

The Price of Ambition

Georgette Koller

Senior Division

Historical Paper

Paper Length: 1,522

"Do you think he will kill me?" Anne questioned, her voice light as if she were talking to a young child. She had a thoughtful expression on her face, her eyes scanning over the air in front of her almost like she was watching a picture play out in her mind.

"Do not talk about such things!" Thomas exclaimed, shocked that she had even thought about her death in such a casual manner. Of course he wanted to assure her that King Henry would most certainly not kill her when they wed, but he knew that he would be lying to both himself and Anne.

No words were exchanged between the pair after that. The only sound that could be heard was the chirping of birds. A gust of wind brushed against the flowers that were displayed in front of them. The oak tree above them cast a shadow over both of their eyes so the sun would not bother them. They could both hear a stray dog barking in the far distance, somewhere on the outskirts of the town. It was a rather nice day in England considering the horrid weather which always seemed to hang over city like a disease.

After a couple moments she finally broke the silence that had stretched between them, her voice softening after realizing she had upset him. "We both know it's going to happen someday," Anne said with a gentle tone, her head tilting in his direction.

"Everyone does."

Thomas shook his head, tilting his body to face her. "I'd protect you. Don't worry, I promise nothing will happen to you."

She laughed, dipping her head back and letting the beautiful sound float across the bright blue sky. "Of course you would."

Thomas winced at the memory. That had only been about thirteen years ago, when he had first met her and her head was still sitting peacefully on her shoulders.

Now, he sits in the darkened Tower of London. It was suddenly less enchanting from when he'd first arrived there. Thomas could hear her sobbing, grief stricken ladies-in-waiting down the hallway as they carried her body to be prepared for burial. He imagined their watering eyes trained on the once vibrant cunning woman who would now be packed away in a box underground for the rest of eternity.

This is what happens when you displease the King.

He looks away from the door where he can still hear the grieving women mourn, instead finding that the glass windows were far more interesting to watch. Rain splattered against their surface as the sky opened up above the world. His heart ached, the lack of anguish and sorrow of all of those around him pressed tight against his weakened mind. He still couldn't believe that Henry had actually done it, and seemingly felt no mercy whatsoever if the whispered rumors he had heard lately were true. The King was to be married to his mistress Jane Seymour very soon.

Thomas could not stand it any longer.

He abruptly stood up and shuffled away from where he'd been sitting on the ground, feeling suffocated by the agonizing emotions that raged inside him. Walking with powerful strides towards the exit of the room, he tugged on the handles of the large wooden doors that he knew he had no chance of opening. Just as he predicted, they

didn't budge. Thomas moved back to the windows, placing one of his hands against the pane of glass. He could feel the dense atmosphere of the open world beneath his fingertips, causing a shiver to run down his spine.

His breathing was ragged, chest rising and falling in an uncertain rhythm. The poet could still hear her voice ring through out the court, her final words to a cruel and uncaring world. Thomas closed his eyes and sharply turned away from the window, finding it difficult to look down at the raised platform where she had just stood less than a few minutes ago.

King Henry murdered the girl he was so infatuated with for his own selfish reasons. Beautiful, bright Anne Boleyn did not deserve what she received.

Thomas wished there was some kind of justice to her death. It killed him knowing that everyone simply would go on with their lives after this. How could they? Don't they realize what a horrible mistake this was? He was sure he probably looked as crazy as he sounded. The poet remembered when they had first met almost as clearly as he knew his birth name.

The warm summer night begged him to step outside. The court had thrown a pageant in honour of the imperial ambassadors at the Château Vert. Anne's golden brown locks were gracefully pinned up in an eccentric style. He remembered the simple white dress she had worn as she twirled across the dance floor. It's fabric was embroidered with gold thread and although several other ladies of the court wore the same thing, her beauty and charm caused her to stand out the most. This was the

reason his feet were planted on the floor instead of leading him outdoors to catch his breath.

Amazingly, she was still able to catch him observing her despite the many suitors who stood beside her. But instead of turning away with a disgusted sigh like any other normal woman would have done, she winked at him.

Of course it was merely courtly love and she didn't mean anything by it, but the small action still caused his heart to stop beating for just a moment. His breath caught in his throat when the woman began to walk towards him. Her eyes held a spark that he had never seen before. Thomas hadn't noticed, but he too had begun to gravitate across the room to meet her half way.

Unfortunately, the moment was ruined when he saw the other suitors who had previously surrounded her were still moving to catch up with the woman. One of them kept accidentally stepping on the hem of her satin dress, and although she kept waving it off whenever he swiftly apologized he could tell she was getting frustrated with her present company.

Thomas saw this as the perfect opportunity to save her from the embarrassment of a ripped gown. He took long strides across the room towards her, their eyes stayed locked on each other and it felt like an eternity until he had finally reached the breathtaking woman. The poet only needed to offer his hand to her before she was gently grabbing it with a grateful look. He led them out on the dance floor and within

*moments they had fallen into a routine of twirling around one another and losing themselves in the music.*¹

Thomas let out a shaky breath that he hadn't realized he'd been holding. This was it. These were his final moments on this Earth, and he was using them to think about the dead queen who hadn't given him the time of day. He eased himself off of the wall and turned to the small desk in the corner of the room, walking over to the piece of furniture and settling down on to the wooden bench that accompanied it. After pulling out a piece of parchment and a quill, Thomas began to write.

'Who list his wealth and ease retain,
Himself let him unknown contain.
Press not too fast in at that gate
Where the return stands by disdain,
For sure, *circa Regna tonat.*'

His hand danced across the paper as his full attention was now submerged in his work and thoughts.

'The high mountains are blasted oft
When the low valley is mild and soft.
Fortune with Health stands at debate.
The fall is grievous from aloft.
And sure, *circa Regna tonat.*'

This would be the last of his work, a final farewell to life and the beautiful gifts it had

¹ Josephine, Wilkinson. *The Early Loves of Anne Boleyn*. Amberley, 2010. Novel

to offer.

'These bloody days have broken my heart.

My lust, my youth did them depart,

And blind desire of estate.

Who hastes to climb seeks to revert.

Of truth, *circa Regna tonat.*'

Thomas recalled her soft golden locks of hair and the bright spark of curiosity her eyes always held. He swallowed the small cry that rose up in his throat at the thought.

'The bell tower showed me such sight

'That in my head sticks day and night.

There did I learn out of a grate,

For all favour, glory, or might,

That yet *circa Regna tonat.*'

He wondered what Anne's final thoughts were as she knelt on that wooden platform. Was she scared? Was Thomas scared? The poet liked to think that he wasn't. He wanted to face death almost as bravely as she had.

By proof, I say, there did I learn:

'Wit helpeth not defence too yerne,

Of innocency to plead or prate.

Bear low, therefore, give God the stern,

For sure, *circa Regna tonat.*²

² Thomas, Wyatt. "Luminarium." 2012. *Luminarium.org*. Poem. 14 January 2018.

Thomas finished the work by signing his name at the bottom of the paper.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Thomas, Wyatt. "Luminarium." 2012. *Luminarium.org*. Poem. 14 January 2018.

This source helped me to understand how Thomas Wyatt was feeling during the time he was held prisoner during Anne Boleyn's execution.

Wyatt, George. "The Life of Queen Anne Boleigne." Wyatt, George. n.d. 424.

Manuscript.

This manuscript was, which was written by Thomas' grandson, give us insight on what Thomas really thought about Anne Boleyn. Which helped me to write this story with his perspective.

Secondary Sources

Gilfillan, George (1858). *The Poetical Works of Sir Thomas Wyatt*

This book includes most of Thomas Wyatt's works, including the poem's which he wrote about Anne Boleyn.

Warnicke, Retha M. "The Eternal Triangle and Court Politics: Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, and Sir Thomas Wyatt." *Albion*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 565–579.,
doi:10.2307/4050130.

This small excerpt let's me know how King Henry VII played a role in Anne Boleyn and Thomas Wyatt's relationship.

Josephine, Wilkinson. *The Early Loves of Anne Boleyn*. Amberley, 2010. Novel

This book helped me understand the nature of Thomas Wyatt and Anne Boleyn's relationship together.