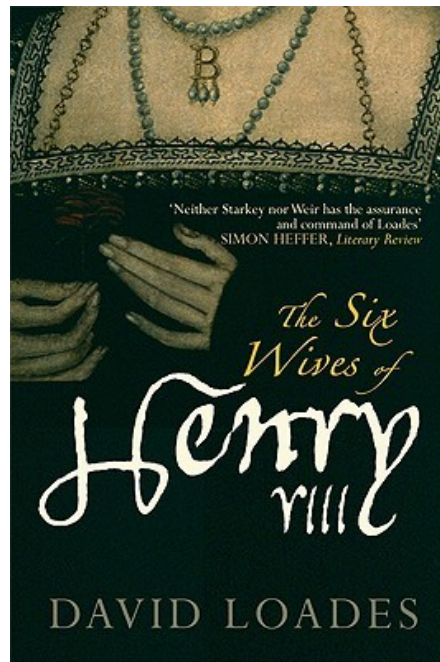




The Six Wives of Henry VIII

David Loades

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The marital ups and downs of England's most infamous king. The story of Henry VIII and his six wives has passed from history into legend - taught in the cradle as a cautionary tale and remembered in adulthood as an object lesson in the dangers of marrying into royalty. The true story behind the legend, however, remains obscure to most people, whose knowledge of the affair begins and ends with the aide memoire 'Divorced, executed, died, divorce, executed, survived'. David Loades masterly book recounts the whole sorry tale in detail from Henry's first marriage, to his brother's widow, to more or less contented old age in the care of the motherly Catherine Parr.

The Six Wives of Henry VIII Details

Date : Published April 15th 2009 by Amberley Publishing (first published July 25th 1996)

ISBN : 9781848683358

Author : David Loades

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Genre : History, Nonfiction, English History, Tudor Period, Biography, Historical, European Literature, British Literature

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Sarai says

Amazon review by: A Customer

This is a well-written description of King Henry's life as ruler of England, as well as a study of his more personal dealings with his wives and his court. The book itself is beautiful. It is filled with glossy, color pictures, facts and details. This is a great reference book for all you history buffs to add to your libraries, but its also great as just entertainment if you have a casual interest in the subject or era.

If you have read the books by Antonia Fraser and David Starkey, you should make this the third of the group. Lots of intrigue. Very interesting time period, fascinating people.

Carolina Casas says

A good, simplified and objective account of the six wives of Henry VIII. I agreed with most of his assessments and I loved that he used primary sources for his research without falling for the bias in all of them. The only criticisms that I have is regarding his views on Catherine Howard whom he still sees as this silly girl and lends credibility to some of the bias sources, but as for the rest he is more better at analyzing those and explaining the reason for every wife's brief or total success, and failures as well as avoiding sugar-coating history by seeing the wives in modern eyes (as some people do) and tell the story of six women who were all products of their time. Some with powerful personalities, others with less, but all very ambitious and committed to their respective causes, be it their faiths, their daughters (in the case of Katherine of Aragon and Anne) or their families. The last thing that I am going to give a lot of applause to this book for, is that the author spends a great amount of time explaining the political setting of Europe and the reasons behind Henry VIII, who far from being the mad and sadistic tyrant as some see him as, he was a monarch determined to show the world he was in control and during the last years of his reign, he would play one faction against another to test his loyalty and it is not very far off that the author makes the assumption that his is what could have been owed to Katherine Parr's near arrest.

Overall it's a great book and a must read for all Tudor fans.

Helene Harrison says

ISBN? – 9781445600499

Publishing? - 2010 by Amberley Publishing (first published 1996)

General Subject/s? - History / Biography / Politics

General Analysis? - Not as good as similar books by David Starkey, Alison Weir and Karen Lindsey, however it is still a good book. In particular, it is good for more of a beginner in learning about the wives of Henry VIII. For heavier reading, Starkey is better.

Recommend? – Maybe.

Similar Books? - The Six Wives of Henry VIII, Six Wives: The Queens of Henry VIII, Divorced, Beheaded,

Survived: A Feminist Reinterpretation Of The Wives Of Henry VIII

Marie says

Historian David Loades presents a convincing narrative as he summarizes the events of Henry VIII's six marriages in almost a conversational format. This work is a reissue in 2009 put out by Amberley with some updates to a previous 1994 title by the author. Most Tudor fans know the stories of each of the wives and like me, may have read many Tudor novels surrounding these women. I found interesting snippets of information in this summarized work, as well as it reading like a refresher for the times and nuance of Henry VIII. I enjoyed the introduction which explains the importance of the Royal marriage market and the process that was accepted among many to marry towards other Royal houses in order to increase land holding or some royal significance such as potential heirs to a throne. Which was not the way that Henry VIII operated, as he chose from his courtiers and fellow noble families when he was wife-shopping.

Loades presents the wives in chronological order, and I found Catherine of Aragon to be once again a formidable lady who put up with a lot from her King. Loades describes the failed pregnancies and how this disillusioned the King with each passing day. Their daughter Mary comes into play of course, and she is portrayed as extremely hostile once the 'Boleyn Whore' succeeds in her quest to the throne. Anne Boleyn's demise and therefore the chapter on her seemed to go by quickly, as Cromwell effectively removed her and her family from the courts of Henry VIII by the farce of a trial that sent her, along with her fellow accused, to the executioner's block. One particular sentence that peaked my interest was regarding Anne's sister-in-law, Lady Jane Parker Rochford: "Not a great deal is known about his{George's} trial, and the story that his wife testified against him may well be apocryphal. There is some circumstantial evidence that she later accepted his guilt, but that may have been the only way in which she could get a property settlement out of the King." He goes on to state that the homosexual references to George are probably more of a twentieth-century speculation. Anne's character was portrayed as a bit of a wild child who did not know how to control her tongue, and Loades stated that it was her wit and sexual attraction that appealed to Henry VIII from the start, but it was this exact wit and sexual attraction that created her downfall as well. Most of the noble families were hateful of the upstart families of Anne, and they were eager to displace the Boleyns and the Howards from the peerage. The fact that Anne was innocent meant nothing to the jury.

Loades goes on to write that the day after Anne was executed, Henry was betrothed to Jane Seymour. Jane has always been an enigma to me. Was she truly the Plain Jane as contemporary novelists like to characterize her as, or was she eyeing the crown from the beginning of her royal courtship? Loades describes her as frumpy, so what did Henry see in this Plain Jane? The author surmises that she was almost an exact opposite of Anne Boleyn: no overt sexual traits, no outspoken mannerisms and her family was well liked, unlike the Boleyns and the Howards. If hereditary genes had anything to do with it, Jane also showed promise of being fertile, as she was one of nine children. And Henry once got his heir, Jane died, so onwards to wife number four and the first true marriage-for-the-good-of-the-realm, which was a disaster in bed because she was not attractive to Henry.

Anne of Cleves is presented a bit different than I had expected; she was still the naive person when it came to consummation, but she was also annoyed with Henry when he later married Catherine Parr, the last wife. She may have been annoyed when he married Catherine Howard after her, but it was probably too early for her to realize what was going on due to her foreign surroundings. But the flirty Catherine Howard had replaced the unseemly Anne of Cleves, reducing Anne to the status of the sister of the King. Catherine's character was portrayed as we typically imagine her, and she seems to have been simply too young to deal with the politics of the times and was extremely stupid in her need for boyfriends. The author goes into the political machinations that brought each of these wives in and out of the picture, and the major players in this

function. Jane Parker is again mentioned, as she the one who helped Catherine illicitly meet with Culpeper. Loades does not state why Jane would help the young queen to do such a thing, but does note that she quickly gave incriminating information but was not spared execution. And soon Cromwell was also summarily executed in a quick timeline as Loades tells it, lacking the drama of what was going on behind the scenes to cause it to happen. Catherine Parr rounds out the tale as the last wife, yet for once Loades gives some more background information on her as she was once known as Lady Latimer and Catherine Neville. The factions of the families were explained and brought up; from the hated Boleyns to the tolerable Howards to the respectable Seymours.

Although I do enjoy Alison Weir's writing, the main difference I found in this text by David Loades is that he uses less "supposedlys" and sticks to facts and not conjecture. Those readers wanting a more detailed account of all the events relating to the wives and the times would not get much of a good taste in Loades summary, but this could be very much treated as a summary of the marriages of Henry VIII but not necessarily of the wives themselves. The writing style itself made this an easy read, as Loades never went too far into depth into the politics or religious topics, instead just touching on them as they related to the wives. I enjoyed the sporadic moments on when I felt I learned something new, but I would not recommend this for the very seasoned Tudor reader because of the lack of insight. Alternatively, this would be a fantastic non-fiction read for those who would like to learn a few facts about Henry VIII's wives without having to suffer through a five hundred page account such as the books by Starkey, Weir, and Fraser. At 240 pages which includes author's notes and bibliography, Loades successfully reviews the marriages while educating the reader, with a look at some interesting illustrations as well. Loades states that there were plenty of "Six Wives" titles on the market, and especially more recently, and he adjusted this work accordingly as to not saturate the reader with the same amount of facts that have been used and reused and reiterated. Which is why I feel this was an excellent work to read when wanting a quick look into the familiar stories regarding the six wives of Henry VIII.

Finuala says

Excellent 201 level book for those fairly new to the subject with wonderful informational gems for us old hands. I particularly like his use of primary sources. There are non historians whose bibliographies contain insufficient information for checking their work. (No names, no pack drill *cough*Alison Weir*cough*)

I'm starting to like Loades' work greatly and am currently working my way through his back catalogue whilst waiting for The Seymours of Wolf Hall. <http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Seymours-...>

Good book.

Karan Wilson says

A good account of the history of Henry viii and his wives, I have read all options available and in my humble opinion this book gives the most unbiased view. Loades doesn't favour Henry as Weir obviously does and gives a more rounded view than Starkey. This book is great for anyone with some or no knowledge of the circumstances surrounding this period but will tell nothing new to the well informed. All in all a first rate telling of this historical period while adding nothing new to what is already known.

Lori says

Nothing new here, same old facts dryly presented. Disappointing.

Nancy Enright says

I haven't read it yet. I'm trying to find out how much it costs so I can decide whether or not to buy it; I've clicked on 4,678 links and fields and hyperlinks and still can't find out how much the damned book costs. And this doesn't count the aggravation of being led through pages that had nothing to do with this book - like picking my favorite categories, then getting a page of book covers for books I'll never read, but I had to pick some anyway, which I didn't. Forget it - I'll stick with Amazon.

Becky Graham says

Well-sourced, well-written, enjoyable to read and extremely informative. There is a reason that David Loades is known as one of the top Tudor scholars of our time. I would highly recommend this book to anyone wanting to know more about the lives of and times surrounding the 6 wives of Henry VIII

Jo March says

Good basic overview, but it doesn't add anything new to our understanding of Henry and his wives . I did appreciate his take on Anne Boleyn's role as an advisor and not just a mistress/wife.

Hasan Makhzoum says

A marriage could change the fate of a kingdom and the destiny of its people.. Kind of strengthened my latent Gamophobia

MerryMeerkat says

Abandoned. 30% in and I couldn't take it anymore. It's a shame because I LOVED the short story. But this was just boring.

Krissy says

Well rounded view of the political climate each wife entered and influenced/was influenced by. Reads like a

lengthy essay.

Sarah Bryson says

Quite simply if you want a book about Henry VIII's wives that is quick, simple and to the point then this is certainly the book to read. In the span of thirty eight years Henry VIII had six wives and with that many wives it is not surprising that there is a great deal of information to cover. What is magnificent about Loades' book is that he is perfectly succinct in his writing. Loades picks out all the most important and relevant information and states it simply and directly.

Each of Henry VIII's wives is presented and a little information about their lives and backgrounds is given. Information is then detailed about their rise, their relationship with Henry VIII and then their fates are discussed. There are no long winded sentences or running paragraphs. All the information is short and to the point. Loades discusses a little about the personality and the religious and political views of Henry VIII but certainly the majority of the information within the book is about the wives of Henry.

This book is certainly a wonderful resource for people who know little to nothing about Henry VIII's wives and I would recommend it to anyone wanting to learn more about Tudor history. The reader can gain quite a bit of information about each wife while not becoming overwhelmed. This is a great starting book and from here one can research further into the life of one or more of Henry's remarkable Queens.

The only fault I found with this book is that Loades states that Anne Boleyn was executed on May 18th. From all my reading I have come to the understanding that Anne was executed on May 19th. Her execution was scheduled for the 18th but because the executioner was late coming from Calais it was postponed to the 19th. I am not quite sure where Loades got the 18th of May as the date of Anne Boleyn's death and I would be very eager to find out why he used this date in his book. Other than this small inaccuracy with the date I found every aspect of the book accurate, informative and utterly fascinating.

Loades has a brilliant mastery of the English language and I found his book a very easy and informative read. Loades writes with great talent and has the ability to draw the reader in and to make them want to keep reading; personally I could not get enough! I would recommend The Six Wives of Henry VIII to people who wish to start learning about Henry VIII, his wives and Tudor history. I would also recommend this book to people who already have a strong knowledge of Tudor history as it makes a wonderful and quick reference source.
