

Tuesday 15th April 1536

Yet another long day of washing and cleaning over! I have now been working in His Majesty King Henry VIII's palace for three months and am finally learning all the rules. Gone are the days of being flogged almost daily! Now, I am going to crash out on my straw mattress. Luckily, it is spring so I shouldn't be too chilly tonight.

Thursday 17th April 1536

I decided to get up early this morning to write in my diary. I can see the sun beginning to rise over the castle turrets. It is half past four in the morning but I will soon have to go to work. I dare not be late, the King executed three people yesterday just for burning his breakfast! People are so afraid of him and I do believe his wife Queen Anne may feel the same. He does not seem to treat her with the love he used to. He is so desperate for a son to be his heir to the throne and she has only given him a girl; Princess Elizabeth.

My jobs today are to clean the fireplace, mop the floor in the kitchen, and mend Elizabeth's stockings. Once these are done, I must join Cook in the kitchen to help with the feast for tonight. I am shaking with fear, I do not usually help with the food but the King kills so many of his servants, we all need to work together.

Sunday 20th April 1536

Thankfully, it is Sunday and I have survived! The feast went well and no one lost their head. There was SO much food! King Henry certainly can eat a lot! My mouth was watering looking at the peacock, boar and pheasant stuffed with fresh fruits and herbs. Unfortunately, I had to make do with yet another bowl of pottage soup and a flagon of ale. I am not stupid enough to drink the disgusting polluted water! Fresh food rots so quickly in this sunny weather, I can't remember the last time I ate a vegetable that wasn't peas.

This morning, I must go to church. I am struggling to get used to this new 'Church of England' still, I was brought up as a Catholic. However, I value my life too much to disagree with King Henry! Later on, I am meeting some friends to go to the theatre. The last play I saw I had to leave as they dared to make fun of the Queen! They were suggesting that the King loved the Queen's maid-of-honour, Jane Seymour, instead!

Wednesday 23rd April 1536

The rich lady in waiting I often serve, was kind enough to let me sit at the back of her lessons today. She is so lucky to be one of few girls who gets to learn her numbers and speak Latin, rather than just how to do embroidery. I sometimes get to mend her clothes and they are made of the finest silks, beautiful particularly in comparison to my scratchy, old woollen dress.

The King was absent from the palace today but everyone still seemed very anxious. The Queen spends much of her time in her room, weeping. I do not know why?

Dinner tonight was grey bread made from rye and barley, AGAIN.

2nd May 1536

I am distraught. Even as I write these words, tears are pouring so fast I may ruin my whole diary. My wonderful Queen Anne was at Greenwich Palace when she was arrested! Her Majesty was accused of "evil behaviour" by Sir William Paulet, Sir William Fitzwilliam and her uncle, the Duke of Norfolk! How cruel and foul these people must be to say such awful and heinous things about her! I believe, not a word of it. She obviously denied these charges but it was no good, she was only allowed to return to her apartments for her dinner, under guard, and then she was escorted by barge along the Thames to the Tower of London. I fear I can write no more as my grief is so overwhelming.

5th May 1536

Her Majesty still waits in prison. I have heard reports she is praying night and day for the King to realise his mistake and she has always been a loyal and faithful wife and Queen. He may simply send her to a nunnery for her crimes. My heart is lifted when I hear this and hope desperately for it to be true. Though, my experience of the King himself leads my heart to sink with dread at how he has always treated those who have angered him...

Wednesday 10th May 1536

I must not speak these words aloud EVER. The King would have me hung in minutes. I have begun to hide this diary under my mattress in order to keep my thoughts safe. I start to tremble whenever I hear him in the palace. However, I also struggle not to shake with anger! He has begun complaining that Anne had seduced him into marrying her! An accusation carrying suggestions of witchcraft! He is also flaunting his growing interest in the Queen's maid of honour, Jane Seymour. Disgusting behaviour.

Monday 15th May 1536

The Princess Elizabeth is only two and half years of age. What shall happen to her if her Father decides to execute her mother? There are rumours that King Henry's advisors have 'invented' these charges against Queen Anne as she has not been able to give him a male heir. This is treasonous talk and I need to be careful I only share these thoughts with my secret diary.

Friday 19th May 1536

My beloved Queen is gone. She was beheaded with a sword early this morning. She wore a red petticoat under a loose, dark grey gown of damask trimmed in fur and a mantle of ermine, and looked radiant and brave as she walked with her handmaidens to the scaffold. My heart feels like it is in pieces and I fear what events shall occur next. What shall become of the Princess? Will the King marry the wretched Jane Seymour? If I am to continue working here, I must not allow my own feelings to be shown in public. For now, my dear diary, you are the only true and honest friend I have.