



1. What do you think it was that drew King Henry to Jane Seymour and led him to make her his third wife? Was it simply a desire for a wife less temperamental and imperious than Anne Boleyn, and likely to give him a healthy son?
2. King Henry came to believe, when married to Anne Boleyn, that she had cast a spell on him to induce him to marry her. Doesn't infatuation always cast its own spell?
3. Some of Jane Seymour's contemporaries described her as "full of goodness." In your own reading, have you found novels about "good" women of the past to be less compelling than those about disreputable women or villainesses?
4. From what you know of Tudor history, do you imagine that King Henry's marriage to Jane Seymour was the happiest of his six marriages? Do you think it is significant that when Henry died, his remains were placed in a single tomb with Jane's so that they would be united in death?
5. What do you think Jane would have thought of Henry VIII's image in popular culture as a royal Bluebeard who bullied and mistreated his wives and ordered the executions of two of them? Would you agree with the sardonic Victorian writer who suggested that the plainness of Henry's queens was, "if not a justification," at least a credible reason for his willingness to discard them?
6. How would the course of English history have changed if Anne Boleyn had died of the sweating sickness in 1528 instead of surviving to marry the king? Or would it have made little difference?

Discussion Questions



St. Martin's
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7. Many of Jane Seymour's contemporaries believed that the end of the world was at hand. Why do you imagine that each generation seems to find so much destruction, confusion, and hazardous mayhem in human society that a future of any sort appears unlikely? Why are prophecies of doom so compelling?
8. In *The Favored Queen*, Jane Seymour idolizes King Henry's first wife Catherine of Aragon as "a model of courtesy and charity," who had "played her thankless role with uncommon grace." Yet it was rumored that Catherine was poisoned by her enemies at court. What was your opinion of Catherine?
9. Have you thought of writing a historical novel or entertainment about any person from the past? If so, who?