

You
Wouldn't
Want to...

BE

MARRIED TO HENRY VIII



Be careful
or be
beheaded!



Written by Fiona Macdonald • Illustrated by David Antram



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Introduction

The year is 1542, and times are difficult in England. King Henry VIII, who has ruled England since 1509, is getting old, tired and dangerously unpredictable. He has quarrelled with the Pope, leader of the Catholic Church in Rome, encouraged raids on Church property and arranged the murders of people who have displeased him. His private life has been scandalous – he has had five wives so far, and all of them are now dead! Now he is thinking of getting married again.

Your name is Catherine Parr and you are an attractive, intelligent and devout widow. Your father was a senior royal official at the court, so you know members of the royal family and you understand their ways. However, you are still shocked and frightened by the news that King Henry VIII wants to marry you!

What should you do? Would you want to be married to King Henry VIII?

Risky royals

Will you or won't you?

HENRY VIII, KING OF ENGLAND

He is tall, strong, energetic and fond of hunting, music and dancing. He used to be handsome but is fast becoming overweight and riddled with disease. He is passionate and can be ruthless.

You must soon give Henry VIII an answer to his proposal of marriage. It's no easy choice. Many people warn against it, and advise you to steer clear of the English royal family and the cunning politicians at court. Many ambitious men and women have enjoyed a brilliant career there – but many have ended up in prison or, even worse, on the chopping block! Life at court is unpredictable, and there are certain people you should be very wary of...

Watch out for:

plots

secrets

ARCHBISHOP CRANMER
Protestant scholar and religious leader.

EDWARD SEYMOUR
Soldier, politician and keen Protestant.

JOHN DUDLEY
Top courtier and Protestant supporter.

DUKE OF NORFOLK
Leader of an ancient noble family. Catholic supporter.

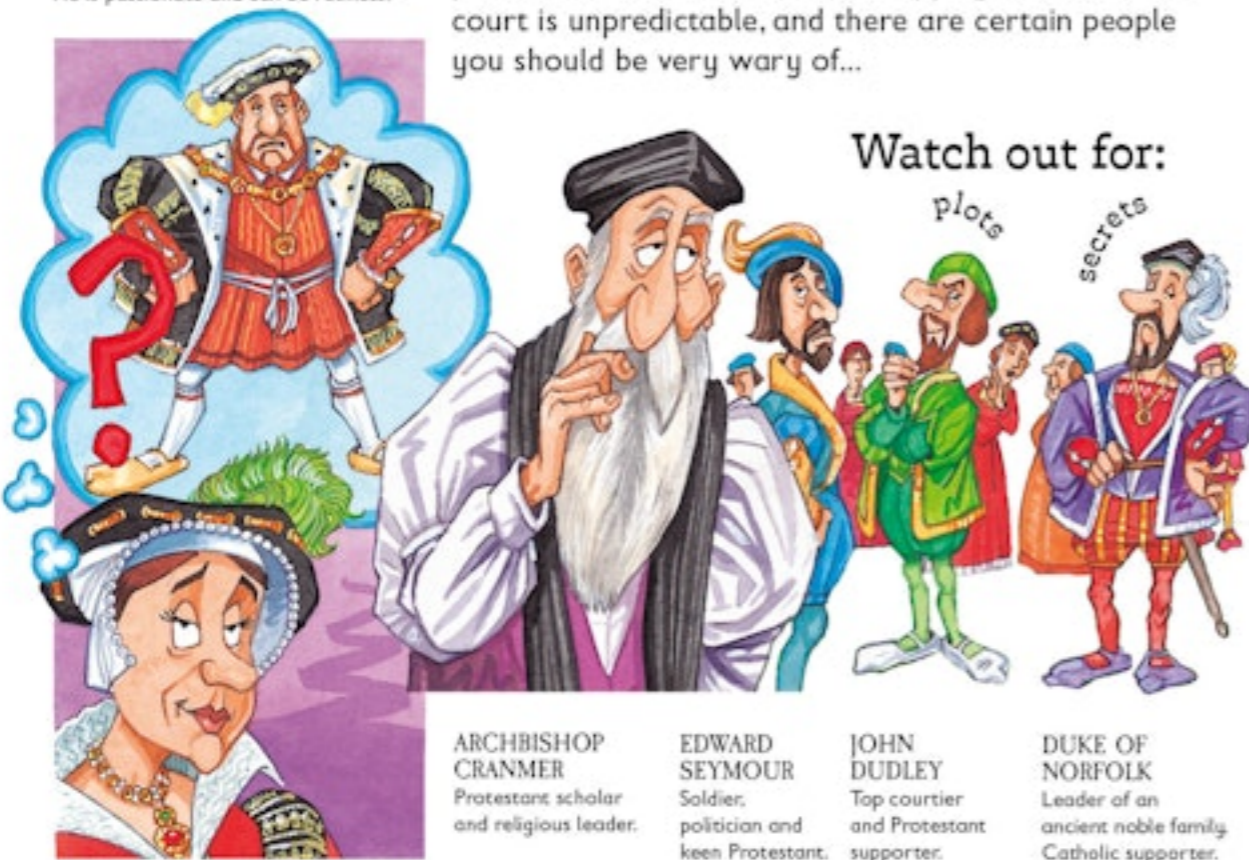
MINISTERS OF STATE
The royal government is run by ministers who are clever, ambitious and unscrupulous. Don't upset them!

Handy hint

Think carefully! If you offend the king by refusing to marry him, he could make your life very miserable.



Of course she'll say yes – I'm irresistible!



Your only career – marriage!

The alternatives:

Becoming a nun is no longer an option. Two years ago, Henry VIII closed down the nunneries as part of his plan to seize wealth and reform the Catholic Church.



Don't be fooled by flattery from the men at the royal court. They all flirt with pretty women and are not to be trusted. You don't want to get a bad reputation!



You have already been married twice before but, sadly, both your husbands have died. Compared to many Tudor women though, you've been lucky. Your parents didn't force you to marry a man you hated, or arrange one for their own economic advantage. Nevertheless, as a Tudor teenager, you abandoned all hopes of having a handsome boyfriend a long time ago, and settled for men who were respectable, wealthy – and dull.

However, now that you are a middle-aged widow, you can decide for your next husband for yourself. Will you choose King Henry VIII? Before making your final decision, you may want to consider the fate of his five previous wives...

Be especially careful to avoid marrying a poet or a musician, however talented. They often come from humble backgrounds with no money and no political allies.



Wife no. 1: The brother's bride

King Henry VIII's first wife was a Spanish princess, Catherine of Aragon. In 1501, she was sent to England to marry Henry's older brother, Prince Arthur. However, Arthur died less than a year into their marriage, making Catherine a widow at seventeen. The English royal family did not want to offend Catherine's father by sending her home, so they arranged for her to marry Henry VIII instead! The wedding took place in 1509. In the same year, Henry became King. Henry and Catherine were both good-looking and clever. Catherine was also gentle and sweet-natured – everyone adored her.



Arthur looked like a promising match for any princess, until, as a teenager, he fell seriously ill.



Henry grew up to be stronger, fitter, and much more glamorous than Arthur, his older brother.



Catherine, however, had no say in the matter of her marriage. She just did as she was told.



King

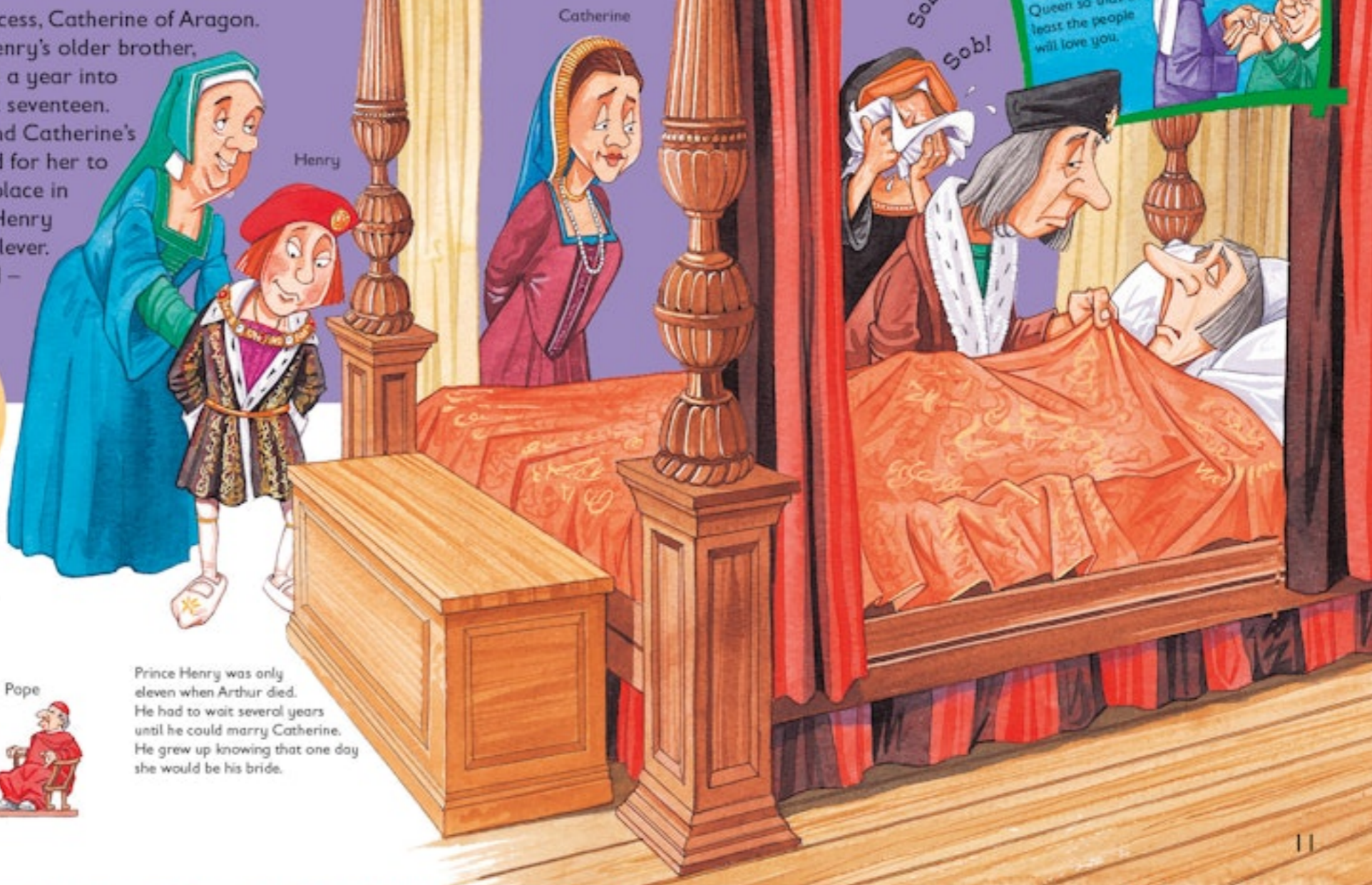


Messengers



Pope

Prince Henry was only eleven when Arthur died. He had to wait several years until he could marry Catherine. He grew up knowing that one day she would be his bride.



Catherine

Henry

Sob!

Sob!

Handy hint

If you decide to marry the King, be a good and gentle Queen so that at least the people will love you.

Rejection!

For almost 20 years, Henry and Catherine had a happy marriage. However, there was one problem – they had no sons. Though they had six children, only one, a daughter named Mary, survived infancy. Henry grew increasingly desperate for a male heir, who would become King after his death. In 1526, he met a young lady-in-waiting

Anne Boleyn was mysterious, elegant and charming. People called her 'fascinating', and even suggested that she used magic powers to attract the King.



The Pope was now caught between powerful rivals – King Henry VIII and Queen Catherine's family in Spain.



12

called Anne Boleyn and fell madly in love with her. He decided to leave his wife to marry Anne, hoping that she would give him a boy. Henry asked the Pope to annul his marriage to Catherine. He argued that he should not have married his brother's widow after all, and that his inability to produce a male heir was a punishment from God.

Catherine protested that there were no valid reasons for ending their marriage. Henry was furious and banished her from the court. Catherine never saw him or their daughter, Mary, again.



Princess Mary was shocked at her mother's treatment. She was also angry with her father and fearful for her own future. Her only consolation was her strong Catholic beliefs.



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Wife no. 2: Bewitching!

Even after five long years, the Pope still refused to annul Henry and Catherine's marriage. Ultimately, Henry decided that he could wait no longer. In 1532, Anne finally agreed to become Henry's lover and quickly fell pregnant. The following year, Henry went against the Pope and declared that his marriage to Catherine had never legally existed. He proclaimed that Anne was his lawful, real wife. In the summer of 1533, Europe watched in shock as a very pregnant Anne was crowned queen. By 1534, Henry had separated from Rome and became the Supreme Head of the Church of England.



At first, Anne resisted Henry's advances. She refused to be a casual love affair. She wanted to be Henry's wife – and the Queen.



Eventually Anne Boleyn got her way. Henry secretly married her in 1533, once she was already pregnant. King Henry hoped that her baby would be the son he had been waiting for.



Handy hint

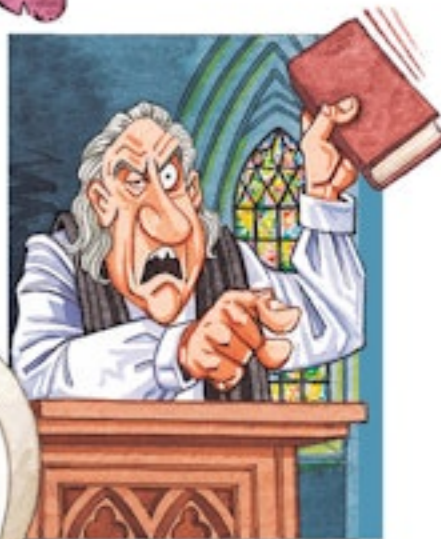
NEW LAW

Bring back Queen Catherine!

It's a disgrace!

Down with Anne Boleyn!

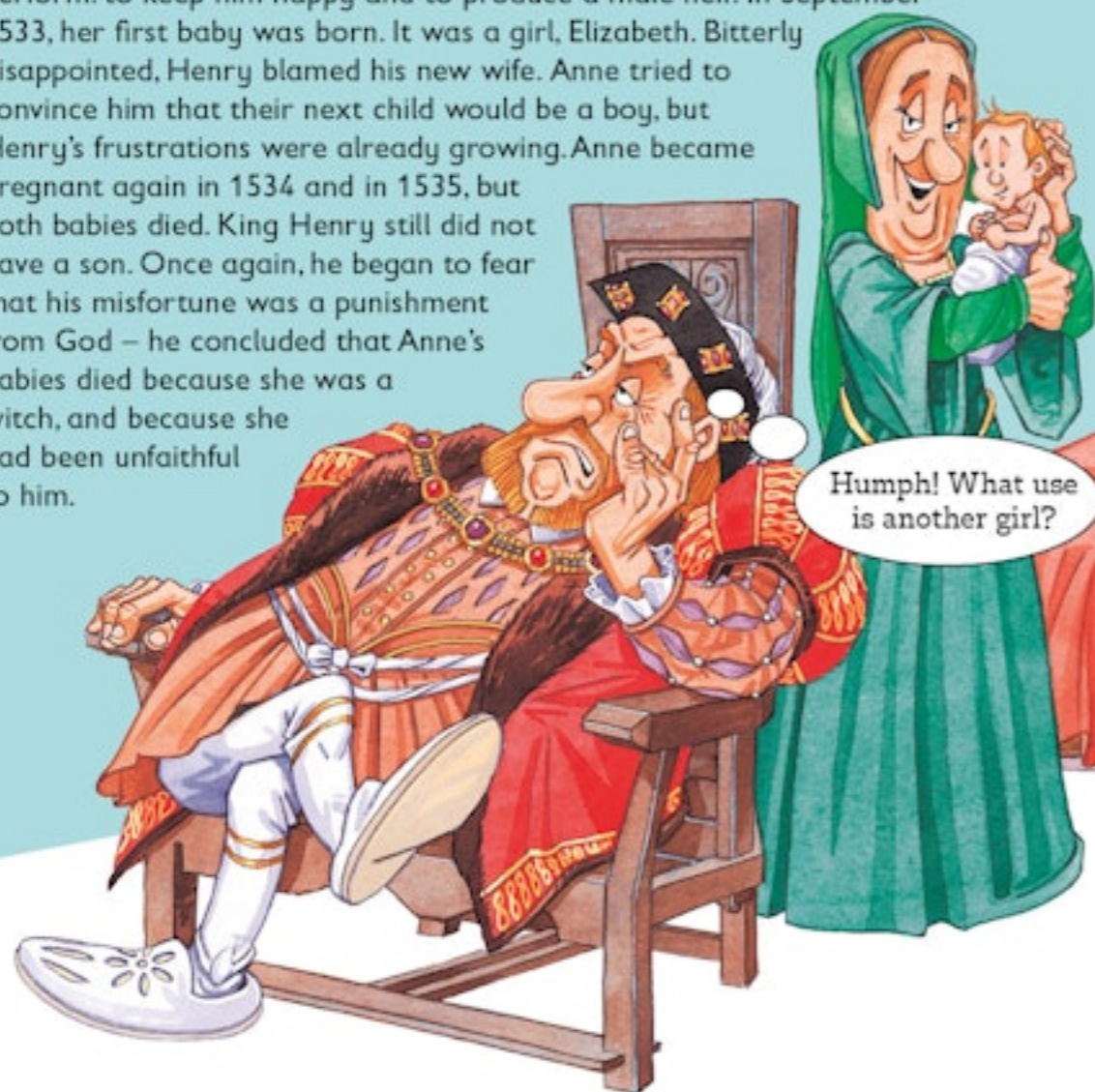
If you do become Queen, you can persuade the King to make new laws. But don't expect them to make you popular!



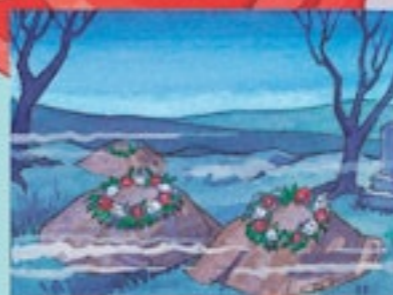
Encouraged by Henry and his new Queen, Protestant reformers preached against the Pope and all Roman Catholics, including Catherine of Aragon's family in Spain.

Failure!

When Anne Boleyn married Henry VIII, she had two vital duties to perform: to keep him happy and to produce a male heir. In September 1533, her first baby was born. It was a girl, Elizabeth. Bitterly disappointed, Henry blamed his new wife. Anne tried to convince him that their next child would be a boy, but Henry's frustrations were already growing. Anne became pregnant again in 1534 and in 1535, but both babies died. King Henry still did not have a son. Once again, he began to fear that his misfortune was a punishment from God – he concluded that Anne's babies died because she was a witch, and because she had been unfaithful to him.



Historians believe that Anne's babies may have died due to a blood condition that killed them in the womb.



Knackered!



Anne Boleyn had many enemies, including members of rival noble families, Henry VIII's political opponents, supporters of Queen Catherine and people who did not want religious reform. They all accused Anne of terrible crimes, including witchcraft and adultery.

Handy hint



Don't talk to ANY man – even your brother. The king will suspect you of being unfaithful!



Off to the Tower!

In 1536, Queen Catherine died. This meant that Henry VIII was free to marry again according to the Catholic Church, which had refused to recognise his marriage to Anne all along. Henry thought that if he married a third time, this time with the Church's blessing, then God would finally reward him with a son. Henry sent Anne to the Tower of London and put her on trial for adultery. With Anne imprisoned, Henry sought out another young noblewoman called Jane Seymour. Predictably, Anne was found guilty on all accounts (no one would defy the King) and sentenced to death. She was beheaded on 19 May 1536. Anne had failed in a royal wife's most important duty, and paid with her life.

Anne's fate:

OFF TO THE TOWER!

Anne was locked up in the Tower of London and kept under armed guard.



ON TRIAL!

She was accused of treason and adultery, found guilty and condemned to death.



TORTURE!

Her brother and male friends were cruelly tortured and then killed.



Wife no. 3: Third time lucky?

Henry loved Jane, but his proposal to her was also prompted by his strong desire for a baby son. He was fed up with daughters!



Jane tried unsuccessfully to reconcile Henry with his daughter, Mary.



Jane

Two days after Anne Boleyn was executed, Henry VIII married Jane Seymour. Like Anne Boleyn, she refused Henry's advances until he promised to marry her. Also like Anne Boleyn, she was encouraged by her family to attract the king. They hoped to win wealth, power and influence.



Mary

Henry hoped that Jane would give birth to plenty of children, at least one of whom would be a son and the heir to the throne!



You're going to grow up to be just like your Daddy!

Jane Seymour had been a lady-in-waiting to both Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn, so she knew what Henry was like. He was now getting old (almost 40). He was also overweight, unhealthy and hot-tempered. He was a dangerous man to disagree with! However, Jane wanted to be Queen. Her married life was not easy, but worse was to come. Jane soon became pregnant and in 1537 she gave birth to a healthy baby boy, named Edward. Here, at last, was Henry's longed-for son! However, sadly, Jane died just a few days afterwards.

Handy hint

Don't be born into a politically-ambitious family. They'll use you to try and win power for themselves.



Yes, poor little thing!



Wife no. 4: Fat Flanders mare!

King Henry had an heir at last. However, Henry still needed a wife to secure the Tudor line with a second son, or 'spare', in case anything happened to Edward. His advisors suggested Anne, daughter of the Protestant Duke of Cleves. Henry had never met Anne, so he sent the artist Holbein to paint her portrait and report back. He liked the result, and asked for Anne's hand in marriage. But upon their meeting, Henry mocked her appearance and even called her a 'fat mare from Flanders'! To avoid offence, Henry went ahead with the wedding, but arranged a separation soon afterwards. Anne and Henry remained on good terms. She lived the rest of her life in peace, with a generous pension and large property in Kent.

Cleves was a state close to France and Flanders. Henry hoped that Anne's Protestant father would be a strong ally against France and Spain.

FLANDERS



After the wedding, Henry and Anne kept as far apart from each other as possible. They both looked forward to the time when their 'marriage' could be annulled.



Handy hint

If your new husband doesn't like you, keep calm! Don't make a fuss! Then you can end your marriage in a peaceful and friendly way

What an ugly woman!

What an ugly man!

Flutter

Swish!

Pant

Wife no. 5: Young and foolish

Catherine had a secret, scandalous past before she married Henry VIII. She had engaged in relations with two men, and had been whisked away to court.



After his experience with Anne of Cleves, Henry wanted to find beauty and passion in his next wife. He found both in the pretty seventeen-year-old Catherine Howard, a lively lady-in-waiting. Catherine was young and charming but she did not love Henry, who was twice her age. She had a secret affair with Thomas Culpeper, which signed her death warrant.

Catholics were pleased with Henry's marriage to Catherine. They hoped it would stop the king's planned church reforms. Protestants were less happy.



Catholics

Protestants

Archbishop Cranmer had the unpleasant task of telling Henry about Catherine Howard's love-affairs.



News of Catherine's romance soon spread throughout the royal court. Catherine sealed her own fate, confessing to her previous encounters and her affair with Culpeper. Henry was furious and ordered swift and terrible punishment. After just two years of marriage she was beheaded. She was only twenty-one years old.

Handy hint

DO be discreet! If you make the king look foolish, you'll be for the chop, too!



Like other queens, Catherine was beheaded at the chopping block. In some ways, she was lucky. According to the law, she could have been burnt alive.

Well - here goes another one...



Wife no. 6: Happy at last

After carefully considering the fates of the king's first five wives, you decide to marry Henry VIII after all! Your wedding takes place in 1543 and your marriage lasts for four years, until Henry's death in 1547. It is a great success, in spite of Henry's serious illness (he is plagued by ulcers on his legs), his unpredictable temper and the twenty-one-year age gap. You play the role of the devoted wife, nursing Henry during his last illness. You also look after his three children: Mary, Elizabeth and Edward. Henry allows you to continue your studies and your interest in new Protestant religious ideas, even though he does not agree with all your views.



You are intelligent and well educated, speaking Latin, Greek, French and Italian. Even though Henry is your third husband, you have always found time to study.

You have no children of your own, but you take great care of Henry VIII's children. You hire top tutors to teach them history, languages, music and religion.



After Henry VIII's death, you marry Lord Thomas Seymour, who has been in love with you since before you met the king.

You die aged 37, after the birth of your first child. You are deeply mourned by all who knew you.



What happens next...

Divorced



CATHERINE OF ARAGON
1485-1536
Married to Henry VIII
1509-1533

Beheaded



ANNE BOLEYN
c.1501-1536
Married to Henry VIII
1533-1536

Died



JANE SEYMOUR
c.1509-1537
Married to Henry VIII
1536-1537

Divorced



ANNE OF CLEVES
1515-1559
Married to Henry VIII
6 months in 1540

Beheaded



CATHERINE HOWARD
1520-1542
Married to Henry VIII
1540-1542

Survived



CATHERINE PARR
1512-1548
Married to Henry VIII
1543-1547

All three of Henry's children become kings or queens. Despite being the youngest, Edward is the first to rule as the only male heir. His reign is brief and, because he is so young, advisors rule for him. They introduce many Protestant Church reforms. After Edward's death, Mary becomes queen. She is a Catholic and has many Protestants burned at the stake – her harsh religious policies make her unpopular. Elizabeth is Henry's last child to take the throne, and her rule is the most successful. Remembered today as one of England's most glorious queens, her long reign (almost fifty years) proved that women could rule as well as a men, despite what Henry VIII thought!



QUEEN MARY I
(RULED 1553-1558)
Married King Philip
of Spain but had no
children



KING EDWARD VI
(RULED 1547-1553)
No marriages
or children



QUEEN ELIZABETH I
(RULED 1558-1603)
No marriages
or children
THE END OF THE TUDORS

Glossary

Adultery Being unfaithful to a husband or wife.

Annul To cancel.

Archbishop Religious leader; head of the church in a particular country.

Banished Sent away from (usually as a punishment for wrongdoing).

Catholic (or Roman Catholic) church One of the main branches of the Christian church. Its headquarters are in Rome and its head is the Pope. Until the 16th century, almost all Christians in western Europe were Roman Catholics.

Courtier A man or woman who works at or spends time at a royal court.

Flanders The old name for land that today forms part of Belgium and the Netherlands, both in north-west Europe.

Heir Someone who will inherit (take over the ownership of) property or a title after the death of a relative.



Lady-in-waiting A woman (usually from a noble family) who acts as a trusted personal servant to a member of the royal family.

Nun Member of a religious community of women that live according to strict religious vows.

Pension Money paid to someone who has retired from work.

Pope Religious leader and head of the Roman Catholic Church.

Protestant Member of a Christian group that broke away from the Roman Catholic Church in Tudor times. Protestants disagreed with Roman Catholics over the way worship was organised and the way the Church was run.

Radical Deep and thorough.

Reformers People who try to bring about changes in a society.

Tower of London A large castle in London – during the time of Henry VIII, prisoners seen as enemies of the King were held there.

Treason Betraying your country to an enemy. In the past in England, the word was also used to describe the behaviour of a wife who was unfaithful to her husband.



Tudor A dynasty (ruling family) whose members were kings and queens of England from AD 1485-1603. Also used to describe the period of history when Tudor kings and queens ruled.



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