**Film – a Man for All Seasons– Summary**

A Man for all Seasons is the story about a man named Thomas More (the author of Utopia) and his reaction to the great church split in the 1500’s when King Henry VIII declared himself to be the head of the Church of England, thereby disconnecting himself from the rules and authority of the pope. The story begins with Thomas More, a fairly wealthy judge, is summoned to see the Chancellor of the land, who is the highest advisor to the king. Cardinal Wolsey, the Chancellor, tells Thomas that the king is unable to bear children with his current wife, and that he wants to get a divorce in order to marry someone else and have a son to give the throne an heir. The Catholic Church, however, strictly forbids divorce. The King has instructed the cardinal with getting the pope’s approval so he can divorce his wife, and the Cardinal wants Thomas’ support in the matter, as he is a very honest and popular man of political power. Thomas strictly refuses to lend the Cardinal his support in this matter, as he is a very pious man of conscience. He disagrees with the Kings divorce, though he is VERY careful not to state so, for speaking out against the king’s decision is an act of treason punishable by death, since as a judge he has sworn loyalty to the king.

Later, a young student from Cambridge named Richard speaks with Thomas about acquiring a position in his office of court. Richard strongly desires to be a rich and famous statesman, although Thomas refuses Richard because he does not want Richard to be subjected to numerous bribes and temptations, which Thomas himself must endure on a daily basis. We also meet a man by the name of William Roper, a young heretic who used to be a churchman. He is a good man who wants to marry Thomas’ daughter Margaret. But since he is a heretic, Thomas refuses. William is a heretic because he strongly believes in the evil and corruption of the Catholic Church. Later in the story William changes his ideals slightly and becomes a catholic again so as he can marry Margaret, though he still holds fast to the corrupted nature of the church. During this whole ordeal Thomas is very careful never to tell anyone about what he thinks about the king’s situation, so that way no one will have a testimony against him.

King Henry’s Chancellor failed him by being unable to get the King the pope’s approval on divorcing his wife. He is removed of his Chancellor status and the title is given to Thomas, who is very good friends with the King. Later King Henry declares himself to be the head of the Church of England and removes himself from underneath the Pope’s authority. Thomas resigns as Chancellor because he disagrees with the King’s decision, though once again he never openly disagrees. He only stays silent and refuses to support the king’s actions.

A powerful statesmen named Crowley, begins to lead an investigation as to why Thomas More, a close friend and ex-advisor to the king, would be unwilling to sign the agreement that recognizes and honors King Henry’s title as head of the Church of England. Crowley tries to find some sort of proof that Thomas disagrees with the ideas of the king, though he can find no evidence and Thomas is very careful not to say anything. Ultimately Crowley, along with the king and many other statesmen, want Thomas to either sign the agreement and ‘join the team,’ or they want him to admit that he disagrees with the King’s ideas and they can behead him under the pretense of treason. Thomas is eventually taken prisoner and interrogated many times, not being allowed to see his family, being held under guard in a cell, all in an attempt to either get him to sign the agreement or to openly disagree. Thomas is a stone wall, however, and stays completely silent. As a man of the law Thomas knows that he is innocent under the law as long as he stays silent. He does all of this and stands true to his morals because, as he says in the film, He loves God, he loves his family, and has a duty to his conscience. This representation of Thomas More in the film is very similar to the ideas found by the *actual* Thomas more in his very famous work *Utopia*. In *Utopia*, the purpose of life as seen by the Utopians is to love god, love others, and to do the right thing – do good works.

Thomas is eventually taken to court and accused by Crowley of high treason and completely rejecting the king’s title as the Head of the Church of England. An argument ensues in which “Master of Verbal Kung-Fu” Thomas More rhetorically destroys his accuser Crowley. However, Richard, the young man who wanted fame and glory and was refused office by Thomas, gives a false testimony concerning Thomas. Richard claims that he had denied the crown and was guilty of the crimes, though this testimony was really fake and was only given because Thomas accepted a bribe and is now the head statesmen of Wales. Due to Richard’s false testimony, Thomas More is found guilty of the crime he is accused for and ultimately gets his head cut off.

This story is a very good story of the accounts of Thomas More and his reactions to the great church split of the 1500s. I found the overall story to be compelling, and relevant, since we live in an era where there exists both great protest and people standing up for what they believe is right as well as brutality and injustice. There are also a couple of very good lines in the movie. Overall I really enjoyed a Man for all Seasons, and will more than likely purchase the movie at some point in my life.