

The *SIX WIVES* of *KING HENRY VIII*

The wives of Henry VIII were the six Queen Consorts wedded to Henry between 1509 and 1547. After he had his first marriage annulled, the Pope denounced him. His disagreement with the Pope led Henry to initiate the English Reformation, separating the Church of England from papal authority, appointing himself the Supreme Head of the Church of England, and writing divorce into the laws of the people. Henry's first marriage lasted nearly 24 years, while the remaining five totaled less than 10 years combined.



Catherine of Aragon (23 years, 11 months, 19 days; marriage annulled) was Henry's first wife. After the death of Arthur, her first husband and Henry's brother, a papal dispensation was obtained to enable her to marry Henry, though the marriage did not take place until after he came to the throne in 1509.



Anne Boleyn (2 years, 11 months, 19 days; marriage annulled then beheaded) was Henry's second wife and the mother of Elizabeth I. Henry's marriage to Anne, and her subsequent execution, made her a key figure in the political and religious upheaval that was the start of the English Reformation.



Jane Seymour (1 year, 4 months, 24 days; death from complications of childbirth) was Henry's third wife, and sister of Sir Thomas Seymour, who married Henry's last wife after his death. She served Catherine of Aragon and was one of Anne Boleyn's ladies-in-waiting. It is strongly believed that she is the mistress who disposed of Anne, who was executed just 10–11 days before Jane's marriage to the king.



Anne of Cleves (6 months, 3 days; annulled) was Henry's fourth wife, a German princess. Her pre-contract of marriage with Francis I, Duke of Lorraine, was cited as grounds for an annulment. Anne agreed to this, claiming that the marriage had not been consummated, and because she hadn't resisted the annulment, was given a generous settlement, including Hever Castle, former home of Henry's former in-laws, the Boleyns.



Catherine Howard (1 year, 3 months, 26 days; beheaded) was Henry's fifth wife, sometimes known as "the rose without a thorn". Henry was informed of her alleged adultery with Thomas Culpeper in November 1541.



Katherine Parr (3 years, 6 months, 16 days; his death at the age of 55) was the sixth and last wife of Henry VIII. Katherine showed herself to be the restorer of Henry's court as a family home for his children. One of Katherine's most significant achievements was influencing Henry's passing of the *Third Succession Act* that confirmed both Mary and Elizabeth's line in succession to the throne, despite the fact that they had both been made illegitimate by divorce or remarriage.