



MONOLOGUES

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Queens by Kristen Doherty

Henry VIII's fifth wife, Kathryn Howard, is sentenced to death for treason when her relationship with Thomas Culpeper is discovered. Here, she awaits her execution.

KATHRYN HOWARD

If I look outside, I can still see them, though darkness spreads its blackened fingers to extinguish the day, I can still see them... Oh my love. My Thomas, is it you I spy? The very same face that would smile upon me with such love and affection...the very same face with eyes I could feel myself getting lost in... *(Haunted:)* The very same face that greeted me as I was brought through Traitors' Gate. Oh Thomas, I can't bear to see your face, once beautiful and serene, now distorted with fear and pain. Eyes piteously seeking me, and yet your head remains struck atop yonder pole, within my eyesight. Oh, take it away, take them away! For there beside my love is my traitor, Deneham... Eyes accusing, blaming me, blaming me, blaming me... Body gone, gore dripping... Don't stare at me! Stop looking at me!

(Sinks to ground:) Oh, oh, oh, I am so cold, so cold. Will I ever be warm again? However shall I overcome these last torturous hours before my life is snuffed out forever? Before I lose my precious head... *(She touches her head, her face tenderly:)* These eyes that looked upon you with too much love. These silly little ears that listened to the sweetness of your voice. These lips which kissed with too much passion, I say goodbye to you. *(She cries, then corrects herself.)* No, no, no... I must be well remembered. I must die with dignity not with shame. I must be remembered in my death as I never shall be in my life, with courage and decorum. Yes, I must do this right.

Lead me to the block, I must prepare. Then I am ready.

(She steps forward, the FOOL steps forward behind her.)

I will remember those who have gone before me. I must be brave, and I shall remember them... *(She kneels and hesitantly puts her neck upon block, then recoils.)* Oh God! I smell blood. *(Panics, stands up and paces around crying.)* Oh God. I can't do this; I can't do this. I don't want to die; I don't want to die. *(A beat.)* ...But what do I have to live for? Oh, Thomas, I will miss you forever *(A beat.)* ...Or will I? Maybe I shall hold you in my arms once again... *(Composes herself.)* Oh Thomas, I never longed so much for anything, as I do to see you and to speak with you, which I trust shall be shortly now. That which doth comfort me very much when I think on it. Pray God, it is quick... Now I am ready.

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Length: 90 minutes **Cast Size:** 10-35 actors (suggested casting: 7F, 2M, 7 any) **Genre:** Historical Drama

Synopsis: King Henry VIII is trapped in purgatory, bound to his throne by a sinister Fool and the ghostly Women in White. Here in his gilded cage, he is forced to relive the sins he committed against his queens, mistresses and people of the court, over and over again, for an eternity.

(A one-act version of this play is also available.)