

# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

Play 1 – Wives One And Two

*By*  
**Sue Russell**

(Cast Copy)

# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

## Play 1

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**Wolsey:** Yes, he did have very little idea of duty. Take the running of his country, for example. That was left to me. It was me who governed the country for 15 years, whilst Henry was off enjoying himself. I worked so hard.

**Courtier:** But all that power, in the hands of a mere butcher's son, like you? Did you really think us nobles at court would stand back and let you take everything? You got too greedy!

**Wolsey:** Well you lot got your revenge.

**Pope:** He failed to persuade me to give his master the divorce he so badly wanted - and paid with his life.

**Wolsey:** Yes, though I died on my way to prison. And poor old Sir Thomas More, who became Chancellor after me - he didn't do any better. He ended up with his head on the block, just because he wouldn't accept Henry as Head of the Church of England.

**Courtier:** Yup, all very fine making fine speeches like "I die loyal to God and the King, but to God first of all" – but it didn't save More from getting it in the neck!

**Wolsey:** No, Henry sure didn't show much loyalty to his main ministers.

**Courtier:** Glad I wasn't one of them! Guess I'll just stay where I am – forget the promotion! Maybe that way I at least will get to keep my head!

# Henry VIII

## And His Six Wives

by Sue Russell

### Play 1 – Wives One And Two

#### *Characters:*

Henry VIII  
Catherine of Aragon  
Cardinal Wolsey  
Pope  
Courtier  
Anne Boleyn

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**Wolsey:** I built him his favourite, Hampton Court, and gave it to him as a gift, to try and stay in his favour. What a waste of time, that was!

**Pope:** Yes, many of us were let down by Henry. When he defended the Roman Catholic church at the beginning of his reign, I was so pleased I called him Defender of the Faith. I also gave him permission to marry his dead brother's wife, Catherine. I'd never have guessed he would have wanted me to take away that permission, 20 years later!

**Wolsey:** But that's just what he did. When Catherine was 40 and it was beginning to look unlikely she'd give him the son he so desperately wanted, what does he go and do?

**Catherine Aragon:** Ask for a divorce!

**Pope:** And I couldn't possibly agree. If I had, Catherine's nephew, Charles the King of Spain, would have been furious with me. And I couldn't risk that.

**Wolsey:** And guess who got the blame? Muggins, here! Hardly my fault that I couldn't convince the Pope that God was punishing Henry for marrying his brother's widow, and that he should deny that the wedding had ever taken place. The fact was, it did take place, rightly or wrongly. It was a bit late to try turning the clock back 20 years on!

**Pope:** Yes, an impossible task. And then he goes and makes himself head of the Church of England!

**Catherine Aragon:** And divorces me!

**Anne Boleyn:** And marries me! But not strictly in that order. 4 months before, to be precise!

**Catherine Aragon:** What? You mean he married you before he divorced me? How dare he?

**Courtier:** Not the best kept secret at court, but one which slipped past poor Catherine. We all felt really sorry for her, she was a very popular lady. The way Henry treated her was truly cruel.

**Catherine Aragon:** Yes, banishing me from court. I never did see Mary again, or Henry, even though I carried on loving him.

**Anne Boleyn:** What a fool! Wasn't it obvious what sort of man you were married to? Do you think he shed any tear over you? Not likely! He was far too busy enjoying himself!

# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

## Play 1 – Wives One And Two

**Courtier:** Tudor king

Great fat thing.  
Wife killer  
Wine swiller.  
Pope hater  
War baiter.  
Fashion leader  
Banquet feeder.  
Church breaker  
Riches taker.  
Oh for a son  
Well he did get one!

**Wolsey:** Yes, that just about sums up my master. But for goodness sake, don't let him hear you say such things. Not unless you want your head to roll like countless others did during his reign.

**Catherine Aragon:** Mmm. A real Mr. Charming, but I loved him 'til the day I died despite all his faults.

**Anne Boleyn:** Well you might not have felt quite so lovey dovey had you ended your life with your head on the block! That's what happened to me, just 3 years after I married him!

**Catherine Aragon:** Well, your marriage lasted a little longer than my first marriage did – that was to Henry's older brother, Arthur. He went and died just 5 months after we got hitched! I was only 15!

**Anne Boleyn:** Gosh, you didn't have much luck, did you?

**Catherine Aragon:** No, what with five out of my six children dying. Only Mary survived.

**Anne Boleyn:** And we all know how popular daughters were! Henry wouldn't even come to my Elizabeth's christening!

**Wolsey:** It's all very fine you ladies chin-wagging amongst yourselves. Perhaps you didn't realise what was at stake.

**Pope:** No, I think you'll find you've fast forwarded to Mary, Catherine's daughter's reign. She was the one who burnt all non-Catholics at the stake!

**Henry:** Steak! Steak! Is it suppertime already! Excellent – more feasting, that's what I like best. You know what they say about the quickest way to a man's heart?

**Wolsey:** Yes, he sure knew how to put away the food!

**Henry:** Well, I still managed to stay a fine figure of a man! Course, all my sporting activities helped – wasn't I just the finest jouster, the best archer and (**looking at Anne**) the most amazing tennis player?

**Anne Boleyn:** Huh! Indeed. So you should have been with all that practice you put in – no prizes for guessing where you were when I was 'losing my head'?

**Catherine Aragon:** On the tennis court?

**Anne Boleyn:** That's right. While I was having my 'walk around the block', he was practising his backhands!

**Henry:** Only because you'd been so underhand in your behaviour!

**Anne Boleyn:** Ooh. That was a cheap shot.

**Wolsey:** (**Coughing**) Huh Hmm. I think we'll call that 'Deuce' as they say on the tennis court. Yes, Henry certainly was a fine athlete when he started his reign.

**Pope:** Indeed. Crowned at 18, and married just 2 weeks later. (**Aside**) Shame he didn't stay that way.

**Henry:** And what a 'catch' I was! Tall, good-looking, intelligent – I could speak several foreign languages, and play many different musical instruments!

**Courtier:** Like a trumpet? He was certainly good at blowing his own trumpet!

**Henry:** Yes, I owned 14 trumpets, along with 10 trombones, 5 bagpipes, 76 recorders and 78 flutes!

**Courtier:** He'll be telling us he played them all at once, next!

**Henry:** Ooh. And did you know about all my wonderful palaces?

# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

Play 2 – Wives Two and Three

*By*  
**Sue Russell**

(Cast Copy)

# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

## Play 2

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**Henry:** Yes, life can be so cruel. The love of my life ...  
and she dies giving me what I most wanted in the world. A son!  
Still, she was the only one of my wives to be buried next to me at  
Windsor. She knew she was special.

**Jane Seymour:** Yes, we made a happy couple. A shame I didn't  
have longer to enjoy being your wife. I didn't even stick around  
long enough to be crowned queen! Still, I did leave you that most  
precious gift – a son! Sweet little Eddie, here!

**Henry:** Yes, so good looking. Just like his daddy!

**Courtier:** Could have fooled me! Fat and forty, that was  
you, mate. What is it they say? Love is blind? Must have been, in  
Jane's case! You've only got to look at those paintings by Hans  
Holbein to see the truth!

**Anne Boleyn:** Huh! To think he got rid of me because of my  
fading good looks. Shame he didn't take a few minutes to look in  
the mirror himself!

**Henry:** Just listen to her. Anyone would think she had  
an axe to grind! Enough of these 3 wives! And a word of advice to  
you readers. Never, never, never listen to old wives tales! Very  
misleading! They deserved what they got, believe me!

# Henry VIII

## And His Six Wives

*by Sue Russell*

Play 2 – Wives Two and Three

### *Characters:*

Henry  
Anne Boleyn  
Jane Seymour  
Courtier  
George (Anne's brother)  
Executioner

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# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

## Play 2 – Wives Two and Three

**Courtier:** So let us move on to the year of 1536.

**Jane Seymour:** The year I married Henry. And the year his first wife, Catherine, died.

**Anne Boleyn:** And the year I passed on. Though my life came to a rather more abrupt end – with my head on the block! Just like my cousin, Catherine Howard, wife number 5. She also found out how dangerous it could be catching the king's eye.

**Henry:** Oh come, come, my dear! You hardly put up a fight when I spotted you at court. And you can hardly blame me for that. You were the most beautiful lady in waiting I had ever seen!

**Anne Boleyn:** Well, my earlier time at the French court certainly gave me a few handy fashion tips.

**Courtier:** She was very elegant and charming. We could all see why Henry fell for her. Shame about that extra finger.

**Henry:** Yes, the priest at our wedding had a bit of a shock when I nearly put the ring on her sixth finger!

**Anne Boleyn:** Hmm. Didn't take you long to use that against me. Witch, indeed!

**Executioner:** Pardon, Mademoiselle, but there were other reasons why I was called up to punish you.

**George:** And you did that alright!

**Executioner:** Monsieur, as an expert swordsman, I was hardly likely to miss!

**George:** OK. So I suppose we can say 'Job well done'. Though I'd say yours was a bit of a dead end job! Not everyone's choice of career!

**Executioner:** I hope you're not forgetting, it was your sister, Anne, who asked that I 'finish her off'? I had to travel all the way from France. And like I said, being a witch wasn't your sister's only crime.

**Anne Boleyn:** No, but not having a son, certainly was! You can say what you like, Henry. But we both know that was the main reason I had to go!

**Henry:** Well, there was the small matter of me falling in love with someone else. My beloved Jane.

**Jane Seymour:** But I wouldn't want anyone thinking I encouraged him! I sent back his gifts, including a purse of gold. I returned his letters unopened, and I refused to speak to him apart from when there were other people around.

**Anne Boleyn:** Sounds just like when he was courting me! I, too, refused to be his mistress, and I made him wait 6 years!

**Henry:** This lady in waiting didn't have to wait that long!

**Courtier:** You can say that again. Henry and Jane were married just 2 weeks after Anne was executed.

**Anne Boleyn:** But I made sure I wouldn't be forgotten – I etched my signature into the wall of my prison cell, at the Tower of London. You can still see it there today.

**George:** And meet her yourself, if you visit Hever Castle, our family home, at Christmas. That is when her ghost is said to wander around the gardens there. You might just bump into her if you're lucky!

**Anne Boleyn:** My poor brother. You weren't so lucky. You got dragged down with me, through no fault of your own. You and those other unfortunate courtiers who supposedly courted me.

**Courtier:** Not me! I stayed well clear!

**Anne Boleyn:** You were just lucky. Henry was looking for an excuse to get rid of me, so what does he do?

**Henry:** Charge you with adultery and treason – flirting with other men and plotting to murder me! Sounds about right! If you're King of England, you are the law! Wasn't difficult for me to get my own way in everything!

**Courtier:** Well, not quite everything. Some things even you couldn't control. Your time with Jane, for example. Now there was a cruel twist of fate. Finds the woman of his dreams, she gives him exactly what he wants – a son... But then dies 12 days afterwards! No happy ending there!



# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

Play 3 – Wives Four and Five

*By*  
**Sue Russell**

(Cast Copy)

# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

## Play 3

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**Henry:** 7 months.  
**Priest:** And you're marrying Catherine how long after the divorce from Anne?  
**Henry:** 2 weeks.  
**Priest:** And you really think this one will last?  
**Henry:** With all my heart.  
**Priest:** I'll take that as a 'no' then!  
**Henry:** Have you always been this pessimistic?  
**Priest:** Hmm. Let me see. I think the doubts started round about wife number ... how many is it now?  
**Courtier:** I think we all lost count a long time ago!  
**Catherine Howard:** My! He's had nearly as many wives as I've had boyfriends! But shhh! Don't tell him that. I'm so enjoying all these lovely new clothes and jewellery... And so are my many admirers!  
**Hans Holbein:** Did you hear that? She won't be with us long! Better get on with this one's painting double-quick! Chop! Chop! As they say!  
**Catherine Howard:** Not yet! I'm having far too much fun!  
**Anne of Cleves:** You certainly are! Have you learnt nothing from the rest of us wives? I'm surprised you're not more careful, when you think of what happened to your cousin, Anne Boleyn!  
**Catherine Howard:** Nah! The old man's far too much in love with me to listen to a bit of gossip! He'd never believe it. Now, where's that handsome Thomas Culpeper? I'm sure no one here would tell Henry about what's going on right under his very nose!  
**Courtier:** How foolish she was! Of course we told him! Not many of us liked those Howards – far too many of them for a start! Most of them ended up like Catherine – charged with treason.  
**Henry:** Betrayed again! Why must it always end this way? Am I - great manly Henry, King of all England – not enough for these pretty women?  
**Priest:** There's an answer to that, but I won't be the one to say it! I want to keep my head on my shoulders!  
**Catherine Howard:** Too late for me, I guess. Tower of London, here I come!

# Henry VIII

## And His Six Wives

*by Sue Russell*

### Play 3 – Wives Four and Five

#### *Characters:*

Henry  
 Anne of Cleves  
 Catherine Howard  
 Hans Holbein  
 Courtier  
 Priest

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# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

## Play 3 – Wives Four and Five

**Henry:** So, where are we now?  
**Priest:** I make it wife number 4. Are you not getting just a little bit bored with this Wedding March music? Seems to me like this getting married business is getting a bit of a bad habit! Perhaps you should take a little time 'off' between each one!  
**Henry:** Silence, you rogue! You are just here to listen to the 'I do' bit.  
**Priest:** Hmm. It would be a lot more interesting if one of them said 'I don't'!  
**Henry:** Do you want to watch your head roll all the way down the aisle?  
**Priest:** Oh no, sir!  
**Henry:** Then I suggest you just go and get ready for the next one. Now, who was it?  
**Courtier:** Anne of Cleves, Sire. The princess from Germany.  
**Hans Holbein:** The one you sent me out to paint. I did such a fine job with the rest of your family, how could I go wrong?  
**Courtier:** These artists! Such huge egos! Shame he did get it so wrong, with Anne!  
**Henry:** What was that? Did I just see a horse walk by, inside my royal palace! Someone - take it to the stables!  
**Courtier:** Er, that was your new wife, Sire. Anne of Cleves is her ladyship's name!  
**Henry:** Flanders mare, more like! How could my painter, Holbein, have got it so wrong?  
**Courtier:** Even great artists make mistakes.  
**Henry:** But not at my court! I'm meant to be marrying that .. that horse in half an hour. How will I face that impudent priest? And after all he said the last time about taking more time?  
**Anne of Cleves:** **(Coughing)** Sprechen zie Deutch?

**Henry:** I beg your pardon! **(Groaning)** Oh please don't tell me she can't speak English either?  
**Anne of Cleves:** Just a little, my lord. Enough to say you don't look anything like your pictures, either!  
**Henry:** Aha! She has spirit, this one! I'm sure we'll have other things in common. What about music?  
**Anne of Cleves:** Nein.  
**Henry:** What about sport? You must do that back in Germany.  
**Anne of Cleves:** Nein.  
**Henry:** So, apart from making your country, Germany, friends with my country, England – is that all this marriage has going for it?  
**Courtier:** It would seem that way. Poor Anne, what a disappointment she turned out to be.  
**Henry:** And poor me. Time to start looking for wife number 5!  
**Priest:** What? Already? But you've only just walked up the aisle! Perhaps if we made it a few yards longer, you might make your mind up before you get to the pulpit, in future!  
**Henry:** But wait! I see another maid in waiting. But not for long! This one's as pretty as her cousin, my second wife Anne. I can feel myself falling head over heels in love again!  
**Courtier:** Let's hope her head stays attached to her upper half, longer than her cousin's did!  
**Anne of Cleves:** What is zis? My husband falling for a girl 5 years younger than his own daughter, Mary?  
**Hans Holbein:** She has a point. He is old enough to be her father. This can only end in tears!  
**Priest:** Oh oh! Here we go again. He does so let his heart rule his head. I can't see this one lasting.  
**Anne of Cleves:** I feel sorry for ze child. As long as I keep my head, I'm quite happy to go and live somewhere else.  
**Henry:** My! That was easy! No threats! No tantrums! You go, Anne dear, with my blessing!  
**Priest:** **(Coughing)** Huh hhm. That's meant to be my job. So where is she? Wife number 5? How long did you stay married this time?

# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

Play 4 – The Last Wife

*By*  
**Sue Russell**

(Cast Copy)

# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

## Play 4

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# Henry VIII

## And His Six Wives

*by Sue Russell*

Play 4 - The Last Wife

***Characters:***

Henry  
Catherine Parr  
Thomas Seymour  
Courtier 1  
Courtier 2  
Priest

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# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

## Play 4 – The Last Wife

**Priest:** So. Five down one to go! And who might that lucky lady be?

**Catherine Parr:** That would be me. Already widowed twice before meeting Henry. I managed to become a widow for a third time ...

**Henry:** You're not saying one of my wives actually out-lived me?

**Catherine Parr:** Oh yes. Not only survived you but went on to marry my real sweetheart.

**Thomas Seymour:** That's me!

**Henry:** I don't want to know! Fancy one of my wives lasting longer than me! That's not fair!

**Catherine Parr:** Now come along, Henry. You know perfectly well I gave you nothing to complain about. I was the perfect wife. And let's face it. By then you were hardly the perfect husband!

**Courtier 1:** You can say that again! Fat, balding and with legs so badly ulcerated that, well frankly, the strongest air freshener would have failed dismally when he was around.

**Priest:** A little respect, young man! That's no way to talk about your lord and master.

**Courtier 2:** You didn't have to carry him everywhere when his legs got so swollen that he couldn't move by himself.

**Thomas Seymour:** (Laughing) Did you really have to hoist him in and out of bed, using ropes and pulleys?

**Courtier 2:** We certainly did! And lift him up and down stairs using a hoist.

**Thomas Seymour:** Poor old man. What a way to end up! Lucky he had my beloved Catherine to nurse him and look after him. What patience that must have taken!

**Catherine Parr:** It certainly did! He was an old man at 52 whereas I was just 30. Still I was used to it. My second husband was much older than me, too. And I looked after his children just as I did Henry's.

**Thomas Seymour:** The perfect wife. I hope he appreciated you!

**Henry:** I did. She was a great companion to me in my dotage. She was intelligent enough to be able to discuss religion with me ..

**Catherine Parr:** Though I had to be careful not to disagree with him – I wasn't going to lose my head as others had.

**Priest:** But we all admired you for writing those books – you set a fine example to other women at court who had never done such clever things before. It was quite something having a woman scholar in court, in those days!

**Thomas Seymour:** And she was always a kind stepmother to Henry's children. She encouraged Mary, Elizabeth and Edward to try hard at their studies, and gave them all the love and support she possibly could.

**Priest:** So, we're near the end.

**Henry:** I don't like this bit. 'Course, it's different watching others go

**Courtier 1:** Often kicking and screaming!

**Henry:** But I was far too handsome to die at 55.

**Courtier 2:** Er, quick reality check! Handsome at the end? I don't think so!

**Priest:** Hideous is the way the rest of us would describe him! I bet Catherine was relieved to be shot of him! I know the rest of us were!

**Henry:** Such disloyalty!

**Priest:** Yeah, but what're you going to do about it now? Send down a chopper from heaven? No! We could all speak freely at last. Gone was Mr. Mega Pain in the Neck!

**Catherine Parr:** And I was free to marry Thomas, here.

**Thomas Seymour:** A happy though sadly short marriage. My lovely Catherine died soon after having our baby daughter, the year after we got married.

**Henry:** So she might have survived me ... But not for long!



# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

Play 5 – All the Wives

*By*  
**Sue Russell**

(Cast Copy)

# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

## Play 5

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# Henry VIII

## And His Six Wives

*by Sue Russell*

Play 5 – All the Wives

***Characters:***

Catherine of Aragon

Anne Boleyn

Jane Seymour

Anne of Cleves

Catherine Howard

Catherine Parr

Published by Lazy Bee Scripts

# Henry VIII And His Six Wives

## Play 5 – All the Wives

**Catherine Aragon:** So here we are all gathered – the merry wives of Henry VIII!

**Anne Boleyn:** That's right! We couldn't let him have the last say in this set of plays!

**Jane Seymour:** He might have thought he was the bees' knees, but there aren't too many other wives in history as famous as us lot!

**Anne of Cleves:** Yes, there might have been six of us – but you ask most people what became of us and they will probably be able to tell you ..

**Catherine Aragon:** Divorced!

**Anne Boleyn:** Beheaded!

**Jane Seymour:** Died!

**Anne of Cleves:** Divorced!

**Catherine Howard:** Beheaded!

**Catherine Parr:** Survived!

**Catherine Howard:** So who got the worst deal, out of us lot?

**Anne Boleyn:** I'm surprised you even have to ask, dear cousin! Us two, of course! We got sent to the block, don't you remember?!

**Jane Seymour:** Well, at least you got to wear the crown. I missed out on that, dying as I did.

**Anne of Cleves:** And at least you lot didn't have to live with a nickname like .. Flanders Mare!

**Catherine Aragon:** But none of you were separated from your child. When Henry banished me from court, Mary and I never saw each other again. How hard was that?

**Catherine Parr:** And how hard was it for me having to nurse him in his last years? At least you, Catherine, had the man at his best. He was, I hear, quite handsome, once upon a time. He was well past his sell by date by the time I married him!

**Jane Seymour:** Have none of you got a kind word to say for your husband? I loved him right up to my death!

**Anne Boleyn:** You might not have done if he had sent you to that grave. Just because I didn't give him a son!

**Anne of Cleves:** Well, I know he was rather rude to me at first. But he was very generous in leaving me

**Anne Boleyn:** Hever Castle! My family home! Pardon me if I'm not smiling!

**Catherine Parr:** Ladies! Ladies! Let us not bicker among ourselves! We should not punish each other for the wrongs that were done to us! It seems to me we all had a pretty rough time of it – being married to Henry VIII sure was no bed of roses!

**Catherine Howard:** Let us all be thankful that we died with dignity – which is more than can be said for Henry! Thank goodness none of us ended up as hideous as that!

**All:** **(Together)** Here! Here! So now we must let the old rascal ... Rest in Peace!