

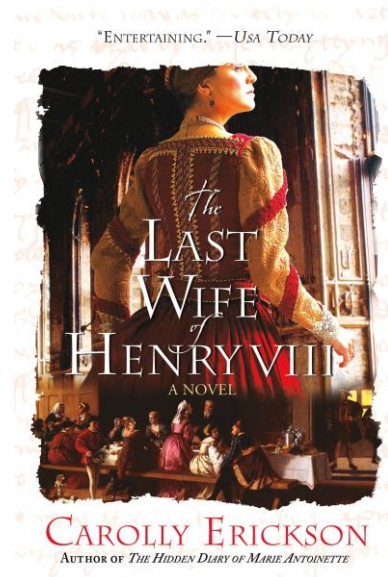
READING GROUP GUIDE

The Last Wife of Henry VIII

By Carolly Erickson

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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *The Last Wife of Henry VIII* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *The Last Wife of Henry VIII*.

About the Book

The least known of Henry VIII's six wives was the cleverest of them all. Alluring, witty and resourceful, she attracted the king's lust and, though much in love with the handsome Thomas Seymour, was thrown into the intrigue-filled snakepit of the royal court. While victims of the king's wrath suffered torture and execution, Catherine withstood the onslaught, even when Henry sought to replace her with wife number seven. She survived her royal husband, and found happiness with Seymour--but it was shadowed by rivalry with the young Princess Elizabeth, whose affection Seymour coveted. Catherine won the contest, but at great cost.

About the Author

Distinguished historian turned popular novelist CAROLLY ERICKSON is the author of *The First Elizabeth*, *Great Catherine*, *Alexandra*, *The Hidden Diary of Marie Antoinette*, and many other prize-winning works of fiction and nonfiction. She lives in Hawaii.



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Discussion Questions

- 1.) How does the character of Henry VIII change from his dashing, athletic young manhood at the Field of Cloth of Gold to his final years?
- 2.) Was Catherine Parr's high intelligence a help or a hindrance to her in surviving at the court of Henry VIII?
- 3.) Do you think Tom Seymour really loved Catherine, or was he merely using her to advance himself?
- 4.) In what ways were the lives of women at the Tudor court severely restricted? In what ways were they given latitude?
- 5.) Do you think Catherine Parr was a victim of her era or transcended it through her force of will?
- 6.) Which of Henry VIII's wives, as described in this novel, did you like best? Which did you respect most?
- 7.) Do you think Catherine Parr was a good stepmother, or merely a well-meaning one?
- 8.) Why did everyone (except Tom Seymour) dislike the young Elizabeth? Was it only because her mother was the disgraced Anne Boleyn, or were there other motivations?
- 9.) Overall, do you think Catherine Parr had a happy life? If not, how would you characterize her life?
- 10.) Would you have liked to live at the court of Henry VIII?

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