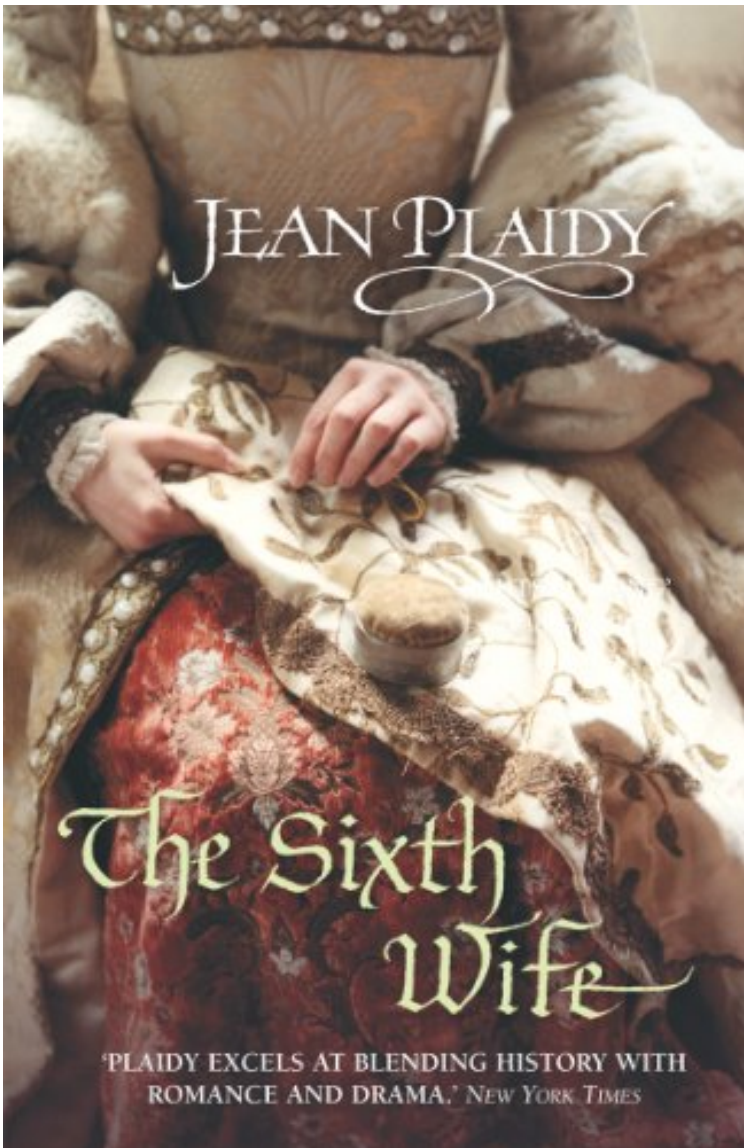


(Mobile ebook) File size: 34.Mb

The Sixth Wife: (Tudor Saga)



Par Jean Plaidy
*ebooks / Download PDF / *ePub /*
DOC / audiobook

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #772368 dans eBooksPubli le: 2011-02-15Sorti le: 2011-02-15Format: Ebook Kindle

(Mobile ebook) The Sixth Wife:
(Tudor Saga)

Par Jean Plaidy : The Sixth Wife: (Tudor Saga) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Sixth Wife: (Tudor Saga):

Download

Read Online

Description : Description du produit304 PAGES

Prsentation de l'diteurThe stirring story of Henry VIII's final marriage, to Katharine Parr.Katharine Parr has unwittingly become the last pawn in King Henry VIII's ambitions for an heir. Already twice widowed, Katharine finally dares to hope that she might find love with the dashing Thomas Seymour - but Henry has decided he must have a sixth wife and Seymour's intentions to marry Katharine have not gone unnoticed. Unable to refuse the King of England, Katharine becomes his reluctant bride. Once again it seems only a matter of time before another wife's fate leads her to the Tower of London...ExtraitCHAPTER ISpring had come to England. There were marsh marigolds along the banks of the river, and in the royal park the saxifrage showed gold and green on the damp sweet-smelling earth; the buds were bursting open in the

hedgerows; and the songs of the thrush and the blackbird filled the air. In his royal palace of Greenwich, his "Manor of Pleazaunce," the best-loved of all his palaces because it was his birthplace, the King was aware of the coming of spring. He was melancholy and he knew the reason for his melancholy. It was little more than a year since his fascinating but unfaithful wife had, at his command, lost her head. A whole year! It was a long time to be without a wife. The small eyes seemed to sink into the puffy face, the mouth grew prim, as he thought of all he had suffered at the hands of his wives. The first and second had deceived him; he had divorced one and beheaded the other; the third had died giving him his son; the fourth he had not loved at all and had lost no time in divorcing her; and the fifth that faithless wanton, Catharine Howard whom for the last year he had been unable to banish from his thoughts, had walked out to Tower Green on a February day of last year and laid her head on the block. This was an unnatural deprivation for a man to suffer; and, he reminded himself, if I am a King, I am also a man. And the remedy for his melancholy? A wife. The King must look for a sixth wife. Blustering March winds buffeted the walls of a mansion close to the Charterhouse Priory in the City of London. On one of the window seats, her tapestry in her hands although she was paying little attention to the design she was working at a woman. She was small and her hair, which was fair and abundant, showed beneath her hood of black velvet; her gown of the same material was richly embroidered, but in dark colors; and the skirt was open in the front to display her silk petticoat, which was a somber shade of purple; the long veil flowing from the back of her head proclaimed her a widow. Her face was charming, but the charm came from its expression rather than a regularity of features; at the moment it seemed to wear a borrowed beauty; her cheeks were flushed, her eyes bright, and it was as though this beauty had snatched away ten years of her thirty and made her a young woman of twenty again. She was in love; and the eager glances which she cast down at the courtyard suggested that she was waiting for her lover. Why should she not have a lover? She had married twice to please her family. Why should she not marry this time to please herself? Soon he would come riding into the courtyard. He would look up and she would wave her hand, for there was no subterfuge in her nature, and she would not hide her feelings. He was quite sure that she loved him and that he had only to ask her to become Lady Seymour and she would most readily agree. He was the handsomest man in the King's court. It was not only her love that told her this. Others said the same; even his enemies and he had many granted him that. He was the brother-in-law of the King; and he was a favorite of the King, for all knew that the latter liked to have about him those who were gay, young and handsome. Some thought that Thomas Seymour had become too ambitious since his sister Jane had married the King; others said that favors won through a female relative and not as a reward for a man's prowess, were built on flimsy foundations. Thomas, they said, lacked the ability of his elder brother, Edward, Lord Hertford. Edward had crafty diplomacy to set against Thomas's charm. Edward was cautious; Thomas was reckless. It mattered not, Katharine, the widow, assured herself. He was the most charming, the most delightful of companions. He was the only man she would ever love, and he loved her too. He was going to ask her to marry him and she widow of a few months though she was going to marry him. Contemplating her third marriage must naturally make her think of the other two. They had been no real marriages. She smiled now, a little tenderly, thinking of the poor frightened child whom they had married to Lord Borough of Gainsborough, an elderly widower, with children who had seemed to Katharine quite old. Her Mother had arranged that match, and she and her sister and brother had always obeyed their mother without question. Katharine could not remember her father, for Sir Thomas Parr had died when she was only four; and in the capable hands of his wife, Maud, he had left the care of his children. Lady Parr had been a stern mother, continually scheming for the advancement of her children; and when young Katharine had been told she was to marry the rich Lord Borough, it had not occurred to her to protest. And perhaps, Katharine told herself, as she threaded her needle with crimson silk, she had not been so unfortunate, for my Lord Borough had proved to be a kindly man, gentle and tender, and not so demanding as a young man might have been. She had been sorry when at the age of fifteen she had found herself to be a rich widow. The first widowhood had been allowed to last only two or three years when another wealthy widower had been found for her. John Neville, Lord Latimer, was an excellent match, so said her family; and recognizing in him the same kindly tolerance which had made her first marriage less frightening than it might so easily have been, and finding friendship with his grown-up children, Katharine had allowed herself to be married a second time indeed, she had had little say in the matter and had taken up residence in the beautiful mansion of Snape Hall, or sometimes in another of his houses in Worcester, or, when they visited London, here in the mansion near the Charterhouse. With Lord Latimer she had attended court and had become acquainted with the Princess Mary, who was of an age similar to her own; they had interests in common and had found

pleasure in each other's company. She had been a good wife to Lord Latimer; she had nursed him in sickness and she had astonished him with her wisdom, since but for her he might have come to a tragic end. He had taken an active part in the "Pilgrimage of Grace," that insurrection against the reforms of the King and Cromwell, and it was only by great good fortune that he had escaped the King's wrath; and this was due to his listening to Katharine's entreaties that he should not join in the second rising. Katharine could shudder now remembering those times, but they were behind her since she was widowed for the second time. She was still young only in her thirty-first year and she was rich, possessing several stately mansions and the fortunes inherited from two husbands. She was also in love. Sir Thomas Seymour was quite different from either Lord Borough or Lord Latimer. The flashing eyes, the chestnut beard, the curling hair, the great stature, the booming voice, the air of jaunty recklessness, the sailor's oaths which rose to his lips at the least provocation, set him apart; he was a man in a thousand. Perhaps she was rather foolish, she a widow of thirty, to love the most charming man at court. She would certainly have been had she not been sure that her affection was returned. As she stitched she thought of their meetings in this mansion. Lord Latimer had been a Catholic, but she even during his lifetime had been attracted by the New Religion. She had friends who were interested in it; and how she had enjoyed their conversations, the books which had to be smuggled to her apartments because they were forbidden reading. She had never talked to Lord Latimer of her feelings for the New Religion. How could she when he was a staunch Catholic and supported Rome with such fervor that he was ready to disobey the King and risk his life to do so? She had been taught that it was a wife's duty to follow her husband in all things. But when Lord Latimer had died there seemed no longer any reason why she should not admit to herself that she had these Protestant leanings. She had first become interested through her conversations with a friend named Anne Askew, the daughter of a squire of Lincoln. Anne was fervent in her beliefs and Katharine felt that she herself could never be so pious. Her intentions were noble, but worldly matters came between her and her piety. She smiled as she paused in her work to smooth the folds of her velvet gown; she enjoyed wearing beautiful garments and rich ornaments. It was at a religious gathering which she had arranged should take place in this house that she had first become aware of Thomas. He had looked incongruous at the gathering; he had not seemed in the least devout; his extravagant clothes and gay manners set him apart. Did he come for religious reasons? She doubted it. He came because the meetings were anti-Catholic and antagonistic to those--such as the Duke of Norfolk, Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester and Sir Thomas Wriothesley who wished to wrest the King's favor from himself and his family. Katharine was not interested in his reasons for coming; she only cared that he came; and from the moment he had selected her for his attention, she had to admit that the religious purpose of the gatherings seemed to lose its importance. At that moment her woman, Nan, came into the room. Nan was younger than Katharine by a year or two; dark-haired and pretty, she had been with Katharine since her marriage with Lord Latimer; she was a very loving servant. There was a cloud in Nan's eyes today because she knew the reason for her mistress's elation, and it disturbed her. Nan felt that Katharine judged all men by the two she had married, and innocently thought that Sir Thomas Seymour was a younger, more handsome and more charming version of Lord Latimer. "Well, Nan," said Katharine, "how do you think the pattern goes?" Nan came and surveyed it. "Very well, my lady." "It is cold today. But the spring will soon be here. There are signs of it everywhere." "They are saying, my lady, that the King feels the effects of spring." "The King?" "Yes, my lady. And it is rumored that he looks for a new wife." "Oh, yes." Katharine glanced down at her embroidery. Her mood had become solemn. There was not a lady at court who did not become solemn at the thought of the King's last marriage, which had ended so tragically just over a year ago. "It seems such a short while ago that we had a Queen," went on Nan. "We thought the King was happy at last. And then quite suddenly . . ." She paused and shivered. "She was so pretty," she went on. "I do not think I ever saw anyone quite so pretty. Queen Anne Boleyn was more striking to look at--more fascinating too, they say--but I do not think I ever saw one so dainty, so sweet to look upon as Queen Catharine Howard." "Don't speak of it, Nan. It is . . . upsetting." But Nan went on: "I remember how she ran screaming down the gallery at Hampton Court when the King was at chapel. I can't forget the sound of her voice." "It is best forgotten, Nan." "But I shall never forget. I was there at the end. I should not have gone, but I could not help it. I had to go. And I saw her walk out and lay her pretty head on the block . . . like a child who had learned her lesson. They say she practiced how she should do it while she was waiting in her cell. And now, my lady, the King looks for a sixth wife." "A sixth wife!" said Katharine. "How I pity her . . . whoever she shall be. But what are we saying? This is no affair of ours. The King grows older although doubtless it is treason to say so. Let us hope he is putting all thought of another marriage from him. And, if he should marry, now that he is older, there is

less likelihood of his fancy's straying." "It did not stray from Catharine Howard, my lady." "Let us not speak of it. Do I hear the sound of horses' hooves in the courtyard?" She looked out of the window, smiling, for riding into the courtyard was Thomas Seymour. Revue de presse "Jean Plaidy doesn't just write the history, she makes it come alive." (Julia Moffat, RNA) "Her novels are still very much to be enjoyed ... Any writer who can both educate and thrill a reader of any age deserves to be remembered and find new fans ... One only has to look at the TV/Media to see that the appetite for this kind of writing is still very much there" (Matt Bates WH Smith Travel) "Plaidy excels at blending history with romance and drama" (New York Times) "Full-blooded, dramatic, exciting" (Observer) "Interesting and accurate...an absorbing novel" (Times Literary Supplement)