

# Anne Hutchinson

by  
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## Cast

**Anne Hutchinson**  
**Francis Marbury**, Anne's father  
**William Hutchinson**, Anne's husband  
**Zechariah Symmes**, a minister  
**Henry Vane**, governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1636-1637  
**Mary Dyer**, Anne's friend  
**John Winthrop**, first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony  
**John Coggeshall**, Anne's friend  
**John Cotton**, a minister  
**Thomas Dudley**, Winthrop's deputy governor  
**John Wilson**, pastor of Boston's Congregational Church  
**Edward Hutchinson**, Anne's and William's son  
**Narrators A-I**

This play is based on actual events. All characters were real people.

### *About This Play*

Today, we take freedom of religion for granted. But the right to worship as we please was not won without a struggle. Until the adoption of the Bill of Rights in 1791, many Europeans who came to America in search of religious freedom instead found religious **intolerance** (a refusal to allow freedom of expression). People who disagreed with religious leaders were jailed, **banished** (forced to move), or hanged.

Still, many Americans risked their lives to fight for religious freedom. Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643) was one such person. Hutchinson lived during a time when women were not allowed to speak out on politics or religion. But she caused a major controversy in Massachusetts Bay Colony by bringing the issue of religious intolerance into the open. Her fight cost her dearly, but she never gave it up.

### *Scene 1*

**Narrator A:** Anne Hutchinson was born in England in 1591. Her father, Francis Marbury, was a minister of the Church of England, that country's official church. But he often criticized the church and by age 23 had been jailed three times for that offense.

Although Anne probably had no formal schooling, her father taught her a great deal. One day, he finds Anne in his library . . .

**Francis Marbury:** Have you been reading, child?

**Anne:** Yes, the Bible, and some of your papers.

**Marbury:** Which ones?

**Anne:** Well, one was the account of your trial in 1578.

**Marbury:** That was a difficult trial.

**Anne:** But you defended yourself well.

**Marbury:** You must be prepared to defend yourself if you want to make your voice heard in the world.

**Anne Hutchinson came to America to worship according to her beliefs. She didn't know that she would have to fight for that right.**



*Like many colonists, Anne Hutchinson came to America in search of religious freedom. But in Massachusetts Bay Colony, she found only intolerance. At great personal cost, she led a fight to win tolerance and religious freedom.*

**Narrator A:** Anne starts to say more, but hesitates.

**Marbury:** What is it, Anne?

**Anne:** I also saw some papers that said women are capable of entering the ministry. Do you agree with that?

**Marbury:** Yes, I do.

**Anne:** But that is unheard of in the church!

**Marbury:** The Church of England is not always right, Anne.

### *Scene 2*

**Narrator B:** In 1612, Anne marries William Hutchinson. The two travel 25 miles on horseback to hear

the Reverend John Cotton speak. Afterward . . .

**Anne:** The Reverend Cotton may belong to the Church of England, but he preaches like a Puritan.

**William Hutchinson:** You are right. He holds more simplified religious services and focuses more on the Bible than most ministers.

**Anne:** He seems to have a great understanding of God, whom he sees as more kind than cruel. I wish that other ministers would preach about God's love, as Reverend Cotton does.

**William:** We should attend his services as often as possible.

**Anne:** Yes. He is one of the few ministers worth listening to.

**Narrator B:** Anne keeps busy raising a large family and serving her neighbors as a nurse. But she enjoys Cotton's preaching so much that she begins to hold meetings in her home for local women to discuss his sermons and other religious subjects.

### *Scene 3*

**Narrator C:** When Charles I becomes king of England in 1625, John Cotton's ideas begin to cause Cotton trouble. In 1633, he secretly sails to Massachusetts Bay Colony in Ameri-

ca to escape religious persecution [harassment]. The Hutchinsons make the same journey the following year. Anne often speaks her mind during the two-month voyage across the Atlantic. When she does not like the preaching of Zechariah Symmes, a minister on board the ship, she tells him so.

**Anne:** God is not so harsh as you say. When we reach Boston, I will prove that your teaching is full of errors.

**Zechariah Symmes:** How dare you speak to me thus? You are but a woman and must obey your husband and your minister.

**Anne:** I obey God and my conscience.

**Symmes:** You slight ministers and the word of God.

**Narrator C:** Anne does not know that most of the leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony are just as intolerant of differences of religious opinion as Symmes is.

#### Scene 4

**Narrator D:** After they settle in Boston, Massachusetts, Anne again holds religious meetings in her home. At first, only a few local women attend. But as word spreads about her inspired talks, more and more people, including men, attend. Anne is a bold leader, and speaks freely. At a meeting in 1636 . . .

**Anne:** You do not need ministers to teach you God's ways. You can find God on your own.

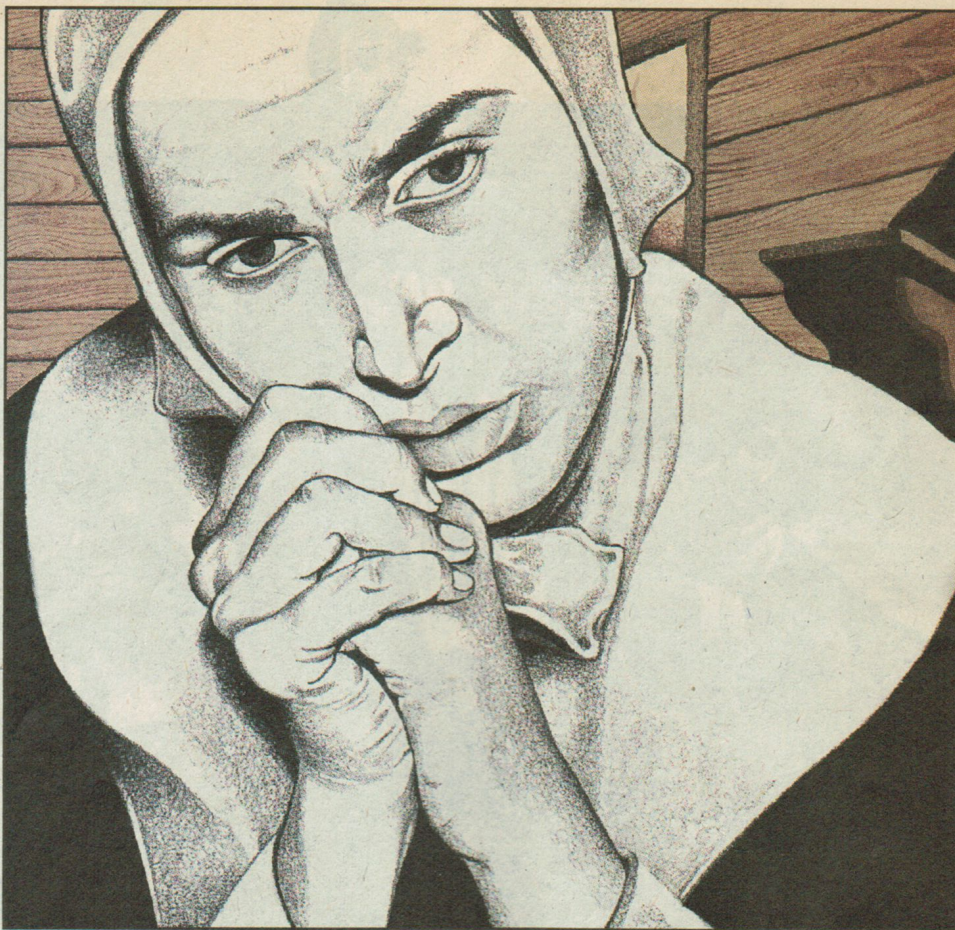
**Governor Henry Vane:** Do not let the ministers hear you speak thus.

**Anne:** Reverend Wilson already knows how I feel. I have had to lead people out of church during his misguided sermons.

**Mary Dyer:** Are all ministers misguided?

**Anne:** John Cotton and John Wheelwright are the only two good ministers in this colony.

**Narrator D:** Anne Hutchinson makes many enemies with such statements. She also manages to divide the colony in half. She and Governor Vane are on one side; Minister Wilson, the pastor of Boston's Congre-



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gational Church, and John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, are on the other side. Hutchinson and Vane want both government and religion to be less strict. Wilson and Winthrop want to maintain strict control of the colonists' political and religious behavior.

Winthrop runs against Vane for governor in the 1637 election. Since Hutchinson has many supporters in Boston, Winthrop moves the election outside of the city to make it more difficult for them to vote. His tactic works and he wins the election.

#### Scene 5

**Narrator E:** With Governor Winthrop on their side, the ministers are free to turn on Anne. She is called to trial on a bitter-cold day in November 1637. The pregnant, 46-year-old woman stands in the packed, unheated meeting room and listens to Winthrop. The governor is both her judge and prosecutor [person who argues the government's case

against the accused].

**Governor John Winthrop:** Mrs. Hutchinson, you are accused of having troubled the peace of the both the colony and the churches.

**Anne:** What law have I broken?

**Winthrop:** The law passed two months ago that decreed that all large meetings of women must cease.

**Anne:** God tells us in the Book of Titus that "the elder women shall instruct the younger." I am only following what the Bible says.

**Winthrop:** You have also insulted all of the colony's ministers and said that they are unfit to preach.

**Anne:** No, sir. I have only said that some of them preach more clearly than others.

**Narrator E:** All afternoon and well after dusk, Anne Hutchinson defends herself against her accusers. Winthrop becomes frustrated.

**Winthrop:** The court has given you the opportunity to admit to your wrongs, but you refuse to do so. The court will meet again tomorrow.



**"Mrs. Hutchinson, the sentence of the court is that you are banished . . . as being a woman not fit for society, and are to be imprisoned till the court shall send you away."**

### Scene 6

**Narrator F:** Anne returns the next day exhausted, but she is still determined to fight. . . .

**Anne:** I demand that all my accusers repeat their testimony under oath.

**Winthrop:** Are there any present who are not satisfied with the testimony already given by the ministers?

**John Coggeshall:** I dare say that she did not say all of which she is accused.

**Narrator F:** Anne is winning her case. Then she makes a speech that proves to be her undoing.

**Anne:** You condemn me for speaking what I know to be the truth.

**Thomas Dudley:** How do *you* know what is the truth?

**Anne:** How did Abraham know that it was God who wanted him to offer his son as a sacrifice?

**Dudley:** God told him in a revelation.

**Anne:** I was told in the same way.

**Narrator F:** The people in the court are stunned. They are amazed that this woman believes that she has had a revelation from God. Few Puritan

women would dare to think that they deserved such notice. Anne continues to dig her own grave . . .

**Anne:** If you go on in this course, you will bring a curse upon you, and the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

**Narrator F:** Now the court is in an uproar about what one minister calls Anne's "devilish delusion."

**Winthrop:** Let us vote to **censure** [condemn] and banish this woman, for she is the root of all the mischief we have suffered.

**Narrator F:** Only two members of the court **dissent** [disagree].

**Winthrop:** Mrs. Hutchinson, the sentence of the court is that you are banished from out of our **jurisdiction** [area of rule] as being a woman not fit for society, and are to be imprisoned till the court shall send you away.

**Anne:** I desire to know why I am to be banished.

**Winthrop:** Say no more. The court knows why and is satisfied.

**Narrator H:** Anne is kept under house arrest far from her family and friends until spring.

### Scene 7

**Narrator I:** Anne's battle is not yet over. Early in 1638, Reverend Wilson calls the weak and very-pregnant woman before the church.

**John Wilson:** Mrs. Hutchinson, you have in so many ways troubled the church with your errors.

**Narrator I:** Anne's accusers keep listing her offences until her son finally interrupts . . .

**Edward Hutchinson:** You misunderstand—

**Wilson:** Silence, sinner!

**Narrator I:** Even John Cotton turns against Anne. . . .

**John Cotton:** You have been an instrument of doing some good amongst us, Mrs. Hutchinson. But the evil of your opinions do outweigh all the good of your doings.

**Narrator I:** This attack lasts for many hours. Finally, Wilson speaks the words he has dreamed of for so long:

**Wilson:** Anne Hutchinson, I do cast

you out. . . . I deliver you up to Satan!

**Anne:** Better to be cast out of the church than to deny Christ. \*

**Narrator I:** As weak as she is, Anne holds her head high as she walks out of the meetinghouse.

### Afterword

That spring, Anne Hutchinson and her family traveled 65 miles south on foot and by canoe to the settlements founded by Roger Williams, who had been banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony two years earlier. They made their new home in what is now Rhode Island.

When William Hutchinson died in 1642, Anne moved her family to New York. There, in the late summer of 1643, she and all but one of her children were massacred by Indians. When this news reached Boston, the clergy there rejoiced. "The Lord," said one of her persecutors, "heard our groans to Heaven and freed us from our great and sore affliction."

History remembers Anne Hutchinson differently. She was one of the first Americans to fight for religious freedom. Neither the government nor the clergy of her time could silence her. ☆

### YOUR TURN

#### Word Match

- |                 |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. intolerance  | a. send away               |
| 2. banish       | b. area of rule            |
| 3. persecution  | c. prejudice               |
| 4. prosecution  | d. harassment              |
| 5. jurisdiction | e. brings charges in court |

#### Think About It

1. Why did government officials in Massachusetts Bay Colony become so angry with Anne Hutchinson?

2. Who was the winner in the dispute between Hutchinson and Massachusetts Bay? Explain.