

# The second queen: a collared deer or wild schemer?

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King Henry VIII was the undeniable catalyst of the Protestant Reformation and the persecution and tumult that followed it. The legend of his many wives is widely circulated, too; they were all 'defective' and did not give birth to a male heir. (In reality, it was the king that determined the sex of the child; females, after all, can only contribute an X chromosome, but males contribute either an X or Y. It was just the 'chance of the draw' that King Henry VIII had so many daughters but only one legitimate son.) Though the king himself was the one who could not produce a son, the incompetence was blamed on the queens because of the prevailing attitude of women's inferiority.

But King Henry VIII's second Queen, Anne Boleyn, is a highly controversial figure in England's history with theories of her character range from her being a w\*\*\*\* to a heroine. Anne Boleyn's story begins with her early life and King Henry VIII's first wife. Anne grew up in the French court, daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn and niece of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk (Mantel). She was given a "royal education" in the hopes that she would marry a nobleman. Though Anne's sister, Mary, married before she did, there is strong evidence that Mary had a brief affair with King Henry VIII and may have even given birth to his son ("Mary Boleyn..."). At the time, the king was married to Catharine of Aragon who was aging past her best childbearing years and still had not birthed a son (Mantel).

Anne came to the English court around 1522. Though not considered a "beauty," she drew many admirers and was to marry Lord Henry Percy. The king prevented their marriage, however, and fell in love with her himself ("Anne Boleyn..."). Having lost interest in his wife Catharine and Mary, King <https://assignbuster.com/the-second-queen-a-collared-deer-or-wild-schemer/>

Henry VIII tried instead to woo Anne, but she resisted his advances until he divorced Catharine (Mantel). Her resistance to him was the catalyst that began England's break from the Roman Catholic Church.

Anne Boleyn was crowned in 1533 and gave birth to Elizabeth I later that year. Her crowning, however, began a religious revolution unmatched by any since. Anne had a miscarriage and then a stillborn son. Frustrated and still lacking a male heir, King Henry VIII did not hesitate to charge her with adultery and incest. Anne was "committed to the Tower of London" in 1536.

She was tried, unanimously convicted, and beheaded that same year. Only eleven days after her death, King Henry VIII married Jane Seymour ("Anne Boleyn..."). Anne's memory faded in England, though her affect on world history is undeniable even today. The question of Anne's character and the king's motivations remain a mystery today, though scholars have conjectured about possibilities for decades. Anne was a religious reformist even before England broke away from the Church, and she was probably a supporter of the underground reform movement in France (McGowan).

She may have desired to catch King Henry VIII's attention to force England to change its religious loyalties. This hypothesis is supported by Anne's statement shortly after her crowning when she called Thomas Cromwell "her man" (Mantel). Her newfound power may have gone directly to Anne's head. Her plan was working out great, after all. After she had manipulated the king, though, her interest in him would have rapidly declined. Subsequently, his interest in her would have declined.

Members of the English court reportedly complained of Anne's arrogance. King Henry VIII's hope for a son may have been the only factor keeping his marriage together after the first year (" Anne Boleyn..."). The king, though, may never have even been in love with Anne. Certainly, his many wives provides evidence that he may have been easily dissatisfied or indecisive. Anne Boleyn could have been utterly innocent or guilty of the crimes she was charged with. A common consensus among scholars is that Anne was most likely framed and she had no adulterous interactions with any of the accused men, which included her older brother, George.

Thomas Cromwell led the proceedings, though by now, the Boleyns were in the way of Cromwell's advancement within the court (Mantel). The poem " Whoso List to Hunt" compares Anne to a collared deer: the king's property and carried with a death sentence. The author also implies, however, that Anne still had many followers and was unafraid to flaunt her sexuality. Anne may " seem tame" in court while she wears a diamond necklace given to her by King Henry VIII, but she is " wild... to hold" (Wyatt). No matter whether Anne was a simple victim, adulterous temptress, or careful conspirator, it is certain that every theory has its place in history. Every one of them can be justified, and none proven for certain.

Her life and death is still important to us today, though, even if we know relatively little about them. She is undeniably the reason why King Henry VIII broke away from the Roman Church and began the whole English reformation, which has shaped our past and the aftermath of which continues to shape our future. Works Cited " Anne Boleyn (queen of England)." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Encyclopedia Britannica, n. d. <https://assignbuster.com/the-second-queen-a-collared-deer-or-wild-schemer/>

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