



## The Tudors, Off with Their Heads!

**1485-1603**

### Initial questions:

1. Write the names of the Tudor kings and queens under the portraits.
2. Why did Henry the 8<sup>th</sup> chop his wives head?
3. Why did a cocktail get named after a Tudor Queen?
4. Why was Elizabeth the First known as the Virgin Queen?

**While listening to the Video, fill in the gaps of the text about the Tudors.**

#### **Henry VII.**

The War of the Roses and Richards the Third's short and bloody reign came to an end on Bosworth Field in 1485. Richard died of a head wound and the crown of England was found under a bush and placed on the head of the victor: Henry the Seventh.

The House of Tudor Henry of the Lancastrian (red rose) married Edward the Fourth's daughter Elizabeth of York (white rose), and the two warring sides were finally brought together.

This didn't stop a myriad of Impostors from popping up claiming to be one of the Lost princes in the tower or some other long-lost relative with a closer claim to the throne. Henry took care of them all by cutting off mini heads in the process Henry went about spreading propaganda that made Richard out to be a villain and himself the hero and rightful king .He named his eldest son Arthur after the ancient English warrior king. Sadly, the prince died at fifteen.

The wool trade grew under Henry the Seventh's rule and the kingdom grew wealthier. However, as Henry had inherited a bankrupt government, he went about taxing the people heavily to fill his coffers' greed.

## Henry VIII.



**List the names of the six wives of Henry the 8<sup>th</sup>:**

Henry the Eighth - Henry the Seventh's second son and successor - is famous for his ferocious appetites for food and for women. Although, he is popularly remembered as a heavy old man, when he took the throne at seventeen, he was handsome and athletic. He made himself immediately popular by reducing taxes and beheading two of his father's unpopular ministers. His father did leave him with the well-stocked treasury and with so many barons dead in the War of the Roses, Henry held more power than any previous King in England. He fell in love with and married his brother Arthur's widow, the Spanish princess, Catherine of Aragon, and they had a happy relationship for many years. Sadly, Catherine suffered several miscarriages and had only one surviving child, Mary. King Henry was obsessed with cementing his dynasty, so when it became clear that Catherine was unable to bear any more children, Henry decided to divorce her. He had a replacement all picked out: a young lady in waiting and servant to the Queen, Anne Boleyn. Unlike other women, including Anne's own sister, who had gone quickly to Henry's bed, Anne played a coquettish game of resistance: why settle for being a royal mistress when she could be queen? Nevertheless, Catherine wasn't going to give up her husband or her place without a fight.

Henry's basis for the divorce was a Bible verse which said it was a sin to marry your brother's widow. But Catherine stood up to Henry in court and proclaimed that her marriage to Arthur had never been consummated and therefore didn't count. The only one who could grant a royal divorce was the Pope and he was currently under siege from the Holy Roman Emperor who happened to be Catherine's nephew. The Pope refused to grant Henry's divorce so Henry used the Protestant movement to make himself head of the new Church of England. He dissolved the monasteries and enriched himself by looting their wealth and he granted himself a divorce. Catherine, heartbroken, died shortly after.

Anne Boleyn was finally Queen and bore a daughter, Elizabeth.

During a joust, Henry fell from his horse and suffered a leg injury that would plague him for the rest of his life, ending his athleticism and allowing him to pile on weight. Historians hypothesized that he also

suffered brain damage that would explain his hair-trigger temper. Anne had a miscarriage with their second child and Henry started to resent his wife. Her enemies at court accused her of adultery and incest with her brother. She was most likely innocent of all charges but nonetheless she was beheaded at the Tower of London. Eleven days after Anne's execution, Henry married Jane Seymour.

Jane learned from the mistakes of her predecessors and was quiet and demure and kept her head. She gave birth to Henry's long-awaited son Edward but died shortly after the birth due to infection. Next, Henry was encouraged to make an advantageous political marriage and to add a spare to the nursery of the heir unsurprisingly.

Princesses were not lining up to marry the wife-murdering-monarch. One said if she had two heads, she'd be happy to marry him. Ann of Cleves, the sister of the German elector was eventually selected after Henry had become infatuated with her portrait. Henry decided to surprise her upon their first meeting by disguising himself as a peasant, being sure that she would fall in love with him on sight. But when Anne was shocked rather than enamoured with the old, overweight stranger who burst in on her, Henry was humiliated. He complained that it was Anne who is ugly and thus she was unable to consummate the marriage and was happy to accept a divorce, a generous settlement and an estate, and escaped with her head.

Fifty-year-old Henry quickly healed his broken heart with a 16 year-old girl, Catherine Howard. For a year, he doted on her and fulfilled her childish desires for clothes and jewellery, while another man was fulfilling her more womanly desires. Court rivals brought evidence of her adultery to the king along with the knowledge that she had sex before marriage. Both Catherine's current and former lovers and Catherine herself lost their heads in the Tower of London.

Since Henry the Eighth had split with the Catholic Church, the Vatican no longer recognized his rule. Ireland, still devoutly Catholic, didn't care to be a fiefdom of the Vatican and preferred Henry as their King even if he was technically a Protestant. So the Irish parliament upgraded the title held by kings of England since Henry the Second from Lord of Ireland to king of Ireland.

Henry's sixth and final wife was Catherine Parr. There was no question of her virginity as she had already been twice widowed. She was a companion and nurse for the ailing, old king as well as a published author, a remarkable feat for a woman of the time. She got herself into hot water when she angered the king by arguing for her Protestant beliefs. Though Henry was head of the Church of

England and demanded Protestantism of his subjects, he was still a practicing Catholic. Catherine was able to convince the hot-tempered King moments before guards arrived to arrest her that she was only debating his majesty in order to learn from his instruction. Henry's failing health finally gave out in 1547 at the age of 55. He was survived by his wife Catherine Parr and was buried next to Jane Seymour, the only wife who didn't live long enough to piss him off.

### **Edward VI**

Edward the Sixth, Henry the Eighth's one and only longed for son, became king at the age of 9. He was staunchly Protestant and he and his Regency Council did much to shape the Church of England, including introducing the Book of Common Prayer which was in English rather than Latin and is still in use today. Edward had always been a sickly child and lived in fear that his heir, his older sister Mary was to return the country to Catholicism. At age of 15, he fell fatally ill with tuberculosis and he and his council drew up a new succession, naming his cousin Lady Jane Grey as his heir.

### **Lady Jane Grey**

Lady Jane Grey was the granddaughter of Henry the Eighth's younger sister, Mary, the Queen of France. Upon hearing that she would be queen, Jane fainted. She had an outstanding education and was a dedicated protestant. The council's scheme to swap Mary for Jane was doomed from the start.

Mary was popular with the people and they felt they'd been duped. Mary easily raised an army in the English countryside and marched to London. After Jane Grey's ruling for only nine days, the men who had put her in this dangerous position saw the writing on the wall and abandoned her to save their own skins. Her own father arrested her. And Jane and her husband were imprisoned in the Tower of London. Mary, now queen, recognised that Jane had been a political pawn and did not wish to execute her cousin. But when a rebellion in Jane's favour frightened Mary's betrothed from coming to England, Mary signed the death warrant and the 16-year-old, nine- days-queen lost her head.

### **Mary I**

Mary the First, Henry the Eighth's oldest child had had to fight her whole life for her position after her mother Catherine of Aragon had been cast out as Queen. When Mary came to the throne at 37, she made quick work of undoing her father's and brother's efforts to convert the nation to protestantism. She was a devout Catholic and became known as Bloody Mary by burning some 280 Protestants at

the stake in her short five-year reign. She married her cousin, Philip the Second of Spain and loved him dearly but her affections were not returned. She was desperate for an heir to keep the throne from her protestant younger sister, Elizabeth, but with her husband frequently away in his own kingdom, this proved challenging. At last, Mary began to exhibit symptoms of pregnancy but as the tenth and eleventh months ticked by with no sign of labour, her swollen belly began to recede. She probably suffered a psychosomatic episode. Following the humiliation of her false pregnancy, Philip returned to war on the continent and Mary was heartbroken. She died at the age of 42, most likely of uterine cancer.

### **Elizabeth I.**

Elizabeth, the first the daughter of Henry and the beheaded Anne Boleyn had spent her half-sister, Mary's reign desperately avoiding any association with plots against her sister. Even so, Mary was always deeply suspicious of her protestant sibling and had her in and out of imprisonment and always close to the chopping block. When Mary died, Elizabeth was declared queen at 25. She was incredibly intelligent, an outstanding leader and is considered one of the greatest monarchs of England. She was more politically moderate than her father and siblings and promoted religious tolerance. In response, the Pope declared that any Catholic who killed the English Queen would be innocent of sin. The many assassination attempts that ensued were all foiled by the Secret Service. As her mother had been beheaded at her father's order, it is no surprise that Elizabeth refused to marry and became known as the Virgin Queen. She did, however, have many favourites throughout her life. She was particularly close to Robert Dudley, a childhood friend whose wife died after a fall down the stairs that many believe may have been orchestrated by Dudley to free him up in case the Queen might propose marriage. She did not, however, and rebuffed her many foreign suitors, as well, including her sister's widower, Philip the Second of Spain, who, in his disappointment, brought the Spanish Armada to overthrow Elizabeth. Against great odds, she led the country to one of the greatest military victories in it and defeated Philip's fleet.

Elizabeth dressed fabulously: she wore elaborate red wigs and fine poisonous lead makeup. She was idolized in art and encouraged her people to worship her as a goddess. During her reign, the wool trade flourished and the English became wealthier than ever. She was beloved by most but had one enemy: her cousin. Mary Queen of Scots was the centre of many Catholic plots to overthrow Elizabeth. Mary was not like Queen Elizabeth. Once she had foolishly

married a handsome but violent man, Henry Darnley who took as much of her power from her as he could. In a jealous rage, Darnley murdered Mary's secretary in front of her while Mary was pregnant. Another Scottish Lord James Bothwell orchestrated Darnley's death by blowing up his bedroom.

Mary then married Bothwell and everyone suspected she'd been involved in her first husband's Murder. She was forced to escape to England where she was immediately arrested.

Elizabeth put off executing Mary for years because she had a horror of killing her cousin and a fellow monarch. But when Mary was found to have participated in a plot to have Elizabeth assassinated, Elizabeth signed the death warrant and Mary lost her head.

Elizabeth's 44-year reign was a period of flourishing art led by the likes of William Shakespeare who wrote such timeless plays as Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet and Macbeth. Exploration and colonization of the Americas was led by the legally sanctioned pirate, Francis Drake and by Walter Raleigh who named Virginia after his Queen and brought tobacco and potatoes back to England.

Elizabeth died at 67 ending a golden era in England but with no children to follow the Virgin Queen.