# **Historic Royal Palaces Podcast**

# **The Six Tudor Queens:**

# **Katherine of Aragon with Elizabeth Norton**

## **Show Notes**

Tracy Borman opens our new series on the Queens Consort of Henry VIII with renowned historian Dr Elizabeth Norton. To better understand the six Queens, they first explore the context of the turbulent times in which these women lived.

As the first Queen of Henry VIII, Katherine of Aragon’s reputation as the dowdy wronged wife has endured for 500 years, but Tracy and Elizabeth call this into question. They reveal that Katherine’s iron-will was both her strength and arguably her undoing.

Please be aware that this episode contains references to miscarriages, still births and infant mortality.

This six-part series will aim to do The Six Tudor Queens justice by stripping away unhelpful narratives and myths, to better understand them as women in their own time.

## **Transcript**

### **Tracy Borman [00:00:02]**

[The podcast opening theme music begins. It is steady and regal. Tracy’s voice comes in on top. She speaks clearly, from the studio, with a measure pace, but sounds excited about this new series.]

Welcome to this new series on the Historic Royal Palaces podcast. I'm Tracy Borman and I have the huge privilege of being Chief Curator here at the palaces. In this new series we will be exploring the lives of the six Tudor queens. Of course, they all have one man in common, but as we know, they are so much more than just wives and queens consort. In this series, we hope to do these extraordinary queens justice, but this series will ***not*** be biographies of our queens. We will be exploring and disputing the interpretations that history has offered of them, as well as talking about what they might have been like as women in their own time. To get a sense of the context in which they lived, we will be stepping into parts of our palaces where they would have walked in a court that was both exciting and toxic in its temperament. So join me as we dive into the world of The Six Tudor Queens.

[The theme music finishes and fades out. Tracy reads the episode’s content warnings with a serious tone.]

**Tracy Borman [00:01:23]**
Today, we're going to be tackling themes that some listeners may find distressing. This episode will contain references to miscarriages, stillbirths and fertility issues.

[After a beat of silence, the sound changes. Tracy is now in a large, echoey space. She speaks animatedly with less formality.]

**Tracy Borman [00:01:37]**
Welcome everybody. I'm so excited. This is Episode One of our Six Tudor Queens podcast series, and I'm in one of my favourite parts of Hampton Court because of course, it's a Tudor part. It's the Wolsey Rooms. And, I've come up here, with my guest today, dodging the showers. I think it's quite, I don't know, it's quite fitting that it's a stormy day today. Thunder is sort of in the air and it's definitely going to be very appropriate for, the woman we're discussing for her relationships with the Tudor court. And I'm joined today, I'm thrilled to say, by historian, author, broadcaster, prolific woman all round. Elizabeth Norton. Beth, welcome to Hampton Court!

[Elizabeth Norton has a Southern English accent. She speaks a little faster than Tracy, and her voice also echoes in the Wolsey Rooms.]

**Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:02:34]**

Hello, thank you. I'm absolutely thrilled to be here.

### **Tracy Borman [00:02:37]**

Well, I couldn't think of anybody better to be opening this series with and talking about, of course, the first of the six queens. Well, Beth, as well as having written about all six queens at different times, you also specialise in the lives of Tudor women. And I'd like to start there really, with a bit of context, because this wasn't a society we would recognise today, is it? Can you paint a picture really, of what it was like being a woman in the Tudor period?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:03:12]**

Absolutely. And it's completely different, as you say. I mean, we still live in quite a patriarchal society, I think most people would agree, but in the Tudor period, it's really something else. Women are entirely inferior to men in every single regard, and everybody thinks it. I mean, we always think about Elizabeth I saying, you know, ‘I may have the body of a weak and feeble woman’, but that's what everybody believes. Women are intelligent- they are inferior in intelligence. They are inferior in body. They're inferior in just about every aspect of their life. Married women cannot even own property. So as soon as you marry in the Tudor period, you lose your legal personhood. So, you can't go to court, you can't be sued, some might say ***that's*** an advantage! But equally, everything you own belongs to your husband, including your clothing. And this is why married women can't make wills. So it is a society where you are entirely subject to your father. When you marry, it's then your husband. And it's really only in widowhood that you get any sort of prospect of freedom if you're a woman.

### **Tracy Borman [00:04:19]**

That sounds just completely incomprehensible. I mean, as you say, we haven't quite got as beyond that as we might like today, but this is a different world. And what about for aristocratic or ***royal*** women? Did they have a little bit more power over their own lives?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:04:38]**

So again, and it's difficult to generalise because although, you know, the hard and fast rules are actually women are pretty much powerless, it depends on personal relationships. A particular husband might well give his wife more freedom. Henry VIII, actually, when he's granting the jointures to his queens and has them declared ‘*femme soles*’, which means that they actually can act as though they are widows in relation to the property. So they do have a little bit more freedom, but it's very much at the grant of their husband. And I think that's really the key point. Aristocratic women, royal women, they probably do have a little bit more freedom in general because there's more money going around, bigger resources, but they are entirely at their father’s or their husband’s mercy, if you like. I mean, when we look at Henry's treatment of Princess Mary, he is ***outraged*** that she doesn't just obey him because he is her father, he is the head of the family, not just the head of the state, but the head of the family. And she should do exactly what he says.

### **Tracy Borman [00:05:38]**

So in his eyes, that's just completely outrageous. She's not just a- a disobedient daughter, [with mock outrage] she's a disobedient woman! And that isn't acceptable in this age. Although, you know, you did mention something positive about Henry there in relation to giving his queens a ***little*** more authority, perhaps, than they would otherwise have had. I think we should just note that, because I'm not sure Henry's going to come over in a very positive light as we explore [Tracy laughs] the story of his first wife.

You very neatly encapsulated what it was like to be a woman, even at the higher levels of society in Tudor England. But could we look just a bit more generally about what was happening at the time, so late 15th, early 16th century. So, this is a real melting pot, isn't it, of different cultural, intellectual, religious ideas. It's, you know, the high Renaissance, early Reformation. Can you tell us a bit more about that context?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:06:43]**

Absolutely. So in university departments, they will always call the start the 16th century, the start of the Early Modern period. We have this break from medieval, and there's such a lot of change. Only a few years into 16th century, of course, we get Martin Luther, who throws the established church absolutely upside down, turns it upside down. And develops into Protestantism. But even before that, there are questions being raised about the church. So Erasmus, the great humanist scholar Thomas More, people are questioning the Church and they're not necessarily looking for change to the Church itself. I mean, Thomas More would be absolutely horrified at changing the Church itself. But what they're looking for is change within the Church. So it's called Christian humanism, the movement. And it's very much looking to, in some respects, go back to basics, to look at the older church and try to bring a more Christian tenor to religion at the time. And it's debatable how much the late medieval church is questioned how much, how unpopular it is. But certainly people are, there is a movement for change. And as part of that, there's also a movement for education, because humanism is at its heart an educationalist the movement.

So, the humanists, they want to go back to the classical writers, they want to go back to the scriptures, they want people to go back to what's seen as of the high point of learning. And as part of this, actually, for women, you get the education of women. I mentioned Thomas More earlier, and he really decides to use his daughters as guinea pigs to see whether you actually can educate a woman, whether you can make them a university student effectively. And it's a roaring success. And after that, noblemen, members of the royal family start to try and copy it and they start to educate their women.

### **Tracy Borman [00:08:35]**

That's fascinating. So the experiment works, thank goodness, with Thomas More and his daughters. Otherwise perhaps others wouldn't have followed suit. So now what you're saying is, women are educated in more than just the usual household management, embroidery, dance. Their curriculum is similar to men?

**Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:08:54]**
It can be, certainly at the highest levels. And there is some concern about this. I mean, it's a time of the self-help manual, the 16th century. You get so many books about conduct, what you do in your household, how you cook, how you raise your children. And you get educationalist manuals, that will say, you know, [putting on a voice as if imitating a sexist man] ‘I'm going to talk about boys first because they're more worthy’. And there are concerns, about teaching girls Latin and Greek, for example, because it might [dramatic voice] ‘inflame their stomachs towards vice’.

But certainly all the way down society actually, even at quite low levels, you'll be getting boys and girls taught equally in free parish schools, and they'll be taught to read, they'll be taught to write, they'll be taught a little bit of arithmetic. Higher up the social scale, princesses like Princess Mary, Princess Elizabeth are really taught like university students, to some level, they're given incredibly good educations. They are taught languages; they are taught the classical languages. And so, you do start to get proper education of girls in this period.

### **Tracy Borman [00:09:55]**

That's really interesting and very, very useful context for the women who we're going to be talking about, in particular. And just on that, so looking at the six Tudor queens or the six consorts of Henry VIII, were they therefore all very well educated?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:10:18]**

No. So Henry tended to draw his wives from less traditional sources. Katherine of Aragon has been relatively well educated in Spain. She is the daughter of the Queen of Castile, the King of Aragon. So she has received a relatively good education, certainly not one that will rival, say, Elizabeth I later on, because she's a little bit too early for really, the ideas about educating girls to be equal to boys in their learning hasn't really- hasn't really happened.

Anne Boleyn is clearly well educated. Again, she won't be as well-educated as her daughter, and we don't have firm details about Anne's education. A lot of what she's learned, she's clearly picked up in France, such as, her French language. Jane Seymour, she's not very well educated. She can certainly read and write. She seems to know a little bit of French. That's probably about the extent of her education.

Anne of Cleves, although she is also royal, the daughter of a German duke, she has not received a very good education, and certainly, the changes to female education don't seem to have reached Cleves in this period.

Catherine Howard, we have a surviving letter, that's about it for her. Katherine Parr is well-educated, although it's again, it's not at the level that her stepdaughters were educated to. There's a letter she writes suggesting that she's not particularly good at Latin, although actually other evidence would suggest that she isn't too bad at it.

### **Tracy Borman [00:11:44]**

That is interesting as we tend to think of Katherine Parr in particular as this great intellectual, but I suppose a lot of that was kind of self-teaching in a way.

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:11:51]**

Absolutely. I think her education continues throughout her life, and I think that's really key. The same with Anne Boleyn. Neither will have been given a great humanist education. They've certainly better educated than a lot of their peers. But I would say that they learn as they go, if you like. [Tracy hums agreement]

### **Tracy Borman [00:12:07]**

So you have, brought to life, education and religion, society in general when it came to women at this time. But what about the political situation? Because today we're talking about the very beginning of, really the, the reign of Henry VIII. And it's easy to forget, because we look back on his reign as this sort of all powerful time for the monarchy, that actually the Tudors are pretty new. They're quite fragile. And what about what went before? The- the rise of the Tudors. England was in turmoil, really, wasn't it?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:12:48]**

Absolutely. And the Tudors somewhat come from nowhere. I mean, they are the classic sort of nouveau riche dynasty. There are certainly many members in the nobility that would consider themselves to be more noble and to be a more established family than the Tudors. They are born out of the turmoil of the 15th century, as you say, when you get rival dynasties, rival branches of the Plantagenet dynasty vying for the throne. Henry VI who is the head of the House of Lancaster, is a pretty terrible king and he is deposed by Edward IV, who's the head of the House of York. He then comes back for a bit and is then deposed again. I mean, it's a rare achievement to be deposed twice in one lifetime! [Tracy laughs]

The real turmoil, at least as far as the Tudors are concerned, comes in 1483, when Edward IV dies suddenly, leaving a 12-year-old son as his heir. It's quite debated what happens next, and I don't want to get too involved in that here. [Amused] You could fill hours and hours and hours! But Edward V, a young Edward V is removed from the throne and his uncle Richard III becomes king instead. And this very much splits the Yorkist loyalties. Some throw their weight behind Richard III, others the Queen, Elizabeth Woodville, Edward V’s mother, and she supports the Tudors. She supports Margaret Beaufort, who is the mother of Henry VII.

And the Tudors, I mean, arguably Henry Tudor has no claim to the throne. He is descended through the Beaufort family, who are the illegitimate children born to John of Gaunt, Edward III's third son, and his mistress Katherine Swynford. They then marry and legitimise the children, but whether that gives the Beaufort's a claim for the throne or not is open to question. Really, Henry VII, he knows the right people. His mother is very active on his behalf. He's able to secure Yorkist support from Elizabeth Woodville, and he's very, very lucky in battle and wins the day at Bosworth Field in August 1485. But it's a difficult start, and he works very hard to hold on to his throne. So actually, you know Henry VIII, second monarch of the Tudor dynasty, but there are other people that potentially would consider they had a better claim to the throne.

### **Tracy Borman [00:14:59]**

Gosh, yes. What a turbulent time, and certainly by no means resolved by the time Henry comes to the throne in 1509. And actually, as you say, the Tudors’ claim to the throne doesn't bear too close scrutiny. By the way, Beth, I have to congratulate you. That is the most diplomatic description of Richard III and the Princes in the Tower I have ever heard. Because I think we need to steer well clear of that. [Both laugh.]

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:15:27]**

Absolutely!

### **Tracy Borman [00:15:27]**

That's another podcast series entirely! And I'd like to bring us back to the Queens and to one queen in particular, of course, the first of the six, Katherine of Aragon.

Well Beth, what this series is all about, is setting the six Tudor queens partly in the architectural context, you know, here at Hampton Court, but also very much rooting them in their time, because I think there has been a trend of sort of turning those queens into feminist icons, if you like, who live in a- a pseudo modern Tudor time. So we sort of layer on our own perspectives, in other words, and we need to see them as women operating in their own times, don't we?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:16:20]**

Absolutely. I would 100% agree with this, and I think there is a place for looking at the queens through a modern lens, but we cannot understand their story ***fully***, if we look at them as 21st Century women, because they don't live in those cultural parameters. They live in a world where, you know, where if a woman kills her husband, she is guilty of petty treason because the husband is the head of this house, which is the state in microcosm. So it's that kind of level we are at. It's not the same by any stretch of the imagination. Katherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard, Katherine Parr, they didn't live in the 21st Century. They lived in a world that has just come out of the Wars of the Roses. They live in a world of religious turmoil. They live in a world where the idea of a woman actually wearing the crown is seen as really quite ridiculous. This is the world they live in. They are not acting as independent, modern women when we see them act. And I think in many respects it's quite unfair on them to expect it of them. And sometimes we look back and we think, well, why did they do that? But we're not necessarily looking at them within their own context, in the context in which they've been raised.

### **Tracy Borman [00:17:34]**

Absolutely. And it does change them, doesn't it? When we when we truly try to get back into the Tudor world view and, and it explains a lot of their, their actions, their beliefs in a way that being a bit too modern about it really doesn't. So you've encapsulated that so brilliantly. Thank you.

So Beth, as you say, it's about understanding the six queens in the context of their times, not our times, but also, I think, stripping away some of the sort of male centered, quite unhelpful narratives that have been written about, spoken about for 500 years, maybe even the fact that most people refer to them as ‘the six wives’. That's why we're saying the six Queens. And that's important, isn't it?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:18:26]**

Absolutely. And you're 100% right. So much of history has been dominated by the male voice and particular I think when we're talking about women, it's really important to- to try and strip that away. You get a lot of dichotomies with the six queens. You know, people will compare Katherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn. One is the saint, the other one's the, you know, [dramatic voice] ‘the other woman’. Or Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour, sometimes one is saintly and the other one is ‘the other woman’, or, you know, the ‘bad’ woman. And it varies. Catherine Howard is a [puts on a dismissive voice] ‘silly girl’, you know, Anne of Cleves is an ‘ugly wife’. And these aren't helpful because we're not looking at them as individuals, and they're all six individual characters. And it's so important to strip this gloss away. And we are starting to do it. And it's certainly, you know, over the last few years, there have been some really great pieces done on the six wives as individuals and stripping away some of this gloss. But there is definitely more to be done.

### **Tracy Borman [00:19:25]**

Such a good way of putting it, because so often it has to be a kind of battle, doesn't it? We have to consider the good wife, the bad wife, the hero, the villain. Let's forget all of that and just drill down and focus on these women as individuals. And you've teed it up perfectly, Beth, for beginning our chat now in detail about the first of the six Tudor queens, Katherine of Aragon.

So, Beth, could you tell us a little bit about Katherine of Aragon just to start our story today?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:20:03]**

So Katherine is the oldest of the six queens. She's born in 1485, so she's around five years older than Henry. She is the youngest daughter of Isabella, Queen of Castile in her own right, and Ferdinand, King of Aragon. And these monarchs have united Spain. So she's a Spanish princess, very, very high born. She marries first Prince Arthur, Henry VIII older brother in 1501. He then dies early the next year, and she then marries Henry VIII in 1509, and of course she is the first ‘divorced’ in the rhyme, and the marriage is annulled in 1533.

### **Tracy Borman [00:20:39]**

Gosh, so she certainly is from very good stock, as you say, she's born to a queen in her own right: Isabella. That's quite fascinating, isn't it?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:20:51]**

It is. And it very much means that Katherine has different views about female rulership than Henry does, because her mother is an incredibly powerful monarch. She's actually wrested control of Castile from her own niece. And she is, I mean, she is the Queen that commissions Columbus to sail to the New World. She is a warrior queen. She's also a cultured queen. She's a very religious queen. And she's a really, really important influence on the young Katherine of Aragon.

### **Tracy Borman [00:21:19]**

So that's going to give you a whole different outlook if you have a mother like that. How interesting to see how that will play out in Katherine's lifetime.

So to explore Katherine's story, we're here in the Wolsey Rooms at Hampton Court, and, they are just wonderfully evocative of the palace that Wolsey would have known and that Katherine would have known, because, of course, Wolsey was the original builder of Hampton Court Palace. And, so this is the palace that he would have entertained Katherine of Aragon at and that Katherine would have, would have certainly known before then Henry VIII took it over and started enhancing it, extending it for later wives, really. And just to kind of describe the scene, it's quite gloomy in here, [Tracy lowers her voice conspiratorially] satisfyingly so, I quite like a gloomy room, because of all this dark wood paneling. There's a magnificent Tudor fireplace, that we're standing next to. And then - [Tracy turns her head away from the microphone, towards a window.] it's rather nice view, isn't it? Don't you think?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:22:28]**

It's lovely, isn't it?

### **Tracy Borman [00:22:30]**

Because we can see over the Privy Gardens there, but also beyond that, near the red brick wall is the River Thames. And that's how most people would have arrived, isn't it, at Hampton Court?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:22:40]**

Absolutely. So from these apartments, Wolsey and his servants would get a great view of the King and the Queen arriving for their many visits. So it's a fabulous view. Upper class people try as much as possible to avoid going through the streets, so they use the river as their highway if you like.

### **Tracy Borman [00:22:58]**

It's the M25 of the Tudor age, isn't it really?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:23:00]**

It is! [Both laugh.]

### **Tracy Borman [00:23:01]**

It would have been full of barges and small boats and other vessels because, yeah, it's the most comfortable way to travel by far.

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:23:10]**

Absolutely. You don't have to go on the narrow-cobbled streets where people are throwing things out of windows. You don't get accosted by your own subjects as well, which I imagine from Henry's point of view is a major plus.

### **Tracy Borman [00:23:21]**

Absolutely. So what better place then, to be exploring Katherine's story.

So we're here in the first of a sequence of rooms in what we call the Wolsey Rooms. And it's certainly the, the largest, and the sort of airiest of the rooms. But should we take a walk on through - [Echoey footsteps on a wooden floor] because it's a little warren, I think. And as we move on through, [more footsteps] you can see that, you know, the gloom kind of gathers a bit more here [wood creaking] because there's just one set of windows. And also, I don't know about you, but I think the temperature went up then! [Elizabeth agrees and both laugh.] When we, when we walked on through here, it's actually quite cosy now. As somebody who works at Hampton Court year-round, I have to say I will take a cosy room any day of the week. It's quite often, uh, the opposite.

What does it feel like for you, Beth, walking through these rooms, having researched Katherine and many of the other queens in such detail?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:24:25]**

[Excitedly.] It's so fabulous. I'm so glad that you've invited me to be here today. And this is my favourite part of the palace. It's, of course, Wolsey's surviving private apartments, so it's not impossible that Katherine of Aragon has also stood in these rooms. She is a guest when she comes to Hampton Court, and I think that's really important, because Henry doesn't take control of Hampton Court until well into his estrangement from Katherine. So when she comes here, she comes as a guest. She comes to enjoy herself. She comes to be entertained.

And really, this is, these rooms to some extent represents a lost period in Henry VIII's life, it is this long period during his marriage to Katherine of Aragon, when they're happy. And I think often with Katherine, we look at the misery, but actually, there are years and years where she's quite happy. [Elizabeth emphasises this with a happy tone] This is the palace where she entertains her nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, when he visits in 1522, and he comes to become engaged to her daughter. So this is absolutely the high point of her life. And he moves around. He's shown all the best palaces. But of course, one of his stops is Hampton Court.

### **Tracy Borman [00:25:36]**

[Hums agreement.] That's wonderful that you've put our attention on that because, as you say, Katherine of Aragon, we tend to think what a sad life. And you know, it, it all goes horribly wrong in her marriage to Henry. But you're right to remind us that for many years they were ***happy***. And where we are now was Katherine in her heyday. Hampton Court, you know, Wolsey first started building it back in 1514. So Katherine was only five years into being queen, and the world was full of possibilities for her at that time, wasn't it?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:26:09]**

Absolutely. It's a world where she's in love with her husband, he is probably in love with her, he's not always faithful, but certainly he's picked Katherine as his bride. He didn't ***have*** to marry her in 1509. He's newly come to the throne. He has already secretly broken his betrothal to Katherine at his father's command, so he doesn't have to marry her. He ***chooses*** to marry Katherine, and the early years of their marriage are full of love and [said smiling] excitement. You know, Henry will dress up as Robin Hood and surprise Katherine and her ladies, and she pretends that she doesn't know who it is. [Amused] I mean, the idea that she wouldn't know that these men bursting into her chamber wearing outlandish costumes weren't in fact Henry and his men, I think, is fairly... he's maybe a little naive, [smiling] but she always plays along and she's the older of the two. So she's five years older than Henry. So there's also some extent the power dynamic in this early stage falls in Katherine's favour. So she is Katherine at her peak for the first decade or so of her marriage.

### **Tracy Borman [00:27:14]**

[Hums.] And, and that's interesting. A woman who really is at an ***advantage*** with Henry VIII, you know, as you say she's older, she's wiser. And I love the feeling that this is a very happy time for Katherine, because she has suffered already, even before becoming Henry VIII's wife. She has been through quite a turbulent time. You mentioned that she was married to his older brother, Arthur, who died just a few months later. And then what happened to her?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:27:45]**

So when Arthur dies, a new marriage is immediately negotiated for her with Henry VIII, the future Henry VIII. But he's, of course, a child, and so she's going to have to wait. She is forced to relinquish her widow's pension because she's now a fiancée rather than the widow, as far as the English concerned, and she finds herself in a power play between her father-in-law, Henry VII, and her father, Ferdinand of Aragon. Neither of them wants to pay for Katherine's household, which is quite extensive, and they're both determined that they're not going to pay. So we have these great letters from Katherine. She talks about, addressed to her father. She, of course, always sides with her father, but saying she's been to see the English king, and he's told her that anything he gives her is just out of charity, and he doesn't have to give her any money. She talks about having to pawn her plate and her jewelry to buy clothes that she needs to pay for her servants, to buy food. So it's a really difficult time for her.

And she's supposed to marry Henry VIII when he turns 14, and the marriage doesn't happen. And she waits and she waits, and she possibly doesn't know that Henry has been told to break his betrothal with her, but she's clearly aware that something is up, and her future must have looked quite bleak. And it all of a sudden changes. Henry VIII is 17 years old when he becomes king in 1509, and he almost immediately marries her. And it must have come like a bolt from the blue. Probably Henry is attracted to her, he's probably quite inexperienced, he's probably a virgin when he becomes king. He's been kept very closeted, ‘like a young princess,’ [amused] according to one observer. So, Katherine is this sort of ideal, this very pretty woman. She's also a princess. And a king should marry a princess, and she's very conveniently available. He doesn't need to write to her parents and arrange a marriage. He can just simply marry her.

### **Tracy Borman [00:29:40]**

That's so interesting! And actually, I don't want to necessarily focus too much on appearances because again, we tend to hear a lot about that. And we think of Katherine as the ‘dowdy wife’. And then of course, Anne Boleyn comes along and she's so attractive. But you rightly point out - Katherine was a ***beauty***, wasn't she? Can you describe what she looked like when she married Henry VIII?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:30:03]**

So Katherine's absolutely at her peak in 1509. She's in her mid-twenties. She's got reddish golden hair, and that can seem quite surprising. She's almost always portrayed by someone who we would consider to look traditionally Spanish. So a little bit darker. She actually has a huge amount of English ancestry and probably takes after her Lancastrian ancestors. But she's blonde, she's fair skinned, she’s a bit plump, she's very, very attractive. And I think that's really important because we're used to a Katherine who is towards the end of her life. She's miserable, she's lost her children, she's lost her husband. And of course, this takes its toll on her appearance. But in her prime, she's a rival to any of the six wives.

### **Tracy Borman [00:30:45]**

She's the beautiful Spanish princess, the sort of damsel in distress who [putting on a dramatic voice] chivalric Henry rescues by marrying as soon as he comes to the throne. [She returns to her normal voice.] Or at least that's how the narrative plays out in Henry's head.

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:30:57]**

Absolutely, absolutely. [Smiling] Very chivalrous.

### **Tracy Borman [00:31:00]**

So let's dive in a bit more now and consider how Katherine of Aragon has been viewed by history. How would you sum up her reputation?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:31:12]**

So in some ways it's quite favourable. She's very much seen as this ‘wronged woman’, and she's seen as quite a dowdy figure, you know, quite matronly. Again, looking back at towards the end of her life rather than in her early years. She's seen as quite a severe woman, quite religious. But in general, she's quite favourably portrayed, which to some extent is a positive, but actually is also a negative in that this is almost damning her with faint praise. You know, she's a stubborn figure, she fights for her rights, but she's rather unattractive, and rather single minded. And I think actually it's- in many respects and I think we can see it – the portrayal does her no favours.

### **Tracy Borman [00:31:58]**

I think that's right. Because even just that, that term ‘wronged wife’, it's all quite negative and, and something that's happening to her. But what I want to get back to is something you mentioned earlier. Here is the daughter of a queen regnant, Isabella is a force to be reckoned with. So surely, Katherine has a quite steely core herself.

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:32:21]**

She does. Absolutely. Katherine has [putting on a tough voice] iron at her heart. And we can see this and even the kind of the stereotype of her, you know, you get a sense of this, she is a woman, she's a ‘lady's not for turning’. [Tracy laughs] In many respects she is quite single minded. And she is Isabella's daughter. She comes from this background where a woman can be incredibly powerful and incredibly sure of what she wants and knows how to get it to some extent. And I think that's a really important point, is that she isn't your typical princess, although she follows the same pattern. She's the daughter of a monarch she sent at a young age to go and marry a prince never returns home. She's got Isabella as a mother.

### **Tracy Borman [00:33:05]**

[Hums agreement.] Absolutely. And gosh, what a mother figure to have. And what an inspiration she must have been. So just sort of walking through the first years of Katherine's time as queen here in England, it starts pretty well from what you're saying, this is a happy time. She enjoys being here at Hampton Court after a few years, once Wolsey starts building the palace. We can't get away from her quite tragic history of a miscarriage, stillbirth. Can you just tell us a little bit about that?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:33:40]**

Yeah. So, of course, when we talk about Katherine of Aragon, we talk about the happiness, it is set against this backdrop of enormous loss and her childbearing record. It's not terribly unusual for the time, which is the sad thing about it, but it's pretty dreadful. And from a modern viewpoint, it looks absolutely awful. So she, of course, miscarries early in her marriage. She gives birth to an apparently healthy son on New Year's Day, 1511. And of course, the country erupts in rejoicing. There's a great tournament, there's a lovely image of Henry jousting with H and K, for Henry and Katherine, and he's ‘Sir Loyal Heart’. Absolutely thrilled. And then the baby dies. And it's just a tragic history. She gives birth to probably two further sons who either die at birth or are stillborn. Princess Mary is born in 1516, who is the great success. She's a baby that survives, but she's not the right sex. [Tracy faintly agrees]. And Katherine finally gives birth again in 1518, her last pregnancy that we know of. And this is to a stillborn girl. And after that, there are no more children.

### **Tracy Borman [00:34:47]**

What a tragic history, as you say, when you see it all together in the round. It's ***horrific***, really, what Katherine was going through, not just as a queen, because of course, you know, sadly, this is how they're judged on how many healthy children and heirs they have. But as a woman, it must have been just [emotional] heart rending for her, mustn't it?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:35:07]**

Absolutely. And this is something particularly when I'm writing about Tudor women, I really tried to make clear that parents absolutely feel the loss of every child, and that historians haven't always viewed it that way. There's been a sense in the past that actually people were a bit, they didn't really care about their children, they sent them away, but they absolutely do. And there are so many records of parents absolutely grieving the loss of their children. If you look at tombs in any church, any medieval church, you'll see, rows of little, miniature adults around the base of tomb chests. And these are generally the couple's children, all of their children. And they will have every single one, not just the ones that lived to adulthood. So the grief will have been immense. It's to be expected that you will lose children, no Tudor parents raise all their children to adulthood, which is an absolute tragedy. But every loss is a tragedy in its own way.

And Katherine, we know she remembers her children. She refers to her children, ‘the children, that is, please God, to take from them’ when she is making her great speech at the Blackfriars trial of her marriage to Henry VIII, she feels the loss of every one of those babies.

### **Tracy Borman [00:36:19]**

I'm so pleased you have brought that, you know, just so clearly to life, because so often and I still read it, that, [flippant voice] ‘oh, they had loads of children in those days. So, you know, they wouldn't really felt their loss as keenly’. [Soft, emotional tone] Katherine and other mothers and fathers would have felt every individual loss just as keenly as if they'd just had one child, I think. And you've really brought that home. Now, you mentioned there something that I would like to just tease out a little bit, because it's so important to Katherine's story and how she talks about it in the context of the will of God. Now, here is a very devout woman, isn't it?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:36:58]**

Absolutely. And you can't be Isabella's daughter and not be devout. Isabella is - one of the two Catholic kings of Spain, of course, very, very religious. And Isabella becomes more and more religious as her own children die because Katherine's family suffer many, many losses in themselves. And Katherine also seems to have turned more and more to the Church. And to some extent that's sort of expected. Tudor women, as they grow older, as their children get older, do tend to turn to the Church. It's almost a sort of, a stereotype of them again. But Katherine very much seeks consolation in the church. She's devoutly religious, and she does see the loss of her children as God's will. She doesn't necessarily understand ***why*** it's God's will, but it is God's will. And to some extent, I think that pushes her focus very strongly on Mary, because of course, it's not God's will that Mary dies.

### **Tracy Borman [00:37:52]**

[Hums understanding.] So Mary could have great things waiting for her. But of course, Katherine might think that, that's not what Henry would think. That's not what the rest of Tudor England would think, because you've already said: ***queens*** aren't a good thing. Queens regnant, that is, women who ***rule*** – it's seen as either ridiculous or a total disaster. So Katherine is pretty much on her own with that one.

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:38:14]**

Absolutely. I mean, there's no real history of reigning queens in England. You have to go back to the 12th Century, to Matilda, the only surviving legitimate child of Henry I. She attempts to take the crown. Her father has named her his heir. But it leads to almost 19 years of civil war when her cousin seizes the throne. It's seen as a disastrous period in English history. It's known as ‘The Anarchy’, which sort of sums it up. Then in the 15th century, there are quite a lot of people who would view Elizabeth of York, who is Edward IV's eldest daughter, as the heir to the throne, or at least the person with the best claim to the throne. But nobody suggests crowning her. She marries Henry VII, which bolsters Henry VII's claim. She's obviously Henry VIII’s mother, but she's not a reigning queen.

### **Tracy Borman [00:39:01]**

[Hums] Absolutely. Well, therein lies some trouble ahead, I feel. So you've very vividly portrayed Katherine as a strong woman, a woman who certainly experiences great hardship and heartache as well. But could I just focus a bit more on Katherine's personality. If she was here now in the Wolsey rooms where she had triumphant times and the palace where, you know, it was really her early life as Queen of England. So these are happier times. But what would it have been like, do you think, to meet Katherine? What sort of person was she?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:39:43]**

So I think she would have been quite daunting. She's been raised as a princess, as a future queen all her life, so she's not necessarily a woman that's easy to approach in the same way that perhaps Anne Boleyn is. Or, you know, perhaps Jane Seymour, although she does seem to become quite imperious. But Katherine of Aragon was royal. She knows that she's special, that she's set apart from other people. And I think that's really the first thing that you would see, that she is very self-composed. She's very poised. As a person, she's very kind. She's very generous. She's charitable. Her religion is really, really important to her.

But she does form close friendships with her ladies. She remains friendly with some of her ladies from Spain who've come over with her to marry, particularly María de Salinas. And she also makes friends in England. She's actually very close friends to Katherine Parr's mother, and is probably Katherine Parr's godmother, [said smiling] which is a quite a neat connection. [Tracy reacts with amusement.] But I think really you would find a woman who is kind, listens to you, but somewhat- somewhat distant because she has this royalty. She is a daughter of two sovereigns. I mean, really, she outranks Henry [Tracy faintly says ‘yeah!’] in the royal blood stakes. [They are both entertained by this.]

### **Tracy Borman [00:40:56]**

[Excited] Love that, she's more royal than Henry. And we would have known it by the sound of things. She had this very much queenly presence about her. Well, you did mention there, the uh, ‘the other woman’, Anne Boleyn. And I think that has really jaundiced our view of Katherine. I don't know if you'd agree, because so often we talk about Katherine only in the context of Anne Boleyn, don't we?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:41:22]**

We do. And again, it's this problem with dichotomies that if one queen is something, then the other queen must be something else. So if Anne Boleyn is a homewrecker, then Katherine is the wronged wife, for example. There are elements of this in it, but actually they are individual women. They're separate, you know, they are not defined by Henry VIII and who he wants to be married with at any point. But we do tend to look at them as opposites or look at them in relationship to each other. And to some extent it works in Katherine's favour. She tends to get the sympathy vote. [Amused] Some of Anne Boleyn's behaviour that's recorded is fairly horrible. Although, George Wyatt, Anne Boleyn's early biographer who did interview people that knew her, talks about Katherine getting her own back and so forcing Anne to play cards. [amused tone] [audio glitch here]The start of the second nail on her finger, and so Katherine would force her to play cards, so she has to, of course, display her fingers to everyone at court. [Said smiling] So I would say this shows Katherine very much sort of holding her own. And I think the sources suggest that she's not simply the wronged wife to Anne Boleyn. She is a well formed character in her own right. She's a powerful queen. She's ruled as Queen regent when Henry goes to France, for example, she is an individual person in her own right.

### **Tracy Borman [00:42:40]**

And she's giving as good as she gets, [laughs] or almost when it comes to Anne Boleyn. And I think the other story - I love the card playing one, can you imagine the atmosphere of that card game? [Elizabeth Laughs]. But the other story that that is often misportrayed, I think, is the [pitiful voice] ‘poor Katherine, this dutiful wife, still mending Henry's shirts’ even when he's playing away with Anne Boleyn. But I think it occurs to me, from what you say, we could see that in a different light as well. Katherine is, this is symbolic, [determined] she is still Henry's wife, and she's going to mend his shirts.

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:43:14]**

Absolutely. It's her role. So she- she takes the shirts and Anne Boleyn is furious to discover [laughs] that Katherine is still doing this. But it's part of the role of wife. And again, as we said earlier, you can't really separate the woman from the wife to some extent because she ***is*** Henry's wife as far as she is concerned. And this is a wifely duty, and she will do it.

### **Tracy Borman [00:43:34]**

So if we shouldn't go too far down the road of comparing one versus the other, and because it's so- it does lead to stereotypes. As you say, one has to be good, one has to be bad. But I would just like to touch on the fact that in recent times, for example, I'm thinking of Hever Castle and their display of the Books of Hours of both women. Anne and Katherine had quite a lot in common, really, didn't they?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:44:02]**

Absolutely. And I think, you know, they- potentially if you take all of the history out between them, which is obviously big and difficult for ***both*** of them. Actually, they probably would have got on to some extent. They're both educated women. They're both interested in humanism to some extent, and I should really say with humanism, being a humanist does not make you a Protestant by ***any*** stretch of the imagination. Again, I've said in a few times with Thomas More, who is very much a Catholic, is also a humanist. Stephen Gardiner, the conservative Bishop of Winchester, is also a humanist. So you can be a humanist, you can be interested in education, you can be interested in looking at the workings of the Church and that doesn't make you a Protestant. So I think the two women have a lot in common. And I love Hever Castle's recent exhibition. Sadly, Katherine's book has gone home now, although they now have Thomas Cromwell's in its place. But it's fabulous to see these two women were worshipping from the same book. It's the same printing of the same prayer book. And again, when we look at the dichotomies, when we look at the stereotypes, that cannot be the case. And yet it is.

### **Tracy Borman [00:45:13]**

Yeah. In any other world, they might have been friends, as you say.

So because we're here in the Wolsey Rooms, I would just like to touch on the man himself, Cardinal Wolsey, and how his relationship with Katherine developed. Do we know much of how they got on, in Katherine's early years and then looking at what went wrong, perhaps does then tell the bigger story of Katherine?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:45:39]**

So Katherine, to all intents and purposes, seems to have got on reasonably well with Wolsey. There's no evidence early in her marriage of any breach between them. He's obviously, Henry VIII's ‘Mr. Fixer’, if you like. You know, he's- some people would say he was the man running the country. And certainly, John Skelton in his ‘Why come ye not to court’, to Hampton Court, or the king's court, very much he is suggesting that Wolsey is running affairs. And Katherine stays quiet, and this is very much Katherine's policy. She doesn't explain, she doesn't complain. [Amused tone] And this is Katherine to a tee. Whether she's particularly fond of Wolsey, I'm not convinced?! [Her playful tone implies she thinks Katherine perhaps did ***not*** like Wolsey!] And certainly later on, the relationship very much breaks down. But she certainly tolerates him.

### **Tracy Borman [00:46:29]**

Now, so let's look at this, this breaking down of things for Katherine, when things really do start to go very horribly wrong. So mid 1520s, Anne Boleyn very firmly on the scene. Katherine is getting beyond her childbearing years. And I think, sadly, as we'll see with each of the six queens, no matter how brilliant she might be, she's judged by her body. She just has a living daughter, no son. And so could you map out for us how things then just go from bad to worse for Katherine?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:47:01]**

Yeah. So by the mid 1520s, it's obvious Katherine will not bear another child. I mean, she is past the menopause. She is clearly not going to bear a child. And absolutely that impacts on how she is treated. Anne Boleyn’s coming on the scene very much speeds the king up because he wants to marry Anne Boleyn. So, I mean, whether or not the annulment would have happened at the stage it happens if Anne Boleyn hadn't been there, I'm not so sure. But it's always a possibility that a queen without a son will be discarded, and there are many ways that you can do that.

And Katherine learns almost immediately in 1527, when Henry VIII starts to try to annul the marriage. He doesn't tell her initially; he orders a secret ecclesiastical court to be held to try the validity of the marriage. It's obviously not ***that*** secret because she learns of it within days. And Katherine has a very powerful weapon in her armoury. And that is her nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, who is the most powerful man in Europe, probably the most powerful man in the world at this stage. And she doesn't know him very well, he's her sister's son, she's not seen him very much. But she is very much a member of his family. And it is an insult to the Imperial Royal family that Henry would seek to discard the Emperor's aunt, because surely everyone would want to be married to Charles's aunt, because that makes you a relative. And he tells the English ambassadors that he will defend the queen's just cause. And he does just that.

### **Tracy Borman [00:48:35]**

And of course, Charles also dominates the Pope, who Henry is petitioning and petitioning. [She does a demanding impression of Henry] ‘Grant me my annulment.’ Well, if you are the Pope, who are you going to listen to? I think it might be Emperor Charles.

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:48:46]**

Absolutely. I mean, Henry has no chance of a papal annulment, and he's really unlucky because actually, most kings probably can get a papal annulment. It's not that difficult because everyone in Europe is related to everyone else, in the royal families at least, and the Church frowns upon marriage between close relatives. You're not allowed to do it. And you can dispense a marriage. The Pope can say no, it's okay, you can marry your cousin, or you can marry your fourth cousin. But equally, it's quite easy to find a reason for an annulment. So ‘I've just discovered that we're actually fourth cousins’, and get the marriage broken off. So Henry's really unlucky from his point of view because Katherine's nephew is so powerful, he actually sacks Rome during the summer of 1527 and takes the Pope prisoner. Henry has got ***no*** chance of getting his annulment from the Pope.

### **Tracy Borman [00:49:40]**

So in terms of the annulment, things go in Katherine's favour. She's got these powerful family members, the Pope's on her side, Henry's getting nowhere. ***But****...*it doesn't necessarily develop too well for Katherine here in England, does it?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:49:56]**

No. So he's not going to get his papal annulment. There are other means that Henry can use. One way of ending a marriage, in fact, is for your wife to retire to a nunnery to suddenly find a religious vocation. And this really is the get out of jail card for Henry ***and*** Katherine. Had Katherine agreed to become an abbess, and you don't have to live a particularly holy life in many of the nunneries in this period, had she agreed to become an abbess, I think potentially she could have negotiated and maybe come up with a better settlement for their daughter, Princess Mary. Because Mary doesn't have to be illegitimate even if her parents’ marriage is invalid. And I think that's really important to make clear. If her parents validly ***believe*** they were married at the time that she's conceived, then she is legitimate, even if it's not a valid marriage. For Henry to illegitimise Mary is vindictive, and it's aimed at Katherine, and it's because Katherine won't come to the table. So I think, again, this shows a nuance to her character. She won't come to the table. She won't consider, even when it's quite clear the marriage is personally over, she will not consider leaving Henry or going to a nunnery, and I think that is worth bringing out. So life gets harder for her in England. Anne Boleyn is very, very present at court and the three of them are living together, which is...

### **Tracy Borman [00:51:16]**

Crowded.

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:51:17]**

Crowded! [Both are amused. Tracy laughs.] And awful for all three, I would imagine. And Katherine continues to dig in, and, I mean, incredibly principled. When the Pope finally sends Cardinal Campeggio, who's actually the absentee Bishop of Salisbury, to come and try the validity of the marriage, Katherine attends, and she surprises everyone by attending the court, only to throw herself on her knees before Henry and make an impassioned speech. She's clearly so emotionally invested in this, and I think this is really important with Katherine. It's clear that being Henry's wife, and being Henry's queen is incredibly important to her. It's the destiny of her life, if you like. She's been trained to be Queen of England since her infancy, since she was a toddler. And this is her focus. But life gets worse and worse. And in 1531, Henry and Anne Boleyn simply ride away from her, and they never see her again.

### **Tracy Borman [00:52:12]**

And that's the end for Katherine, really, in terms of her relationship with Henry. She doesn't see him. She's banished from court, living an increasingly miserable and lonely existence. [Her voice becomes sad] And in all of this, I really am loathe to bring Henry VIII back into it, but I have to ask you this, Beth, do you think Katherine truly loved him?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:52:36]**

It's a really tricky question. Certainly, at the start she did. I mean, I, I can't imagine how she still does towards the end because her last years are absolutely miserable. She's been supplanted by a woman she calls, ‘The Scandal of Christendom’. She's lost her face; she's lost her daughter. Henry will not allow her to see her daughter. And her daughter has lost her future. She's illegitimate. She's no longer the heir to the throne. Henry's ***never*** going to arrange a marriage for Mary. So it's not just Katherine's future that has been wrecked by this, by ***Henry***. And Katherine's life is increasingly miserable. When her servants refuse to address her as ‘princess dowager’, which is her new title, then they're removed from her service. And so by the end, she's really only got a handful of servants attending her. She's actually cooking her own meals on the open fire in her room. It's a really sad end. She does write this letter to Henry on her deathbed, and I think there is some truth when she ends, lastly, ‘I make this my vow,’ I'm paraphrasing, ‘but I make this my vow, you know, my eyes desire you above all things’. And there's probably an element to that. But there's so much hurt in that letter as well. And I think at the end, she probably loves the man he once was. But I think there must be an element of hatred and despair.

### **Tracy Borman [00:53:56]**

[Emotional voice] So it was such a sad end, how Katherine had fallen, as you say, she's there alone, banished from the court, can't see her daughter, her beloved daughter Mary, having to cook her own meals. Obviously, she's very ill as well. She's suffering from whether it's, you know, theories are stomach cancer or even a theory she was poisoned at the end. But this is a miserable end for a woman born to greatness who was revered throughout England. And I think that's something worth focusing on. ***Henry*** might have had enough of her, the rest of England hadn't.

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:54:36]**

Absolutely. Katherine is always incredibly popular. In fact, at one stage, when the Duke of Suffolk is sent to forcibly remove her from one residence, Katherine barricades herself into her room and when Suffolk looks out the window, [amused voice] all the locals are there with sort of pitchforks and you know, gardening implements [she laughs] ready to attack. It's like a siege! People love her. And this is part of the reason why she infuriates Henry VIII so much. Because people ***don't*** love Anne Boleyn. They don't love ***him*** very much at this stage. And everywhere she goes, she is cheered or there are people coming out to see her. Everybody loves Mary. Mary is incredibly popular and that will carry on all the way into the future when she makes her own bid for the throne in 1553. She's incredibly popular, too, because people admire them, and I think particularly women. Because women are so powerless in Tudor England and very much reliant on the goodwill of their male family members, I think people feel a great deal of pity for Katherine, but I think they also consider her to be very, very brave.

### **Tracy Borman [00:55:40]**

And they continue just viewing her as the true queen. And that's something that no amount of Henrician PR can get around. But Katherine did die miserable and alone, and she'd sacrificed [emotive voice] an awful lot, hadn't she, for her principles. Now, putting yourself in Katherine's position, if that's even a fair question, ***could*** she have done anything differently?

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:56:16]**

She could. It's the sad end. The sad end is absolutely of Henry's making. And I really want to make that clear because I'm not in any way blaming Katherine of Aragon. I think, you know, what she did was incredibly brave and incredibly principled. But she could have had an easier life. She couldn't have remained as Henry's wife, and he was never going to do that. He's completely removed her from the equation. And there does absolutely come a point in her life where I think she should have come to the table. And I think that is, to some extent, the tragedy, that if she could have stepped outside her principles - and I'm on her side! - but if she had stepped outside her principles and said, ‘okay, I'm no longer Henry's wife, he's not going to keep me as his wife, let's talk and I will go to an abbey in Spain. I will become an abbess there. I want you to arrange a marriage for Mary, Henry, with a member of my family, the Spanish royal family. I want you to keep her legitimate’. I think Henry would have agreed. And I think both Katherine and Mary would have had happier lives.

### **Tracy Borman [00:57:19]**

If only, as you spell it out there, it could have actually ended a lot more positively for Katherine. And yet, that's not to take away from the fact she was incredibly admirable for her strength and her integrity really is a word that keeps coming to my mind.

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:57:36]**

Absolutely. And she's absolutely in the right. You know, regardless of whether her marriage to Arthur was consummated, she had a dispensation which the Spanish were able to produce that says that the marriage is valid. The marriage ***was*** valid. And she played her part. She'd been Henry's wife. She'd been his queen. She’d born him children. She'd done everything right. And yet she ends up with this horrible, horrible death. So I 100% admire Katherine, but I do just look at her story, and I think, if only you'd been... Anne Boleyn would have come to the table, I think. And I think that's, you know, again, I don't want to compare the two, but I think if Anne Boleyn had been given the option of the nunnery, she would have taken it. [Tracy hums agreement.] And I think in many respects it shows a different character between the two. But it also shows that Katherine's principles effectively dammed her and her daughter to a miserable time.

### **Tracy Borman [00:58:30]**

Absolutely. Well, we've explored Katherine's story here in the Wolsey Rooms at Hampton Court, surrounded by this gorgeous linen fold paneling. You really get a sense of the atmosphere, don't you, of Wolsey's Palace, the Hampton Court that Katherine would have known. How has it felt for you, Beth? Exploring Katherine, right here in a space that she probably knew pretty well.

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [00:58:56]**

It is so evocative, because, of course, I come to Hampton Court quite a lot. And it's wonderful to step in the footsteps of Henry and his wives and other members of the court. But for Katherine, of course, she didn't know the palace that Henry would create. So she very much knows Wolsey's Palace, and she knew it very well. So to actually be here talking about Katherine in the part of the palace that she may well have known, I think it's just fabulous [smiling] and it's so evocative for me.

### **Tracy Borman [00:59:25]**

Well, thank you so much for joining me, because you have genuinely given me a completely different Katherine. ***I'm*** guilty of, just immediately reacting to the name Katherine of Aragon and thinking ‘wronged wife’. You've given us a Katherine who was this incredibly strong woman, very intelligent, well-educated, quite a powerhouse, actually. I think I'd have been [amused] rather intimidated to meet her in person. [The podcast theme music fades in under Tracy’s voice.] But just such an admirable woman living in the man's world of Tudor England. What a way to begin our series. Beth, thank you for joining me.

### **Dr Elizabeth Norton [01:00:04]**

Thank you very much. It's been an absolute pleasure.

[The theme music continues – it is measured and stately, then becomes more relaxed.]

[Owen Emmerson speaks over the top. He has a Southern English accent and speaks clearly from the studio, without echo.]

### **Owen Emmerson [01:00:07]**

Thanks for listening to this episode. I'm Owen Emmerson and next time I'll be joining Tracy and my friend and fellow historian James Peacock to talk about Anne Boleyn.

[Tracy speaks from the studio, no longer in the Wolsey rooms.]

### **Tracy Borman [01:00:20]**

Thank you for listening to this new series on the six Tudor queens. If you enjoy these types of topics, please let us know by leaving us a review. Tell us what else you'd like to hear about as well. We really appreciate all your feedback. Thank you so much for supporting us, loyal listeners.

### [End of Episode]