CARDINAL WOLSEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Now I hear she danced at the court
 masque with young Harry Percy?

We see a young nobleman watching her - entranced. This is
 HARRY PERCY.

CARDINAL WOLSEY(V.O.)
 Connived in dark corners with him?

INT. YORK PLACE - AUDIENCE CHAMBER - EVENING

Cardinal Wolsey, still at the height of his powers, sits at
 his desk, facing Anne's father: THOMAS BOLEYN - a smooth,
 cold man. Behind WOLSEY stands his Secretary - STEPHEN
 GARDINER.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 And I won't have that.

THOMAS BOLEYN
 Your grace can't think that I'm
 party to any...

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 Sir Thomas Boleyn, you would be
amazed at what I can think.

OUTSIDE THE ROOM

A figure sits in shadows: Thomas Cromwell, eight years
 younger, waiting to meet Wolsey for the first time.
 Listening.

THOMAS BOLEYN (O.S.)
 Anne knows things can't proceed
 with young Harry Percy. But... he
 believes he is free to choose his
 own wife.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (O.S.)
 Choose his...!

BACK ON CARDINAL WOLSEY

... enjoying his own performance.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 He's not some *ploughboy*! He's the
 man who'll have to hold the north
 for us some day. The Percy family,
 comprise one of the noblest in the
 land. Whereas you Boleyns were once
 in trade, weren't you?

It takes every ounce of Boleyn's self-control to keep the silky smile on his face. He looks at Gardiner.

THOMAS BOLEYN
Who is that?

CARDINAL WOLSEY
My Secretary, Stephen Gardiner.

THOMAS BOLEYN
Send him out.

Wolsey indicates with a nod that Gardiner should leave. Boleyn turns back to the ante-chamber where Cromwell can just be made out into the darkness.

THOMAS BOLEYN (CONT'D)
And who's that?

CARDINAL WOLSEY
(Impatient)
Never mind who that is. He's nobody.

ON GARDINER

As he walks out of the audience chamber, leans against a wall, glaring at Cromwell, resenting having been sent out, resenting having to stand with this commoner. Resentment comes easily to him. Cromwell nods pleasantly. Gardiner's scowl deepens at this affront. Boleyn's voice drifts out...

THOMAS BOLEYN (O.S.)
The problem is, my daughter and Harry Percy... I think they may have gone a little far in the matter. It seems they have pledged themselves before witnesses...

BACK ON CARDINAL WOLSEY

CARDINAL WOLSEY
You can forget any talk of pledges and witnesses! I'll get his father down from the borders and if the prodigal defies his father he'll be tossed out of his heirdom on his prodigal snout! Now get your daughter married into Ireland before her intended hears any rumours of spoilt goods!

THOMAS BOLEYN
(Pale with fury)
Finished, my lord cardinal?

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Finished.

Boleyn begins to leave.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)

Sir Thomas?

Boleyn stops.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)

At the court masque the ladies
dressed as Virtues. I hear your
daughter Anne chose Perseverance. I
hope for your sake she has not
invested the role with any symbolic
value.

Boleyn stalks out.

THOMAS BOLEYN

(As he goes, hissed)

Butcher's boy!

He passes Cromwell and Gardiner in the shadows.

THOMAS BOLEYN (CONT'D)

(To Cromwell)

Butcher's dog!

And he's gone. A moment of silence. Then Wolsey laughs softly.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (O.S.)

Come out, dog.

Gardiner glares at Cromwell.

STEPHEN GARDINER

He's talking to you.

AUDIENCE CHAMBER

Cromwell walks through to Wolsey, who examines this newcomer, then looks down to a letter on his desk.

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CARDINAL WOLSEY

So, Master Cromwell. William Popely
thinks I may find a use for you.

Cromwell sits before him. His eyes drift to a wall hanging behind the Cardinal - KING SOLOMON AND QUEEN SHEBA. His gaze is caught, for some reason, by the depiction of Queen Sheba.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)
A man of many talents, he says. A remarkable memory?

THOMAS CROMWELL
There is a technique my lord. I learnt it in Italy.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
How long were you abroad?

THOMAS CROMWELL
Twelve years. I worked for the Florentine banks. And in Venice. Before that I soldiered for the French.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
Where are you from?

THOMAS CROMWELL
Putney. I left when I was a boy.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
Your father?

THOMAS CROMWELL
A blacksmith.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
(Smiling)
At last - a man born in a more lowly state than myself. Learn from tonight Thomas. You can never advance your own pedigree, so the trick is to always keep them scraped up to their own standards. Percys above Boleyns. They make the rules, they can't complain if I enforce them.

Cromwell is silent. There's something about his expression...

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)
What?

THOMAS CROMWELL
Only... there's something I heard, from the merchants' wives.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
(Amused)
Go on.

THOMAS CROMWELL
I don't think it's fit for your ears.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
You can't speak and not speak.

THOMAS CROMWELL
It's only a rumour. I wouldn't want
to mislead...

Wosley stands suddenly, his chair scraping back and in that moment Cromwell jerks instinctively back, hand reaching for his knife. Silence. Wolsey turns away to give Cromwell time to recover. Crosses to a table to pour himself some wine.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
(Gently)
Can't a cleric move without you
think he's after your blood? (Beat)
I really would like to hear your
rumour.

Cromwell sits, ashamed and embarrassed. He manages to speak.

THOMAS CROMWELL
They judge from orders to the silk
merchants that the king has a
new... what do you call a whore
when she is a knight's daughter?

CARDINAL WOLSEY
(Sitting back down)
To her face "my lady." Which
knight?

Cromwell inclines a head after the departed Boleyn. Wolsey looks alarmed.

THOMAS CROMWELL
But it's not the flat-chested
one...

CARDINAL WOLSEY
The Lady Anne.

THOMAS CROMWELL
It's her sister, the blonde lady.

Wolsey sighs.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
Little Mary Boleyn. A kind girl.
They say she has been passed around
most of the French court. Well, at
least young Mary won't cause
difficulties. Do your merchants'
wives say the queen knows?

Cromwell nods.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)

(sadly)

Queen Katherine is a saint. Still, if she'd married a French king she wouldn't be able to keep track of the women.

He looks Cromwell over, puzzling him out.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)

Well then, here's what I propose Thomas. From now on you bring me the London gossip and I promise never to beat it from you. That way we'll do very well together.

EXT. AUSTIN FRIARS - NIGHT

To establish - Austin Friars - Cromwell's home.

INT. AUSTIN FRIARS - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cromwell stands staring down at his sleeping daughters: ANNE and the baby GRACE. He kisses their foreheads turns to his boys: his little son GREGORY, his nephew RICHARD, his ward RAFE. Each gets a kiss.

DOWNSTAIRS

Cromwell sits wearily. His wife LIZ gives him his little dog BELLA. The dog licks his face ecstatically.

LIZ

Eaten?

THOMAS CROMWELL

Yes.

LIZ

Wine?

THOMAS CROMWELL

Why not?

She finds a glass and bottle.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)

I'm going to work for him. The cardinal.

Liz pours, lips tight.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
 You know what they say in Italy?
 Pick your prince. (Beat) You have
 to pick your prince.

He sips the wine, watches her, understands her obscure fear.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
 We could be rich.

LIZ
 We have enough.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 (Trying again)
 I don't want to spend my life
 dealing in conveyances, and leases
 and lawsuits and whether this man's
 fence should be here or here...

LIZ
 (Beat)
 You know what you're doing I
 suppose. At least you always look
 as if you do.

Cromwell smiles, watches her for a moment.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 You're sweeter to look at than the
 cardinal.

LIZ
 That's the smallest compliment a
 woman ever received.

EXT. ESHER - NIGHT

And we are back in...

1529

The rain pours down on the cardinal, hunched on his mule,
 lost in misery. The party wind their way up to the somewhat
 neglected ESHER. The cardinal dismounts. Cromwell and
 Cavendish watch him. Cromwell looks at the building,
 unimpressed.

INT. ESHER - NIGHT

The party walk through the bleak rooms, looking around them
 with dismay.

KITCHEN

Cromwell and Cavendish inspect the kitchens - the gaping cook, filthy kitchen boys with running noses, the plundered larders, the mildewed stockpot, the scurry of rats...

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Grimly)

I'll send some people to sort out it out. They'll be Italian. It'll be violent, but in a few weeks it'll work.

INT. ESHER - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wolsey kneels by the bed. Cromwell tends the fire.

THOMAS CROMWELL

I asked if they had nutmeg or saffron, they looked at me as if I was speaking Greek. I'll have to find a local supplier.

Wolsey rises with difficulty. Cromwell helps him into bed.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

I shall pray for it. Currently I pray for the king and all his counsellors, Queen Katherine, and Lady Anne, Thomas More that hates me so. I pray for a better harvest and for the rains to stop. I pray for everybody and everything. It's only when I say to the Lord, "Now about Thomas Cromwell..." does God says to me "Wolsey, don't you know when to give up?"

He watches with a sad smile as Cromwell fusses around the bed.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)

Let me bless you.

Thomas kneels and Wolsey raises a hand in blessing, then seems to forget what he's doing.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)

This is all they've been waiting for. Suffolk, Norfolk, Boleyn. They won't rest now until they have my head. (Beat) You should leave me, Tom. Gardiner has.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Gardiner would.

He smooths the blankets around him. Wolsey takes his hand, holds it tightly.

INT. OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cromwell comes out of the bedroom, passes a servant: a pretty young man, MARK SMEATON, holding a LUTE. Cromwell backs up a step or two, searches his memory for the boy's name.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Mark? Go and play for him. It might help him sleep.

Mark hesitates, sullen, perhaps inclined to question Cromwell's authority. A second look at Cromwell's face changes his mind. Cromwell walks on.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Cavendish and Cromwell sit in the drafty space, before a meagre fire.

CAVENDISH

Who will be Chancellor now? His Grace of Canterbury?

THOMAS CROMWELL

No. Warham's too old.

CAVENDISH

Not the Duke of Suffolk?

THOMAS CROMWELL

The fucking mule has more brains than Suffolk. Besides Norfolk wouldn't have him. And vice versa. (Beat) It'll be Thomas More.

CAVENDISH

More is opposed to the king's marriage suit. Even if the king offers it, surely More won't accept?

THOMAS CROMWELL

He will.

They stare at the fire.

CAVENDISH

Well, it's late. I'm sure you have a family to go...

He catches himself, but too late. A mortified silence. Cromwell's face betrays nothing.

THOMAS CROMWELL
I'll stay tonight.

Two men sit in the feeble light of the fire, a vulnerable island in all that blackness.

Cromwell stares into the flames, remembering.

INT. AUSTIN FRIARS - DOWNSTAIRS - MORNING

TITLES: 1527

The early morning bustle of servants lighting fires, preparing food. Cromwell's daughter ANNE - now twelve years old - is writing in her Latin copybook. Cromwell sits reading a letter, little GRACE, now five years old, on his knee.

LIZ
What does your son say?

THOMAS CROMWELL
Hopes you are well. Hopes I am well. (To the girls) Hopes his lovely little sisters Anne and Grace are well. He is well. "And now no more, for lack of time, your dutiful son, Gregory." Terrible Latin.

He checks Anne's copy book, kisses her head.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
Anne is the better scholar.

LIZ
Anne, go and get your breakfast.

Anne gets up.

ANNE
(As she goes)
After I've Latin I'd like to learn Greek. Gregory has hardly any Greek.

Cromwell watches her go.

THOMAS CROMWELL
What will London be like when that one's Lord Mayor?

Liz waits until Anne and the servants have left and they are alone. She puts a parcel in front of him.

LIZ

From Germany. It was packaged as something else. I almost sent the boy away.

He unwraps the BOOK. She watches him, face tight with disapproval.

THOMAS CROMWELL

If you want know...?

LIZ

I don't want to know.

THOMAS CROMWELL

It's Tynedale's New Testament, Liz. You could read it for yourself. It's in English - that's the point. Read it and you'll see how you're misled. No mention of nuns, monks, relics. No mention of Popes. The Church takes money to give the dead early release from purgatory. (Holding out the book) Show me where the gospels mention purgatory.

LIZ

(Ignoring the book)
My prayer book's good reading for me.

He smiles. Their old quarrel. He puts his book down and picks up her PRAYER BOOK from the table.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Rafe! Richard!

He sits examining Our Lady's prayers for canonical hours. Grace turns the pages, traces her small hand over the BEAUTIFUL ILLUMINATIONS. Liz pushes her hair under a linen cap.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)

You look like a baker's wife.

LIZ

You mind your manners, Pot-boy.

Rafe and another young man, Cromwell's nephew RICHARD, walk in.

RAFE

Where first? The cardinal?

Cromwell kisses Grace and puts her down.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Where else?

EXT. YORK PLACE - LONDON - DAY - 1527

Cromwell, Rafe and Richard are walking into the gates as Stephen Gardiner comes walking out, pulling on his gloves. His face darkens seeing Cromwell - his *bete noire*.

STEPHEN GARDINER
Late.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Me, or your good self?

STEPHEN GARDINER
You. He's waiting.

THOMAS CROMWELL
The boatmen were all drunk.

STEPHEN GARDINER
I'm surprised you didn't take an oar yourself. You grew up on the river, didn't you?(Curt) God bless you.

THOMAS CROMWELL
(After him)
Thanks.

INT. YORK PLACE - DAY

Cromwell is moving THREE CARDS around table, hands expert. Wolsey sits watching intently. He indicates a card. Cromwell turns it to reveal a KNAVE. Wolsey chuckles, indicates he'll try again. Cromwell begins to move the cards.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
The king called me this morning, exceptionally early.

THOMAS CROMWELL
What did he want?

CARDINAL WOLSEY
Pity. (Beat) A son. He wants a son. Eighteen years of marriage, with no heir.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Princess Mary?

CARDINAL WOLSEY
Half a daughter. A strong wind could blow her away.
(MORE)

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)
 The king has decided some sin must
 have been committed to cause this
 curse.

He indicates a card. Cromwell turns it - an Ace. He turns
 another card to reveal the elusive QUEEN.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)
 Where did you learn this?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 At the docks, when I first left
 home. I lived on it for a while.
 Everyone thought they could beat a
 child.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 What else don't I know about you?

Cromwell considers.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 Once, in Italy, I held a snake for
 a bet.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 Was it poisonous?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 We didn't know. That was the point
 of the bet.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 And did it bite you?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 It wouldn't be much of a story if
 it hadn't. (Prompting) The sin?

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 Ah yes, the sin.

Wolsey rubs his face wearily.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)
 I remember when they brought the
 Queen over from Spain to marry
 Henry's brother, Prince Arthur.
 Sixteen, barely a word of English.
 When she danced and her red hair
 slid over her shoulder...

He looks into space, remembering.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 God forgive you?

CARDINAL WOLSEY

God forgive us all. Then Arthur dies, Henry decides he'll have his brother's widow for himself. Katherine declares she's still a virgin, poor Arthur having never touched her, Rome issues the dispensation and any doubts anyone has...

He grinds his hand down on the desk.

THOMAS CROMWELL

But now?

Wolsey shrugs.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Now the queen can't give the king a son. So, now the queen must not have been a virgin after all. Now the king says he has mistakenly lived all these years in an unlawful marriage. Hence the sin. So it's back to Rome for an annulment.

THOMAS CROMWELL

You're sending Gardiner? He doesn't understand Rome. The Pope's spies will know what he's about while he's still packing and the cardinals will have time to fix their prices.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

I should send you. You could arrange a loan for Pope Clement.

He stands and stretches wearily. Crosses to the window.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)

She's blaming me, of course. Katherine. She can't blame the king. So it's all my doing. Doesn't matter that I've begged the king not to proceed.

THOMAS CROMWELL

When she defeated the Scots I heard she wanted to send Henry the Scottish King's head in a bag to cheer him.

Wolsey raises an eyebrow - *this helps how?* Cromwell shrugs.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)

She's a fighter.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Then you best teach me your three
card trick, in case we both end up
on the streets.

He rumbles with laughter, shoulders shaking. Cromwell smiles
at the sight.

INT. ESHER - MORNING

And we are back in 1529

Wolsey is walking in the chill morning below. He looks lost,
frail, his steps uncertain.

Cromwell stands at the window, watching him. Cavendish joins
Cromwell, hollow-eyed from their all night vigil. Cromwell
turns to him - *what?*

CAVENDISH

We have to break up the household.
We've no ready money for wages.

THOMAS CROMWELL

I'll get my clerks down, see what
assets are left. We'll find new
homes for as many of them as we
can. You keep him talking, keep him
cheerful.

They watch their old master for a moment.

CAVENDISH

(Hesitant)

Do you think it's true? The mistake
was being too proud? I remember
when he used to say "The king will
do such-and -such." Then it was,
"We will do such and such." Now he
says "This is what I will do."

THOMAS CROMWELL

No. No the mistake was making an
enemy of Anne Boleyn. But who knew
how far she'd rise?

INT. ESHER - HALLWAY - MORNING

Cromwell is leaving. He passes a room, hears voices and
stops.

MARK SMEATON (O.S.)

...I'm going to leave. He says
he'll send me to the Lady Anne. I
think she'll like me well enough,
don't you?

A muffled laugh. Cromwell peers through a crack in the door. He sees MARK SMEATON, the musician, talking to someone we can't see.

MARK SMEATON (CONT'D)
 What's the point of staying here?
 They're going to behead the old
 man. And serves him right.

A muffled reply.

MARK SMEATON (CONT'D)
 The lawyer? He'll go down with him.
 I say lawyer - who knows what he
 is? He comes from nothing, the old
 man takes him in and in a few years
 it's as if *he's* the one in charge.
 As if he has some *hold* over the
 cardinal? I heard he killed a man
 abroad and never made confession.
 But that kind, they always weep
 when they see the hangman.

Another laugh, a whispered "Shhh." Cromwell walks quietly on.

EXT. BONVISI'S HOUSE - EVENING

The house of a prosperous merchant - ANTONIO BONVISI, a friend of Cromwell's. Cromwell waits at the gate. Bonvisi walks out to greet him. He looks nervous.

BONVISI
 (Italian, subtitled)
 Thomas. You've come.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 (Italian, subtitled)
 You invited me.

BONVISI
 I did. But... with things the way
 they are with Wolsey, I
 thought...(Beat, Embarrassed)
 Thomas More is here.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 (Calmly)
 I expect you invited him too.

INT. BONVISI'S HOUSE - EVENING

A meal in progress, prosperous Merchants. At the head of the table sits THOMAS MORE, soon to be the new Lord Chancellor, the guest of honour. Beside him sits a little dapper man, EUSTACHE CHAPUYS, the Emperor Charles V's ambassador in London.

More is talking but as Cromwell walks in he falls silent, stares at his plate, stony faced. Bonvisi ushers Cromwell to his seat, hastily covering the silence.

BONVISI
(Italian, subtitled)
Sit, Thomas. Please sit, eat.

He sits with affected nonchalance, drains a glass of wine, looks to the silent Thomas More.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Did you want to talk about me,
Master More? You can do it while
I'm here, I have a thick skin.

THOMAS MORE
No one was talking of you.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Of the cardinal then?

BONVISI
(Quickly)
Thomas, this is Monsieur Chapuys,
the Emperor's new ambassador here
in London. Monsieur Chapuys, my
friend Thomas Cromwell.

CHAPUYS
Enchanted. (To More, slipping into
Latin, subtitled) I have heard of
this one. No-one knows where he
comes from. Like the Wandering Jew.

He titters at his own joke. Cromwell smiles pleasantly.

THOMAS CROMWELL
I sometimes forget where I've come
from myself.

Chapuys' face falls.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
If you want to speak half-secretly,
try Greek, Monsieur Chapuys.

BONVISI
(To More, nervous)
My friend, you are looking at your
herring as if you hate it.

THOMAS MORE
There's nothing wrong with the
herring.

He looks up at Cromwell.

THOMAS MORE (CONT'D)

But of Cardinal Wolsey I'll say
only this - he's brought his fall
upon himself. He has drawn all to
himself, land, money and titles.
He's always had a greed for ruling
over other men.

THOMAS CROMWELL

He's a public man. You want him to
shrink from a public role?

THOMAS MORE

Oh, I think it's a little late to
read the Cardinal a lesson in
humility. His real friends have
read it long ago, and been ignored.

THOMAS CROMWELL

You count yourself as his real
friend, do you? I'll tell him and
by Christ he'll find it a
consolation as he sits in exile and
wonders why you slander him to the
king.

BONVISI

(Rising)
Gentlemen...

THOMAS CROMWELL

No, let's have this straight.
Thomas here says "I'd spend my life
in the church, if I had a choice.
I'm devoted to things of the
Spirit. I care *nothing* for wealth,
for the world's esteem." So how is
it I get back to London and hear
you're to become Lord Chancellor?

He stares around the table.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)

What's that? A fucking accident?

Silence. More stands, dabs his mouth, smiles, icy.

THOMAS MORE

You're no friend to the church,
Thomas. You're a friend to one
priest only. And he's the most
corrupt in Christendom.

He walks out. No-one speaks. Furious, Cromwell busies himself
with his meal. Beat.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 (To Bonvisi)
 You must tell me the recipe for
 this sauce.

EXT. BONVISI'S HOUSE - LATER

Bonvisi walks Cromwell to the gates.

BONVISI
 Thomas More is my old friend. You
 shouldn't come here to bait him.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 Aren't I your friend, Bonvisi?

BONVISI
 You know you are. That's why I give
 you this advice. The cardinal is
 finished. He'll go. And then you
 will be without a master to protect
 you. Leave him now.

They reach the gates. RICHARD and RAFE stand waiting with
 some SERVANTS from Cromwell's household.

BONVISI (CONT'D)
 I see you have a private army.
 That's good. From now on you need
 to watch your back.

He hugs him and turns and walks back to his house.

INT. YORK PLACE - GALLERY - DAY

Titles: 1527

A long gallery, servants and clergy everywhere, excited
 conversations. Something in the air. Cromwell is walking
 towards where Wolsey stands at the end of the gallery,
 beckoning impatiently to him.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 Thomas!

Cavendish peels away from a group and falls into step with
 Cromwell.

CAVENDISH
 News from Rome! The Emperor's
 troops have run wild in the city.
 They're killing and raping. Thomas
 More say they're roasting babies on
 spits.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Oh Christ, he would! Soldiers don't have time to eat babies. They're too busy stealing. If the Emperor Charles had paid them once in a while...

CAVENDISH

They've taken the Pope prisoner.

Cromwell stares at him, absorbing this. Cavendish takes his silence for incomprehension.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)

The Emperor is the Queen's nephew. If he has the Pope, the king's petition is...

Cromwell is already walking away.

INT. YORK PLACE - AUDIENCE CHAMBER - LATER

Wolsey stands at the window, mind leaping ahead of events.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

In every emergency, look to see if there is some advantage for your prince, Thomas. Now, in this current emergency, it will be to me that Pope Clement looks to hold Christendom together. So, suppose I were to travel to France, gather together the cardinals in a council, to carry on the business of the church while the pope is indisposed? Now, if the business brought before this council *happened* to include the king's private matter...

He turns from the window to Cromwell.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)

... might we not rule on it?

THOMAS CROMWELL

And when the pope is released?

CARDINAL WOLSEY

And how we look forward to that day - then he'll be so grateful for the good order kept in his absence, that any signature will be a formality. *Voila*, the king of England will be a bachelor.

Cromwell is silent. Wolsey looks at him, recognises the expression.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)

Dear God, not more gossip from the silk merchants?

THOMAS CROMWELL

The rumour is the king has moved from Mary Boleyn to her flat-chested sister.

Wolsey looks momentarily troubled by the news.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

Anne?

THOMAS CROMWELL

She hasn't forgiven you for the business with Harry Percy. Cavendish tells me she's sworn vengeance on you.

Wolsey looks amused at the idea.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

The poor chit of a girl. The king will have her in his bed by summer. By autumn he'll be tired of her and pension her off.

INT. AUSTIN FRIARS - DOWNSTAIRS - EVENING

Cromwell is working his way through papers, Liz embroidering beside him. She holds up the shirt for him to see.

LIZ

For Gregory. It's the same design Queen Katherine uses for the king's shirts.

THOMAS CROMWELL

If I were her I'd leave the needle in.

LIZ

I know you would. (She sews) If the king tries this then half the people in the world will be against him.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Wolsey thought perhaps just the Emperor and Spain.

LIZ

All women. All women who have a daughter and no son.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Smiling)

He asked her to enter a convent. She says she'll become a nun when he becomes a monk.

Liz gives a soft grunt of laughter. She glances at Cromwell, gauging his mood.

LIZ

Your sister was here today. She asked again if you'd go and see him? (Beat) She says you wouldn't know him now. He's stopped drinking, settled down.

No answer from Cromwell. Grace walks through the room, wearing WINGS made of PEACOCKS FEATHERS. Cromwell watches her.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Grace, sweetheart, stay away from the fire in those. And they're your angel wings. They're just supposed to be for Christmas.

The little girl drifts back out of the room.

LIZ

(Gently)

Your own father Thomas, and he's never seen the children.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Staring after Grace.)

Let's keep it that way.

BEDROOM - LATER

Cromwell is putting Anne to bed.

ANNE

Can I choose who I want to marry?

THOMAS CROMWELL

Within reason.

ANNE

Then I choose Rafe.

Cromwell pauses, surprised by the answer, and by the sudden sense of hope it brings him.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Grace says I can't marry him
because he's my cousin.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Richard is your cousin, not Rafe.
Rafe is my ward. That means his
father asked me to take Rafe in and
bring him up in business. You
understand?

ANNE

So I can choose Rafe?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Beat)

If he'll wait for you.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cromwell and Liz lie in bed.

LIZ

Rafe?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Smiling)

She could do worse.

There's a creak on the stairs outside the door. He gets up
and opens it. Grace stands outside, still wearing the wings,
groggy with sleep.

GRACE

I'm too warm.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Back to bed, Grace, sweetheart. Are
you going to wear those wings all
night?

She turns to look at him over her shoulder, a beauty. Gives a
drowsy smile.

GRACE

'Till I say my prayers.

She walks over down the hallway, trailing her peacock
feathers. Cromwell watches her, taking the lovely image for
himself.

INT. AUSTIN FRIARS - BEDROOM - MORNING

Cromwell is dressing, Liz still in bed behind. He stoops to
kiss her. She looks flushed, her hair a little damp.

LIZ
 (Murmuring)
 Tell me when you are going?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 I'm not going with Wolsey,
 remember?

STAIRS

Cromwell walks down, catches a glimpse of Liz following him, a flash of her white cap.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 Go back to bed Liz.

He turns - but he's mistaken. There's no-one there.

EXT. YORK PLACE - DAY

Wolsey's huge entourage is getting ready to leave for France. Cromwell stands watching. He sees Stephen Gardiner, crosses to him.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 (Cheerfully)
 Stephen! Back from Rome. Never
 pleasant to come back empty handed,
 is it? I feel sorry for you. Still,
 you did your best. Such as it is.

Gardiner scowls and walks away. Wolsey joins Cromwell.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
 He seems cheerful.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 Stephen? Full of hellfire.
 Denouncing some nest of heretics in
 the city. Followers of Tynedale.
 Thought an example should be made.

Cromwell shows nothing.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)
 I told him we'll pray for their
 poor benighted souls.

Wolsey watches the entourage begin to mount their horses. He twists the rings on his fingers nervously, examines them - a TURQUOISE, a ruby, a diamond...

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)
 I'm dreading the sea voyage. You know, Norfolk has it about that I have a magic ring that protects me from harm?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 Which one is it?

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 If I knew I'd have a copy made for you.

He moves to join the cavalcade, turns back.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)
 If you hear the king's had Anne, get a letter to me that day. I'll only believe it from you.

A LITTLE LATER

Cromwell stands with Rafe and Richard, watching the entourage of horses and wagons set off.

RAFE
 Where to now? Lombard Street?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 You go home.

RAFE
 (Surprised)
 Where are you going?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 For a walk.

EXT. GRAY'S INN - DAY

The society of barristers. Cromwell approaches the entrance, takes the GATEKEEPER to one side.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 If anyone comes asking for me, I'm not here.

INT. GRAY'S INN - DAY

Cromwell sits with other followers of Tynedale, JAMES BAINHAM amongst them, listening to the ecstatic LITTLE BILNEY, a priest and lawyer.

LITTLE BILNEY

The words of scripture are as honey to me. I am drunk on the word of God. I have read Tynedale's gospel. Masses, fasting, vigils, pardons out of purgatory... all useless. This is revealed to me.

Cromwell stirs impatiently.

THOMAS CROMWELL

You think you can crawl out of your hole because Wolsey is away. All that means is that Gardiner and Thomas More have their hands free. Wolsey protects you.

LIITTLE BILNEY

Wolsey burns bibles.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Thomas More will burn men.

LITTLE BILNEY

I met with Tyndale in Germany and...

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Flinching)

I don't want to know where Tyndale is.

LITTLE BILNEY

I'm going to go to Rome and see His Holiness. I'm know I can bring him over to my way of thinking.

Cromwell stares at him, incredulous.

OUTSIDE THE ROOM

Cromwell comes out with the others, falls in beside Bainham.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Softly)

Be careful of that one - he'll jump into the fire willingly.

INT. AUSTIN FRIARS - EARLY EVENING

Cromwell walks in, finds JOHANE and her mother MERCY waiting for him. He looks at their faces, knows something is wrong.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Beat)

What is it? (Beat) Gregory?

JOHANE

(Numb)

Where were you? We looked for you.

Cromwell stares at her.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Say it.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Liz lies on the bed, dead, her jaw tied with linen. Candles are lit at her head and feet. Herbs burn around the room. Cromwell stares at her, sits on the bed. Johane watches.

JOHANE

She said she was tired this morning. After you left. She wouldn't eat anything. Then she started shaking... We called for the priest at two. She said she held a snake in Italy, but the priest said it was just the fever talking. He couldn't wait to get away.

Cromwell stares at his wife.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Did she leave any message? For me?

MERCY

Just kept saying she was thirsty.

A sound behind them. Cromwell turns to find Rafe in the doorway, deathly pale.

RAFE

The girls.

INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Frantic activity. Johane and Mercy are trying to keep Anne and Grace awake, pummelling and slapping them. It's horrible to watch. The girls are wet with sweat, barely conscious.

Only Anne's hands struggle, clenching and unclenching. Cromwell takes the little hand in his, tries to hold it. He watches them hitting his daughters.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Mumbling)

Don't. (Beat) Don't. Don't.

He paws weakly at Johane's arms, until finally she and Mercy stop, exhausted. They stand breathing hard. Mercy turns away, crying.

Cromwell sits, holding Anne's hand, watching his daughters breathing fade and fade...

EXT. AUSTIN FRIARS - DAY

Cromwell stands outside the house, watching the sun dip. Johane joins him.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Everyone said the sweating sickness was back. I should have sent them to the country.

JOHANE

Liz wouldn't have let them go. Anne cried every time you were away.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Anne?

He stares dully ahead, almost drugged with grief.

JOHANE

John and I can stay with you for a while. Look after the household. Until you're...

She doesn't know how to finish the sentence.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Beat)

She was going to learn Greek.

They're silent for a moment.

JOHANE

Where were you?

THOMAS CROMWELL

Gray's Inn.

JOHANE

Rafe went there. They swore you weren't inside.

THOMAS CROMWELL

I was with Little Bilney. I didn't want Rafe... it wasn't safe.

JOHANE

And later?

THOMAS CROMWELL

I met a man from Rostock, fur importer, I asked him and he said he could start me off if I...
(realising he's rambling) I was learning Polish.

JOHANE

You would be.

She's crying, turning her faces to the bricks. Cromwell stares ahead.

EXT. PUTNEY - BLACKSMITHS YARD - DAY

We're TRACKING in on the courtyard, the dark, somehow sinister entrance to the SMITHY beyond. We CLOSE on one particular corner of the yard, the cobble stones, closer and closer...

Cromwell stands staring down at the cold stones. A long beat.

WALTER (O.S.)

Where've you been?

He turns to find his father WALTER staring at him from the darkness of the smithy. In his sixties, but still powerfully built. Still frightening.

SMITHY - LATER

Cromwell stands in the darkness of the forge, picking up the blacksmith's tools, hefts a hammer, feeling the familiar weight again. Walter is shoeing a horse.

WALTER

You look like a foreigner.

THOMAS CROMWELL

I am a foreigner.

WALTER

Where'd you go?

THOMAS CROMWELL

Here and there.

WALTER

Working for Wolsey now I hear.

THOMAS CROMWELL

I'm a lawyer.

Walter spits.

WALTER

Lawyer. You were always a talker.
Slap in the mouth couldn't cure
you.

THOMAS CROMWELL

God knows you tried.

Walter works the shoe, the horse skitters nervously.
Automatically Cromwell takes his place at the animal's head,
calms it, stroking its nose.

WALTER

Law. If it weren't for the so-
called law I'd be a lord. Cromwells
had money. We had estates. Thieved
off us. By lawyers. Suppose you
don't admit to me, now, do you?
Suppose you hoped I'd be dead.
(Beat) Why you here?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Beat)

You have a grandson.

WALTER

I've plenty of those already. Don't
need another fucking grandson.

Cromwell stares into the horse's eyes, is horrified to feel
his own eyes start to swim with tears.

THOMAS CROMWELL

My wife asked me to see you.

WALTER

Well, now you have.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Yes. Now I have.

He drops the hammer, walks back out into the bright day.

INT. YORK PLACE - DAY

Wolsey is back from France, pacing the room. Cromwell is
working at his papers.

CARDINAL WOLSEY

You will hear that the king's
reception of me was cool. That
is only partly true. But my mission
could not be described as an over-
whelming success. The cardinals
wouldn't meet me. They said it was
too hot to travel south.

He laughs, despite himself.

CARDINAL WOLSEY (CONT'D)
 So - what next? A new plan. A
 Legatine Court. We ask the pope to
 send an envoy to act in his name,
 try the matter here in England.

He notices Cromwell isn't looking at him.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 While you were in France my wife
 and girls died.

Wolsey's hand flies to his heart. He sits slowly.

CARDINAL WOLSEY
 Oh Tom. (Beat) Whom the Lord
 loveth...

THOMAS CROMWELL
 Yes. (Beat) Yes.

He turns back to his papers. Wolsey watches him. They sit in
 silence.

DARKNESS

...And then, passing us, GRACE, wearing her PEACOCK WINGS.
 She looks over her shoulder at us with a sleepy smile. She
 walks on into shadow, her wings dissolving into black...

INT. ESHER - HALL - NIGHT

Cromwell sits by the great window, staring at the pages of
 LIZ'S PRAYER BOOK, an ILLUMINATION: an angel with wings of
 heavenly blue.

A CHILD'S HAND appears, traces the outline of the wings,
 rests lightly on his hand.

Cromwell blinks away the tears, blinks away the vision.
 Cavendish appears beside him.

CAVENDISH
 (Concerned)
 Master Cromwell?

He notices the book.

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)
 (Heavily)
 Thomas Cromwell reading a prayer
 book. Now I know how bad things
 are.

THOMAS CROMWELL

How is he?

CAVENDISH

He asks after you. The minute
you're gone. Worries you'll fall on
the road.

Cromwell stares out, running through options.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Beat)

Have you the full inventory for
York Place ready George?

Cavendish looks at him, puzzled.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)

I'll take it to her.

CAVENDISH

The *Lady Anne*?

THOMAS CROMWELL

She should know all's in order.

EXT. YORK PLACE - MORNING

Cromwell approaches the gates. Some CHILDREN stand watching,
carrying bundles of rushes. Cromwell stops to give them
coins.

CHILD

Are you going to see the evil lady?

THOMAS CROMWELL

I am.

CHILD

She's a witch. Have you got a holy
medal? To protect you?

Cromwell stares at the familiar palace.

THOMAS CROMWELL

I had one. But I lost it.

INT. YORK PLACE - ANTECHAMBER - DAY

Cromwell walks the familiar rooms. He sees MARK SMEATON
leaning against a wall.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Mark? You're about early. How are
you?

A sulky shrug.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
It must feel strange to be here at
York Place? Now the world is
altered?

MARK SMEATON
No.

THOMAS CROMWELL
You don't miss my lord cardinal?

MARK SMEATON
No.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Well. You might not think of us,
Mark. But we think of you.

He walks on.

INT. YORK PLACE - AUDIENCE CHAMBER - MORNING

As Cromwell enters a flurry of little dogs run yapping at
him.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Don't let them out!

Cromwell neatly scoops the dogs up. They pant excitedly, lick
at his face. A woman approaches: ANNE BOLEYN.

Behind, her women sit sewing. They include her blonde sister
MARY BOLEYN, and their cousin MARY SHELTON, who studies him
with curiosity.

Behind them, half-hidden in the shadows is a younger girl,
face bowed. This is JANE SEYMOUR.

Cromwell puts two dogs down, hands the third back to Anne.

THOMAS CROMWELL
(Bowing)
Lady Anne.

ANNE BOLEYN
Vous etes gentil.

She examines him.

ANNE BOLEYN (CONT'D)
(Softly)
Alors, Master Cromwell...

She pronounces it with an affected French accent - *Cremuel*.

ANNE BOLEYN (CONT'D)
You have your inventories?

He hands them to her. She examines him.

ANNE BOLEYN (CONT'D)
My Uncle Norfolk speaks of you. He says he finds you amusing.

THOMAS CROMWELL
I'm glad of it. But you, madame? Do you laugh? In your situation? As you find it?

A black look.

ANNE BOLEYN
I suppose I seldom. Laugh. If I think. But I had not thought. Thank you for this.

She turns from him.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Give me a moment.

She pauses.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
Let me put it this way. Since my lord cardinal was reduced, how much progress have you seen in your cause?

She stands still, her back to him. The others watch intently.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
He is the only man in England who can obtain for you what you need.

Beat. She doesn't turn. Then...

ANNE BOLEYN
Very well. Make his case. You have five minutes.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Otherwise, I can see you're really busy.

She turns to him, another black look.

ANNE BOLEYN
(French, subtitled)
What do you know of how I occupy my hours?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 (French, subtitled)
 English or French? Your choice
 entirely, but let's make it one or
 the other, yes?

Behind the others, the shadowy Jane Seymour raises her face
 for the first time, and looks at him, shocked. Or perhaps
 interested.

ANNE BOLEYN
 (Tight)
 Very well. English.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 The cardinal is the only man who
 can deliver an annulment from the
 Pope. The only man who can deliver
 the king's conscience, and deliver
 it clean.

ANNE BOLEYN
 If the king wants it, and,
 according to you, the cardinal,
 formerly the chief subject of the
 kingdom, wants it... then I must
 say Master Cremuel, it's all taking
 a marvellous long while to come to
 pass.

MARY BOLEYN
 (Murmuring)
 And she's not getting any younger.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 No-one is more distressed than the
 cardinal that the king should not
 have his heart's desire. He knows
 all the king's subjects repose
 their hopes in you, for an heir to
 the throne.

ANNE BOLEYN
 (Beat)
 Very nice. Very nice Master
 Cremuel. But try again. One thing.
 One *simple thing* we asked of the
 cardinal. And he would not.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 You know it wasn't simple.

ANNE BOLEYN
 Perhaps I am a simple person. Do
 you feel I am?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 You may be. I don't know you.

Mary Boleyn smirks. Incensed, Anne turns from him.

ANNE BOLEYN
You may go.

INT. YORK PLACE - ANTECHAMBER - MORNING

Cromwell is leaving, furious with himself. He hears footsteps and finds MARY BOLEYN behind him.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Lady Mary.

MARY BOLEYN
God, I thought she would slap you.
My sister likes a good fight. Come
again. I can't wait!

THOMAS CROMWELL
Your sister can, I think.

MARY BOLEYN
Oh she knows how to wait.

THOMAS CROMWELL
So I hear. They say she and the
king...

MARY BOLEYN
Still haven't. It's true.
She lets him pull down her shift
and kiss her breasts.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Good man if he can find them.

Mary gives a boisterous laugh. The pale Jane Seymour appears behind her.

JANE SEYMOUR
Lady Mary, Lady Anne wants you.

Mary rolls her eyes.

MARY BOLEYN
By the saints!

She turns and hurries back. Cromwell stares after them and is surprised to see Jane Seymour catch his glance before following Mary.

EXT. YORK PLACE - MORNING

Cromwell leaves, Rafe and Richard with him.

THOMAS CROMWELL
I need a seat in Parliament again.

RAFE
Why?

THOMAS CROMWELL
Because if I'm not there to speak
for the cardinal they're going to
kill him.

INT. BLACKFRIARS - CORRIDOR - LONDON - DAY

The priory used for meetings of Parliament. Cromwell walks
along the corridor.

INT. BLACKFRIARS - ROOM - DAY

Cromwell stands waiting. The DUKE OF NORFOLK strides in,
rattling from the various holy relics he's wearing. He
ignores Cromwell, crosses to a fire, stands warming his
hands. Finally...

DUKE OF NORFOLK
Cromwell, I am content you are a
burgess in the Parliament.

THOMAS CROMWELL
My Lord.

DUKE OF NORFOLK
I spoke to the king for you and he
is also content. You will take his
instructions in the Commons. And
mine.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Will they be the same, my Lord?

Norfolk scowls, paces the room, rattling faintly. At last...

DUKE OF NORFOLK
Damn it all, Cromwell, why are you
such a... *person*? It isn't as if
you can afford to be.

Cromwell smiles.

DUKE OF NORFOLK (CONT'D)
Smile away! The king will give you
an audience but he is preparing a
quarrel with you, master. Oh, yes!
He has a long memory and he well
remembers when you were a burgess
of the Parliament before this, and
how you spoke against his war!

THOMAS CROMWELL

I hope he still doesn't think of
invading France.

DUKE OF NORFOLK

God damn you! What Englishman
doesn't! We own France! We have to
take back our own!

His cheek twitches with rage. He rubs it, paces the room,
turns, suddenly matter-of-fact.

DUKE OF NORFOLK (CONT'D)

Mind you. You're right. We can't
win. But we have to fight anyway.
That's what was wrong with Wolsey.
Always at the treaty table. How can
a butcher's son understand...

THOMAS CROMWELL

La gloire?

DUKE OF NORFOLK

Are you a butcher's son?

THOMAS CROMWELL

Blacksmith's.

DUKE OF NORFOLK

Are you really? Shoe a horse?

THOMAS CROMWELL

If I were put to it. (Beat) I was a
soldier myself.

DUKE OF NORFOLK

Were you? Not in any English army,
I'll be bound. (Grinning) There, I
knew there was something I didn't
like about you, but I couldn't put
my finger on it. Where were you?

THOMAS CROMWELL

Garigliano.

DUKE OF NORFOLK

With?

THOMAS CROMWELL

The French.

DUKE OF NORFOLK

(Whistling)
Wrong side, lad.

THOMAS CROMWELL

I noticed.

DUKE OF NORFOLK
 Longbow-man?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 Now and then. On the short side for
 that.

DUKE OF NORFOLK
 Me too. Now Henry can draw a bow.
 Very nice. Got the arm.

Cromwell waits, but Norfolk stands, absent.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 (Carefully)
 My lord, Esher is not suitable for
 my lord cardinal. He is willing to
 travel to his palace at Winchester?

DUKE OF NORFOLK
 Oh, I'm sure he is. Nice and close
 to the king! Don't take us for
 fools. Tell your cardinal he had
 his last chance, with his court,
 here in this very building! Tell
 him to go north.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 He isn't ready to go north.

DUKE OF NORFOLK
 But I want him north! Tell him
 Norfolk wants him on the road, out
 of here or tell him I will come to
 him and tear him with my teeth!

THOMAS CROMWELL
 (Beat)
 May I substitute the word "bite"
 for "tear."

Norfolk advances on him, cheek twitching again.

DUKE OF NORFOLK
 Substitute nothing, you, you...
nobody!

He jabs a finger into Cromwell's chest. Cromwell doesn't move
 an inch. Beat. Norfolk turns away.

DUKE OF NORFOLK (CONT'D)
 I tell you, Cromwell, you've got
 face coming here.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 My lord - you asked me to come.

DUKE OF NORFOLK

Did I? (a moment of genuine alarm)
Christ, it's come to that?

INT. BLACKFRIARS - CORRIDOR - DAY

Cromwell is leaving. He passes a doorway, pauses, looks in. And suddenly we are in...

INT. BLACKFRIARS - LEGATINE COURT - DAY

June, 1529 The day of the LEGATINE COURT, Wolsey's last chance.

The hall is packed. The whole bench of bishops is assembled. At the head are Wolsey and the papal envoy CARDINAL CAMPEGGIO. Before them stands QUEEN KATHERINE, now in her forties, tightly laced into her bodice.

Cromwell and Rafe stand at the back listening as the Queen finishes her statement.

QUEEN KATHERINE

For twenty years I have been your true wife and by me you have had many children, although it pleased God to call them from this world, which was no fault of mine. And when you had me first, as God is my witness, I was a true maid, without touch of man.

A murmur runs through the court.

QUEEN KATHERINE (CONT'D)

And whether this is true or not, I put to your conscience.

At last we see the man she is addressing - HENRY VIII: tall, still trim, hair curled, wearing ermine and an impassive expression. He doesn't look at her.

LATER

An extremely elderly courtier - the EARL OF SHREWSBURY - is giving evidence.

EARL OF SHREWSBURY

On Prince Arthur's wedding night, myself and the Earl of Oxford took the prince to Queen Katherine's chamber, and we were there when he climbed into bed beside her.

(MORE)

EARL OF SHREWSBURY (CONT'D)

And then the next morning, out he comes again and says he's thirsty, asks for some ale, because he says "Last night I was in Spain."

He smiles, toothless, at the joke, looks to CARDINAL CAMPEGGIO.

EARL OF SHREWSBURY (CONT'D)

Because the Queen was Spanish, you see?

Another murmur from the hall. Wolsey, pained, cannot look.

INT. BLACKFRIARS - ANTECHAMBER - LATER

Cromwell and Rafe wait for Wolsey.

RAFE

It would be a poor sort of bridegroom who'd come out in the morning and say "Good day, masters. Nothing done!" He was fifteen, he was boasting. I believe Katherine.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Believe nobody.

Stephen Gardiner walks into the room, passes Cromwell with a cold smile, heading for the main hall.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)

(Cheerfully)

You're late Stephen. They're almost done for the day.

STEPHEN GARDINER

It doesn't matter.

Beat. Something about that smile... Cromwell walks after him, takes his arm.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Why doesn't it matter?

STEPHEN GARDINER

(enjoying this)

News from one of my men in Rome. Pope Clement is preparing to sign a treaty with the Emperor.

Cromwell absorbs this blow. Rafe looks puzzled.

STEPHEN GARDINER (CONT'D)
 Your boy doesn't understand. (To Rafe) The Emperor won't take kindly to the Pope helping to have his Aunt cast off the throne. (To Cromwell) I don't think your papal envoy in there is very likely to give the king what he wants, do you? And when he doesn't, Wolsey will be finished. And then I'll feel sorry for you.

Cromwell stares at him.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 Except you won't.

STEPHEN GARDINER
 Except I won't.

INT. BLACKFRIARS - BACK ROOM - LATER

Cromwell stands watching Wolsey remove his fine scarlet robes. The Cardinal seems suddenly a smaller, vulnerable figure.

EXT. PUTNEY - WALTER'S BLACKSMITH'S YARD - DAY - 1500

TRACKING IN on the same yard as before, the dark, somehow sinister entrance to the SMITHY beyond. We CLOSE on the same corner as before, but now a BOY lies on the cobbles - YOUNG THOMAS. His face is a mask of blood. After a moment WALTER'S boot enters the frame and kicks his head. Young Cromwell vomits, in shock.

WALTER
 That's it. Spew! Spew on my good cobbles! Look what I've done now! Burst my good boot, kicking your head!

He starts to stamp on him. This isn't a father beating his son. This is attempted murder. Walter breathes hard, stamping down. It goes on. And on. Cromwell's face is broken, nose shattered.

WALTER (CONT'D)
 (Screaming)
 Now get up! Get up!

Cromwell is trying to crawl away. Walter kicks him again.

WALTER (CONT'D)
 Come on boy, get up! Let me see you stand on your feet! Get up!

We CLOSE on Cromwell's ruined face, enduring the blows, close to dying...

WALTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

GET UP!

INT. AUSTIN FRIARS - STUDY - NIGHT

Back in the present. It's late and an exhausted, hopeless Cromwell sits at his desk, lost in the memory. He looks up to see Rafe and Richard stand in front of him, awkward.

THOMAS CROMWELL

What is it?

RICHARD

I have a question to put to you. My father is dead and you... you are my father now. So, shall I change my name to yours?

Cromwell stares at him.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Richard, the way things are with me... people will be wanting to change their name from Cromwell to any other.

Richard glances at Rafe who nods him on.

RICHARD

If I had your name, I would never disown it.

Cromwell's face reveals nothing.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

So, shall I change my name to yours?

Cromwell nods, looks down at his papers, shifts them for a moment, controlling himself.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Your father...?

RICHARD

Every day I light a candle for him.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Does that comfort you?

RICHARD

I don't know.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(beat)

Well this... this comforts me.
Richard Cromwell.

RICHARD

Good night.

The two men walk out. Cromwell stares blindly down at the papers.

EXT. GROUNDS - WINDSOR - DAY - 1529

Cromwell stands in the gardens of the palace. Nearby stand a group of NOBLEMEN, NORFOLK and SUFFOLK amongst them. And the king's friend HARRY NORRIS, the only one to look over and smile a greeting.

After a moment three men break off from the group and walk towards him: Norfolk, Suffolk and the KING, dressed in brilliant colours.

SUFFOLK

(Slapping his hands)

Cromwell. How's your fat priest?

Behind him, Henry frown with displeasure at the remark, stands arms folded, staring at the ground. Norfolk and Suffolk understand they are dismissed and walk on. After a beat.

HENRY

So... how is...?

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Beat)

He cannot be well till he has Your Majesty's favour.

HENRY

The list of charges against him grows every day.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Saving Your Majesty, there's an answer to each one, and given a hearing we'd make them.

HENRY

Are you prepared to make them here and now?

THOMAS CROMWELL

Would I come here unprepared?

The king continues to stare at the ground, but his lip curls in what could be a smile.

HENRY

Another day. Suffolk wants to go hunting. (Beat) We usually say, we gentlemen, that the hunt prepares us for war. Which brings us to a sticky point.

THOMAS CROMWELL

(Cheerful)

It does indeed.

HENRY

You said, in Parliament, some six years ago, that I could not afford a war.

Cromwell knows there's no point in backing down.

THOMAS CROMWELL

Wars are not affordable things.

HENRY

When I went into France I captured the town of Therouanne, which in your speech, you called...

THOMAS CROMWELL

A dog-hole, Your Majesty.

HENRY

How could you say so?

THOMAS CROMWELL

I've been there.

Suddenly Henry is shouting.

HENRY

And so have I! At the head of an army! You said I was not to lead my troops! You said if I was taken prisoner, the ransom would bankrupt the country! So, what do you want? You want a king to huddle indoors like a sick girl?

THOMAS CROMWELL

That would be ideal, for fiscal purposes.

The king takes a ragged breath. It's a close call, but he decides to laugh.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)

When Your Majesty's ancestors fought in France, we held whole provinces. From there we could supply.

(MORE)

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
 Now we have only Calais, how can we
 support an army in the interior?

HENRY
 (Beat)
 So when we next go into France
 we'll need a sea coast.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 Yes. Normandy. Or Brittany.

Henry stares at the silver morning. He nods.

HENRY
 Well reasoned. (Beat) You said, in
 your speech, that there was one
 million pounds in gold in the
 realm. How would you come by that
 figure?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 I trained in the Florentine banks.

HENRY
 Norfolk said you were a common
 soldier.

THOMAS CROMWELL
 That too.

HENRY
 Anything else?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 What would your Majesty like me to
 be?

For the first time the king LOOKS HIM FULL IN THE FACE. Out
 of habit, Cromwell returns his gaze.

HENRY
 Master Cromwell, your reputation is
 bad.

Cromwell inclines his head.

HENRY (CONT'D)
 You don't defend yourself?

THOMAS CROMWELL
 Your Majesty is able to form his
 own opinions.

Henry studies him thoughtfully.

HENRY
 I can. I will.

With that he's gone, walking after Suffolk and Norfolk. Cromwell stands, feeling his heart-beat slow again.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - HALLWAY - DAY

Cromwell is leaving. He passes Stephen Gardiner. Gardiner smiles.

THOMAS CROMWELL
Well, well Stephen. Master
Secretary to the King.

STEPHEN GARDINER
And how was that, Cromwell?
Unpleasant, I should think?

THOMAS CROMWELL
(Airily)
On the contrary. Oh, and he's going
out with Suffolk. You'll have to
wait.

He walks on, then slows, stops. A beat.

THOMAS CROMWELL (CONT'D)
Gardiner? Can't we drop this?

Gardiner doesn't look at him.

STEPHEN GARDINER
(Quietly)
No. No I don't think that we can.

Beat. Cromwell nods, walks on.

INT. AUSTIN FRIARS - DAY

Cromwell walks back into his home. Servants stand painting the hall.

SERVANT
Are we to paint out the cardinal's
coat of arms?

Cromwell looks up at the WOLSEY'S COAT OF ARMS: the Tudor rose, the Cornish choughs.

THOMAS CROMWELL
No. Paint it again. Paint it
brighter.

He strides in, taking the steps two at a time...