



The Sixth Wife

Jean Plaidy

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Dangerous court intrigue and affairs of the heart collide as renowned novelist Jean Plaidy tells the story of Katherine Parr, the last of Henry VIII's six queens.

Henry VIII's fifth wife, Katherine Howard, was both foolish and unfaithful, and she paid for it with her life. Henry vowed that his sixth wife would be different, and she was. Katherine Parr was twice widowed and thirty-one years old. A thoughtful, well-read lady, she was known at court for her unblemished reputation and her kind heart. She had hoped to marry for love and had set her heart on Thomas Seymour, the dashing brother of Henry's third queen. But the aging king--more in need of a nurse than a wife--was drawn to her, and Katherine could not refuse his proposal of marriage.

Queen Katherine was able to soothe the King's notorious temper, and his three children grew fond of her, the only mother they had ever really known. Trapped in a loveless marriage to a volatile tyrant, books were Katherine's consolation. But among her intellectual pursuits was an interest in Lutheranism--a religion that the king saw as a threat to his supremacy as head of the new Church of England. Courtiers envious of the Queen's influence over Henry sought to destroy her by linking her with the "radical" religious reformers. Henry raged that Katherine had betrayed him, and had a warrant drawn up for her arrest and imprisonment. At court it was whispered that the king would soon execute yet another wife. Henry's sixth wife would have to rely on her wits to survive where two other women had perished. . . .

The Sixth Wife Details

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From Reader Review The Sixth Wife for online ebook

Veronica says

Not my favorite of the Tudor series. There was some awkward switching between characters in the middle of chapters that kind of threw me.

June Louise says

"Henry's good humour was miraculously restored. How strange it was, thought Katharine, that this great King, this man whom the French and Spaniards feared, should be so childish in his vanity. The King's character contained the oddest mingling of qualities; yet the brutality and the sentimentality, the simplicity and the shrewdness, made him the man he was. She should not regret these contrasts; she could watch for these traits in his character, and, as her knowledge of them grew, she might find some way of saving others from his wrath, as well as herself."

The Sixth Wife describes the life of Katharine Parr, a two-times widow who had hoped her future would consist of herself and Thomas Seymour, her roving-eyed lover. However, on appearing at Court, King Henry VIII sees her, and him having been wife-less for a year, decides that Katharine Parr is to be wife Number 6. Poor Katharine really didn't want this outcome, and tried to put him off, but Henry being Henry seemed to get what he wanted, and before she knew it, she was at her wedding ceremony.

Of course, Katharine knew what had happened to all of Henry's previous wives, and the poor soul lived in permanent fear that Henry would grow tired of her and dispose of her in the same way as he did for Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard. Henry, despite having agonising and festering leg ulcers, was also back on his "I-need-a-son" mission; and poor Katharine was under such pressure to produce another heir for him. When after three years of marriage they were still childless, Henry (being the cad he was) decides to set his cap on someone else - the Duchess of Suffolk.....but how could he dispose of Katharine?

Anyone who knows English history (especially the Henry VIII rhyme "divorced, beheaded and died; divorced, beheaded, survived") will then be aware that Katharine Parr outlived Henry VIII (mercifully!) - but heartache didn't stop there. Thomas Seymour was back in the picture, but not only was he playing up to Katharine, but he also seemed to have an unhealthy interest in the Princess Elizabeth as well.

There is heresy, plotting, conniving, tragedy and gruesomeness in this novel, all of which seem to sum up life during the Tudor era. It is very well written, and I absolutely loved learning about Katharine Parr, of whom I had very minimal knowledge before.

Hannah says

Rating Clarification: 3.5 Stars

*"Divorced, Beheaded, Died.
Divorced, Beheaded, Survived."*

So goes that nice little ditty that encapsulates the matrimonial history of England's most famous king, Henry VIII. While a cursory glance would seem to suggest that the "Survived" wife, Katherine Parr, fared best out of the bunch, I'm not so certain that's so. After all, Katherine P. got Henry at his absolute worst both physically and mentally. Aggravated by a stinky, puss-filled leg, over 300 pounds heavy, grossly piggy-eyed and monstrously irritable, Henry must have been a sore pain in the ~~ass~~ neck to his sixth and final wife/nurse. And poor Katherine; twice married to much older men, then pursued by the egotistic royal executioner Henry, while having to watch the man she loved and adored, Thomas Seymour, slip from her grasp. Treading daily on eggshells due to her love of the new religion and the machinations of those out to destroy her for her faith, and wondering if her barrenness will be her downfall to a man bent on siring sons for his dynasty, the years of Queen-ship must have been a hell on earth to her. And then, when the king has finally died, danger has been avoided (and by extension her neck saved), her true love by her side at last, and a baby in her belly, Katherine faces the ultimate betrayal by the man she loved and the step-daughter she cherished and fostered.

No, it's not Katherine Parr that's the "lucky" royal wife. I personally think that goes to Anne of Cleves. Avoiding the king's sexual desire, as well as the axe, while retaining a nice home, money, title and precedence must surely be the penultimate Tudor achievement.

Author Jean Plaidy imagines all of this in her continuing saga of Henry's wives. This offering, while not as personally enjoyable to me as *The Lady in the Tower* (about Anne Boleyn) or *The Rose Without a Thorn: The Wives of Henry VIII* (featuring Katherine Howard), was still a good read, with excellent writing and a plotline twist that would be unbelievable but for the fact that it actually happened.

Jacqueline says

I always enjoy her books since I love historical fiction. She does a lot of research and they are also informative. In some parts she seemed to ramble a bit on the some issues occasionally but once you got passed that it was a good read - if you like this type of book. I would like to get more in her series - especially on Queen Victoria and the Stuarts.

Redfox5 says

A strong retelling of the Katherine Parr story.

When you sing the rhyme about Henry's wives, you always think of Katherine Parr of being the lucky one, the survivor. But even though she managed to outlive Henry VIII her whole life was pretty tragic.

No young girl wants to be married off to an old man but this is just what happened to Katherine. And when she became a widow, her family gave her to another old man. She spent her youth nursing old men.

When her second husband dies, she is excited at the thought of finally being with the man she loves, Thomas Seymour. But then she catches the eye of another old man, one she can't refuse, The King.

She then spends the next couple of years terrified she will follow his other wives to the block and she fails to

give Henry a son. I'm actually surprised that Henry picked her when she had no children from her first two marriages. Her skills as a nurse serve her well as Henry can't decide to get rid of her or keep her for her healing hands.

When he finally dies, she is free to marry Thomas. I wish I could say the tale ends happily ever after but that just wasn't meant to be.

Jean Plaidy is an excellent writer, she brings to life all the excitement and terror that comes with the Tudor court. I can't wait to read the rest of the series.

Emily says

The Tudors will always be one of my fave historical periods, and the little known story of Katherine Parr was a great one. Interesting to learn more about the Seymour brothers too, and a different view of Princess Elizabeth.

Overall very enjoyable.

Casey says

My god was this book boring! I think I've come to the conclusion that this period in time is just not my cup of time to read. If I have to hear another damn book go on about how gorgeous Elizabeth I is I swear I'm going to scream!

The kicker is that despite this book taking the title *The Sixth Wife* it isn't actually about her all that much. It focuses on just about everyone else in the book but her, Katherine Parr is such a mousey character that even the book couldn't focus on her and had to string along other characters (who weren't really interesting per say, but none the less talked about other things other than Thomas Seymour.) who (view spoiler) a conversation for the protagonist could go thus:

Katherine: *I don't want to marry the king, I love Seymour!*

Nursie: *But your family blah, blah, blah*

Katherine: *okay I guess I will!*

It doesn't really matter if you were reading the previous books (I wasn't thankfully) this book is a stand alone (which is why I gave it a star) the writing itself isn't bad but it's wasted on a story that is so bland, so run of the mill that it doesn't really matter at that point. It just comes down to taste, but seeing as I didn't like the last Tudor-era book I read I don't really know why I read this book (all the way too) its just so so boring.

Gary says

This absorbing and well crafted 1953 novel written by that great master of British historical fiction, will keep

you interested until the end. It recounts the story of Henry VIII's sixth wife, Catherine Parr. After two marriages, Katherine Parr has met the man she believed herself to truly love only to be chosen by the cruel tyrant

Henry VIII as his sixth wife. Because of her strong Reformist Protestant beliefs, and her inability to provide Henry with his much desired son, she soon falls in the shadow of the axe, sharing the fate Anne Boleyn and Katherine Howard, two of Henry VIII's wife who had executed. she is saved by Henry's death only to marry the deceitful rake, Sir Thomas Seymour who betrays her by wooing the young Elizabeth

The novel also touches on the lives of others such as Catherine Parr's sister Anne Parr Herbert, her martyred friend and devout Protestant, Anne Askew, her stepdaughter Elizabeth, and her niece, Jane Grey.

Plaidy as always writes with a fine sense of detail, and a deep understanding of the human mind, as well as an almost meticulous grasp of English history. I finished this book in a single weekend

Michelle says

Very quick read...like her queen ship with Henry VIII

chucklesthescot says

The fiction based on fact story of the sixth wife of Henry VIII-Katherine Parr. Twice widowed, she is in love with dashing Thomas Seymour, but Henry has fallen for her and has his love rival sent away. Katherine reluctantly agrees to marry him, living in fear that he will turn on her like his previous wives. And there are those plotting to make sure that it happens sooner rather than later.

Katherine was a fascinating wife-she restored good relations between Henry and his children, outwitted those plotting against her and managed to still be alive when the tyrant died, allowing her to marry Thomas and have his child. Her life was full of misery even at the end when she found her husband seducing young Princess Elizabeth. I love all the passion, scandal and intrigue of the Tudor times!

Margo GR says

Como siempre Jean Plaidy es reiterativa, es innegable que ese es su sello y también, sus cierres, sus cierres son buenísimos, y este no fue la excepción, me gustó, pero admito que contrario a los 3 libros anteriores de la Saga este me pareció aburrido y por tanto tarde más en terminarlo.

Nancy Brady says

Read more than forty years ago, but recall it telling of the story of Katherine Parr, Henry VIII, Thomas Seymour, and Elizabeth. Keeping Henry happy while loving another, and avoiding all the machinations of the court to stay alive to eventually marry Thomas Seymour.

Helen Azar says

If you want to read a more historically accurate account of the life of Henry VIII's wife #6, Katherine Parr, with no "spinning" and bodice ripping, then choose this one over the Susannah Dunn novel with the same title. Jean Plaidy remains the uncontested queen (no pun) of English royal history!

Christine Cazeneuve says

I enjoyed the book but I am not a fan of Katherine Parr - she was the boring wife compared to the others. I know she had no choice in marrying Henry VIII but she also didn't try to make her mark either. It could have been that she was afraid of poking the bear so to speak. Jean Plaidy did a great job of outlining the dull life she lead with Henry but I am eager to move on to the next book in the series.

Hannah Polley says

This was my first foray into historical fiction and I thought it was an ok book.

At first, I thought it was very dull and I wondered how the author had made a wife of Henry VIII seem so boring but I got into it as it went on. Shame you know all the way through that she won't be beheaded as it takes a lot of the drama out of it!

I know it is the purpose of historical fiction but I struggle to get it out of my head that all the thoughts and feelings are made up. I know this is the case in a normal fiction book but I guess I just struggle as I know they were real people and had very particular thoughts that we cannot possibly know!

However, I would be interested in reading more historical fiction.
