

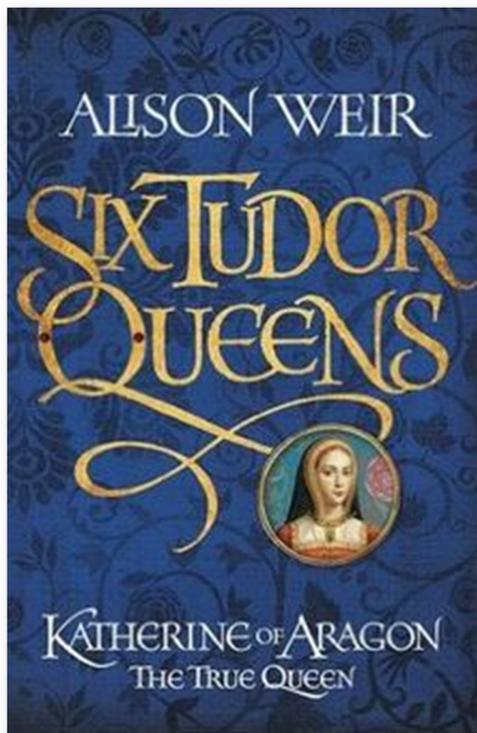


Helping you choose
your next book

LoveReading Reader reviews of
Six Tudor Queens
Katherine of Aragon
The True Queen
by Alison Weir



Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



Sarah Musk

A sympathetic gripping account of the decline of the marriage of Henry VIII and Katharine of Aragon. At the end England would never be the same again.

I have read a few of Alison Weir's history books and love her style of writing as well as her subject matter. She often writes about strong, courageous women (Eleanor of Aquitaine and Katherine Swynford to name a few) and Katharine of Aragon definitely falls into this category.

The story is so sad. It is basically about the decline of an initially happy marriage destroyed by Henry's obsession for an

heir. If she had produced sons there is a strong possibility they would have stayed married and Henry would have just taken mistresses. You do have some sympathy for Henry's position - the Tudors were newly on the throne and their claim to the throne was slightly tenuous. However, the way she was treated was monstrous. Poor lady - your outrage at her treatment mounts as the book progresses. Alison Weir is sympathetic to her plight but there is a slight feeling that her stubbornness (principles?) made her situation far worse.

Alison Weir is an esteemed historian so the facts are correct all the way

through. No dramatic license is needed since this true story is so truly gripping and astonishing that the facts speak for themselves, The story has it all - wronged wife, evil mistress and bullying, selfish husband and what makes it sweeter it that we all know who gets their comeuppance in the end. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the Tudors and especially in the trail of events that led us to eventually becoming a Protestant country. Katherine - a staunch Catholic - inadvertently changed the religion in our country forever

Sue Cunliffe

A fascinating read, depicting the love triangle of Henry, Katherine and Anne. Katherine remains steadfast to her beliefs to the end. The consequences changing the course of history forever.

'The True Queen' is a beautifully written book, which, with its attention to detail captures life in the Court of Henry VIII; with its pageantry, intrigue and political dealings. Despite its length the book flows beautifully as you follow the life of Katherine of Aragon from the moment she steps off the boat from Spain to her lonely death. Katherine, a strong woman, is driven by her morals and religious beliefs remaining defiant to the bitter end; refusing to capitulate to the humiliation and threats from Henry. She battles against the unscrupulous Anne Boleyn who will stop at nothing to destroy anything and anyone who gets in her way. Katherine's experiences shaped her but did not destroy her.

Henry easily swayed and desperate to give the country a male heir battles for his divorce and will do everything in his power to achieve it. This is not just a book about the love triangle of Henry, Katherine and Anne but it depicts a defining moment in time which changes the history of the United Kingdom forever. You become engrossed in the book, almost feeling like one of Katherine's courtiers entwined in her life and struggles. Finishing the book was like losing a friend. If only Katherine knew the fate of Anne. I wait with anticipation to read the next book in the series, Anne Boleyn.

Angie Rhodes

Wow!! I have learnt more from this book, than I did at school.

Katherine is a beautiful young girl, when she is sent to marry Henry's brother Arthur, but the marriage is short lived due to his ill health.

Time passes, King Henry VII dies, making his son Henry VIII King, this allows

Henry to marry Katherine.

Katherine loves Henry and for a while he loves her. Wanting to give him a son, Katherine loses baby after baby, until at last one child survives Mary, not the son Henry wanted but a daughter. Katherine is happy, but all is not well with Henry. A young girl catches his eye at Court, Anne Boleyn, but Katherine will not acknowledge the divorce and we see a side of her that we have not been told about. A strong woman who will fight for her marriage of twenty five years, and her daughter's right to be named as Princess.

Lisa Hall

I was bowled over by this book - an enchanting, intriguing look into the life of Katherine of Aragon, as opposed to what happened after she was removed as Henry's Queen, I was mesmerised by the events that took place, made all the more poignant by the fact that the story is based on true events.

I couldn't help but empathise with Katherine - she gives herself to Henry with her whole heart, after defying all those who try to keep them apart, and Henry leaves her broken hearted, shames her and leaves her with nothing.

This is a compelling and addictive read, one that I found myself fully immersed in every time I opened the pages...I can't wait for the rest of the Queens stories that follow - it will be particularly interesting to read the next novel through the eyes of Anne Boleyn, after reading how Katherine felt about it all.

Follow Lisa on twitter: @lisahallauthor

Kathy Howell

I have read and enjoyed Alison Weir's books and really enjoyed reading this one too. All her books are well researched but easy to read.

The book describes a Katherine of Aragon who is much more than the "awkward" woman that is usually described in books about Henry VIII. Here she is shown to be a loving and romantic woman who is desperately saddened by her inability to have a son, by the numerous miscarriages and by the deaths of the babies she does give birth to. Her relationship with Arthur is shown clearly and her grief at his death is made worse by the way that she is treated by Henry VII. This changes on his death and she marries Henry VIII. The book

shows clearly Katherine's hurt and anger at the way she is treated when Henry becomes infatuated by Anne Boleyn. Her conviction that Henry will return to her continues for a long time, despite the evidence to the contrary. Katherine's love for her daughter, Mary, is very clear, as is her desire to protect her.

The affection of both the British people and her servants is very touching and her delight in this is the one light in her darkness. Her final illness and death are described in touching detail. It is clear that Katherine was the winner in this struggle with the King.

Mollie Mayson-Simpson

Historical fiction as presented by a true historian - edge-of-the-seat confrontation between the one true queen and the husband attempting to depose of her.

This book is a delight. At first sight of its doorstop proportions I confess to having a slight 'wobble' as to whether I needed more Tudors in my life. But no worries, in Alison Weir's safe hands we can enjoy, as a package, a superbly written novel layered with meticulously researched historical content and biographical detail.

The book follows Katherine's life over a thirty year period, starting with her journey as a fifteen year old bride-to-be from home and family in Spain, to take up her position in the English Court. She is to marry Prince Arthur, Henry VII's heir, but sadly, due to Arthur's untimely death, the marriage is short-lived and probably never consummated. The inheritance, including the bride, passes to Henry, the next in line, and at first all seems idyllic. But for Katherine the blissful honeymoon period is woven through with sadness at the loss of her babies and her failure to produce the requisite male heir.

The stalemate situation between their respective positions adds an interesting tension to the reading. Why, we might wonder from our rational 21st century viewpoint, doesn't Katherine stop fighting against the inevitable, and settle quietly for a modernised castle and an annual income for herself and her daughter? But this is 16th century England and the Roman Catholic Church is the final arbiter - until, that is, with breath-taking audacity, Henry dares to introduce his own solution.

Helen Lowry

History and the story of Katherine's life in one book. Told from Katherine's point of view from the day she arrives in England.

As a history lover, this book was a pleasure to read. It is the first in a series of six books about Henry VIII's Queens, Katherine being his first.

Alison Weir tells the story from Katherine's point of view, and starts with her arrival in England in 1501 as she is about to marry Henry's brother Arthur. He is of ill health and not interested in Katherine. After his sudden death, she marries Henry. Their only surviving child is Mary, much to Henry's annoyance, wanting anything but a girl. The story covers their life and marriage, until Henry grows weary of her, finally divorcing her for Anne Boleyn. Despite the shoddy treatment she received at the hands of her former husband, she loved him until her dying day and firmly believed she was the only true Queen of England.

Highly recommended as a novel and as a walk through history.

Margaret Freeman

An enjoyable fictional biography of Katherine of Aragon, based on historical fact.

This is fictional biography at its most straight forward, written in an uncomplicated style. Told from Katherine's point of view, it follows her life from the time she arrived in England in 1501 at the age of sixteen to marry Prince Arthur, Henry VII's heir, and later to his brother, Henry, up to her death in 1536.

Katherine was a woman of her time - obedient to her parents and her husband, conscientious about doing her duty and active in maintaining an alliance between England and Spain. But, even so, she resisted Henry in his demands for an end to their marriage. When its legitimacy was questioned she maintained that her first marriage had never been consummated and, based on recent research, Weir takes her word as the truth. She was heart-broken at her failure to produce a living male heir and to keep Henry's love, who was by then besotted with Anne Boleyn and maintained that she was the true queen until her death.

Overall I enjoyed this book. It's a long and comprehensive study, which has increased my knowledge and understanding of Katherine of Aragon and the early 1500s, but I don't think it works too well as a novel, with too much

historical detail in places, which slowed the pace down.

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Joy Finlayson

‘Katherine of Aragon, The True Queen’ gives voice to an essential player in the 16th Century, displaying strength of character and an unwavering faith.

In ‘Katherine of Aragon, The True Queen’, Alison Weir captures the determination of the first of Henry VIII’s wives in a novel that spans decades. As a book with Katherine as the centrepiece, we are given great context to her life; from her first marriage to Henry’s brother, Arthur, to her life upon Henry’s wooing of Anne Boleyn. We see the impact of multiple miscarriages, the politics behind many decisions of the era, and how much had to be done to hush the voice of a woman who still wanted to be known as Queen.

With the benefit of hindsight, we are able to see the introduction of future wives of Henry VIII, thus alluding to how the story develops into what we now know is filled with matrimony. What Weir brings to the arena of Tudor fiction is her focus on Katherine of Aragon as she is; yes, in part, as the wife of the King, but also as someone whose destiny is chosen for her and whose story continues far beyond Henry’s second marriage. Katherine of Aragon, the True Queen gives voice to an essential player in the 16th Century, displaying strength of character and an unwavering faith.

Filled with researched and documented material, this novel, the first in a series, is illuminating and brings greater scope than other Henry-centric fiction. As a self-confessed Tudor addict, I was gripped by Alison Weir’s storytelling and the outplaying of a plot that made Katherine the protagonist of her own story.

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Edel Waugh

This is the story about Katherine of Aragon who became Queen of England. Katherine was married to Henry VIII and reading the story about their notorious marriage was impossible to put down.

Katherine was a very devout and dignified young woman when she moved from her home of Spain to England where she was destined to many dark moments in

her life. You have to admire her strength, losing so many children and her husband's behaviour towards her would be enough to destroy most other women. Her belief in her faith seemed to be the one thing she could rely on and turn to when she was shaken and unsure of what life had in store for her.

I thought about how daunting it must have been for her and other future queens at that time, as very young girls, and women, to leave their homes and families and go and get married and perhaps not see their family again. They were all terribly brave. I recommend this wonderful book for all fans of history.

<http://edelwaugh.blogspot.ie/2016/03/six-tudor-queens-by-alison-weir-review.html?m=1>