

AT: Welcome to the Infinite Women podcast. I'm your host, Allison Tyra, and today I'm joined by historian Dr. Johanna Strong to talk about English Queen Mary I. Now, because Mary is a Tudor, and there is so much drama around the Tudors, we decided to split this up into a two-parter. So in this section, we're going to talk about Princess Mary, so her early life leading up to when she came to the throne, and then the second episode we'll talk about Queen Mary. So if you're not interested in the backstory, feel free to skip to part two. Otherwise, let's dig into where Mary sits in the broader context of the Tudors.

[Listen to Part 2](#) or [read the transcript](#).

JS: She is the only surviving child of Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. So she is by birth half-English, half-Spanish, which is important to note as we get later into her reign when she's talking about marriages. February 1516, very much Henry's pearl as he calls her, she is a gem to him. She is very much the loved child, is very much acknowledged as the heir, because she is the only child who is surviving of that marriage. And for most of her childhood, obviously we know that the 1520s are going to come, and then 1533 and Henry marrying Anne Boleyn, but at the time, they don't know that. And so Mary is very much perceived as the heir to the throne. And when Henry, as Henry does, has a fling with Bessie Blount and has Henry Fitzroy, there is a sense of, not really tension, because Mary is still seen as the heir, even though Henry has a boy. And part of Mary's education is very much built around this concept that she is the heir, that even if Henry has a boy at some future time, she is still a significant royal political piece. And she stands to inherit England and Henry's realms, but she also could be married to foreign power. And so Mary is very much educated as this Renaissance princess, as someone who knows multiple languages, who is taught in a sense how to govern. And as part of that, she is sent to Ludlow, which is a beautiful castle on the Welsh-English border. And this is traditionally the seat of the princes of Wales. Now Mary is, of course, not a prince in the gender term of that word. And so she is a de facto princess of Wales. She's never invested with that title. She is never really formally viewed as the princess of Wales in official terms. But she basically acts in that capacity.

And it's really here that she gets those first lessons. So part of Ludlow is that the heir is sent off to have their own mini-realm, that they can practice how to govern, they can practice how to rule. And so Mary spends part of her childhood in Ludlow working on this. And of course life changes in the mid-1520s. We have Anne Boleyn come on the scene. The marriage between Henry and Catherine is on the rocks, to say the very least. And this is, I would imagine a really stressful time for Mary. So she is and has been very close with her mother. They kind of talk often through other people. They are very much a very happy mother/daughter. But by the time the 1530s come around, it's very clear that Henry is going to seek an annulment from Catherine. And so Mary and Catherine are very much separated. They are a tour de force when they are together. And Henry knows he can't risk that. And so most historians would say that the last time Mary sees Catherine of Aragon is in 1531. But we have Sylvia Barbara Soberton who's done some some more digging as historians do and has found that Mary was quite ill in 1534. And Henry is concerned enough that he sends his own physician to Mary to take care of her, which is a big deal. And he also gives permission for Catherine to visit. So it might be that the last time

they see each other is in 1534, two years before Catherine dies in January 1536.

AT: And so for context, when we're talking about this time period, she's 15 to 18. So, you know, for anyone who thought that your teen years were turbulent, welcome to Mary's life. But we also need to address that in the broader context of this situation, the reason Catherine was in exile, the reason she was fighting so hard against the annulment was because it would have invalidated their marriage and therefore Mary's legitimacy and her claim to the throne. So she was doing all this to protect her daughter.

JS: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. I think this is kind of the perfect moment when I think so many historians are like, "I know what I'm talking about. Everyone will know." And you think "actually no, wait, hold on." So yes, there is this whole, obviously, the Great Matter in the 1520s and '30s that Henry is trying to get an annulment from Catherine of Aragon. And an annulment is similar to a divorce in that the couple separates. But in an annulment, it is an official Catholic term. And it basically says the marriage never happened. And so instead of it being, "well, they're exes," it's "they were never actually married in the first place. So Henry's a bachelor again, he's never been married." And so, what a great thing for Henry as he's trying to get a second wife. And so part of this tension is, as you say, is that Catherine is in a very tricky spot. She is a foreign princess for all intents and purposes, but she is now also English because she's been in England for so long. And she doesn't want to lose that status. And she knows that if she accepts an annulment that puts her in jeopardy, and that puts Mary's claim to the throne in jeopardy. And so Catherine doesn't want to agree to it. And Mary being so close to her mother and knowing where she stands in the line of succession, knows that she can't accept that either. And so there's there's quite a lot of a bitter divorce, basically, that is happening in the 1530s. And by the time that Henry marries Anne Boleyn, there is very much a pushing away of Mary from the court. Presumably, many people will know that Elizabeth the first is born in September of 1533. And so at this point, Mary is officially illegitimate. She is not in line for the throne, or she is behind this new baby, as opposed to a 17-year-old woman. And Mary's household is officially dissolved. So she basically loses her servants, her entire physical support system. And she is sent to serve the baby Elizabeth. And so that is part of why this 1534 date from Mary seeing Catherine, or Catherine seeing Mary, is so significant, is because by this point, Henry's done everything he can to separate the mother and daughter. And giving permission for them to see each other is a massive deal. When he has a new marriage, his heir is now a baby. It's a very tense situations. Mary obviously struggles through that. We have accounts and a lot of historians make a lot more of these accounts than they perhaps should, but that Mary is understandably unwell during these years. And a lot of it stress, a lot of it is just issues with being a woman at the time, a lack of painkillers.

AT: Well, it seems like, you know, we talk about rags to riches, but she went from being essentially, as you said, the de facto princess of Wales, the heir apparent to her father's kingdom, his "pearl." So someone who is very beloved by and close to both of her parents, only to be separated from her mother, because of her father being an asshole. Like I think we can all agree, you know, whatever your definition of asshole is, Henry probably well and truly exceeds

it. And as you noted, 1533, she's even had her household taken away from her. So whatever position she had, whatever emotional support network she had, everything is gone. And I think a lot of people also like pointing out when we're talking about the drama of the Tudors, the fact that Mary was sent to serve the infant Elizabeth. Not just that, you know, she was sent away somewhere quiet and remote like her mother was, but she was actually put in that servant position. And frankly, I'd be sick too, if that's everything I was dealing with, as a teenager.

JS: Yeah, and that's, I think that's the biggest thing is, we often look at early modern lives and say, well, they didn't live that long anyway. But in terms of being a teenager, yes, she's technically an adult at this point. She technically has been eligible to marry for a few years. She is, for all intents and purposes in the early modern world, an adult. But if we think about kind of the development and the hormones and everything else that is happening, that's a lot to deal with from the ages of 10 to 17. If your parents are having this very bitter, public dispute, if you all of a sudden are going from everything you could ever want to, "you need to curtsy and follow behind a literal baby, because she takes precedence over you." That is in itself, I think, enough for anyone to develop anxiety and kind of not knowing where you stand in the world and that sense of unease, of you had everything and all of a sudden politics changes and you have nothing. And I think this teaches Mary so, so much. Obviously, I would not wish that on anyone in the world, but I think it does teach her a lot about the court and about court life and about politics and about the significance of station and marriage and all of these other things that I think she then harnesses as an adult, as she's trying to get through Edward's reign, as she's coming into her own position as queen. But yeah, I can completely understand why she is not kind of the best, the kind of "perfect" child she could have been as a teenager because she's going through a lot. Yeah, thankfully, it does get a little bit better for her in the later years of her father's life. As Anne Boleyn is executed in 1536 and he marries Jane Seymour almost immediately after, Mary starts to come back into court life and starts to really be welcomed back as his daughter, as a princess, though she's technically not made legitimate or put back into the line of succession. So she is not declared legitimate during Henry's lifetime. Again, she's not declared legitimate for understandable reasons when Edward is king and it falls to her when she becomes queen to declare herself legitimate again. And so even though Henry's kind of later wives do a lot to bring her in and to bring that family together, it's still not necessarily the happiest family relationship.

AT: And so just to run through the wives real quick, because this is not about the wives, there's plenty out there about the wives if you're interested in them. So we've got Jane Seymour, who was the mother of Edward, who you've mentioned a couple times. I'm sure we'll get a bit more into that, but essentially he succeeded Henry when Henry died. He was a sickly teenager. He didn't last long and we'll get into that in a few minutes. But so we've got Jane Seymour dies in childbirth. So the one woman to give him a living male heir is also gone pretty quickly. Kitty Howard is younger than Catherine. She was a, you know, flighty teenage girl who did flighty teenage girl things and ended up dead because of it. And then we've got Anne of Cleves, who was annulled peacefully because she didn't want to be married to him either, as the vibes I got. And so she was then declared like his sister, and she made out the best. Like she didn't have to

stay married to him. She got her own house and everything. Like she she got the best deal. And then Katherine Parr was the one who survived him. Again, she's got her own stuff happening. But what's interesting is that she seems like she was the most maternal towards both Mary and Elizabeth, both before and after Henry died. Is that correct?

JS: Yeah. So I think part of it is obviously Jane isn't in the picture for too long. She dies in October 1537. Anne of Cleves is in the picture for about six months. And then there's quite a chunk where Henry isn't married because he's, I guess, trying to get over the betrayal of Anne of Cleves.

AT: We got to talk about that because you got this fat, gouty jerk who's like well in, I would say well past middle age at this point. And he's complaining that Anne of Cleves wasn't as hot as her picture depicted her to be, which is true. Even today, that's what filters are for, sir. But the fact that you got that guy, wasn't his argument for annulment literally that he basically couldn't get it up because she wasn't hot enough.

JS: Yeah. Yeah. So it is, it is very much this double standard. It's also just very cringeworthy. It's one of those where you think, poor Anne. Like she's come in for this diplomatic marriage. And then he's come in being like, "no, doesn't look like a portrait. Don't like her. Don't want her. Here we are." But I think she does make the most of it.

AT: And this whole time, Mary is seeing, I don't know if she ever really mended her relationship with her father. I assume she played nice because you have to. He's the king. But she's seeing how he's treating not just her mom, but all of these women. And you have to imagine that messed her up a bit.

JS: And I think you really touch on that, that tension that exists there, that Mary is, at the end of the day, still Henry's daughter. And they do still have great love for each other as a father and a daughter. But there's also that tension of, she might not necessarily agree with everything he does politically or personally. And I think so much of that is, yes, he is the king. Yes, you have to listen to the king. Yes, he is her father. And she wants to listen to him because that is her role as a daughter. But I think it also puts in play so much of how she understands marriage and family and politics at the end of the day, that you have to do what the king says, even if you don't agree with it. But how do you deal with that when it's a loved family member? And I think that that really does set the stage again, this as a learning moment for Mary, unfortunately, that she goes in and she realizes, I think that, and we'll see this especially in Edward's reign as they're looking at potential spouses for her, that basically, this has to be a calculated decision. And yes, it is marriage. Yes, it is someone who is supposed to share the rest of your life with you. But that decision can't be quickly made or made just kind of out of the blue or they seem nice, that it has to have some weight behind it, which I think that affects how Mary marries later when she is queen.

AT: Well, I think there's also the question of what she would have seen as examples of love

matches, because her parents were a love match, you know, 20 years before Henry did what he did. And so after Henry dies, Catherine Parr remarries relatively quickly to Thomas Seymour, who is Jane Seymour's brother. And he's also like battling his own brother for the regency, because Edward at this point is too young to rule in his own right. And so the Regency Council is basically, you know, the power behind the throne, actually running things. And so you've got the Seymour brothers battling it out. And I don't know how accurate this is, how much is documented. But Thomas Seymour, then rumor has it, was like hitting on the teenage Elizabeth that Catherine was, you know, hosting because she's her stepmother and she's a maternal figure. And so from Mary's perspective, what she's seeing is her father's horrible relationships. And then she sees Catherine marry for love and ends up with Thomas and his behavior. And then Catherine dies, I believe, in childbirth fairly soon anyway. So there's not a lot of happy endings that she seems to be seeing, except for Anne of Cleves. And that was by not staying married.

JS: Yeah. And I think so much of it, again, with Thomas, he has this kind of reputation. And I don't want to weigh in too far, because I know it is a very controversial topic for those who study Thomas Seymour. But there is this perception that he is perhaps, married Catherine, I mean, yes, they wanted to marry before she met Henry, but then Henry comes along and you can't say no to Henry. So there is a sense that this is a love match beforehand. And then I think he gets into that household. And because of these power struggles with Edward Seymour, Edward VI's mother's brother, so his uncle, there's just such a tension. And Thomas Seymour knows that to stay relevant at court, to keep having influence over Edward VI, his nephew, he needs to make sure that he's in powerful positions. And so there is, I guess there are probably multiple ways to interpret what happens in Katherine Parr's household when she's married to Seymour. But it does involve a perhaps questionable relationship, to what extent, I don't know, I don't want to say, with Elizabeth. But again, that leads to Elizabeth basically being sent away while Katherine is pregnant, from that household. And as I don't know how much Mary knows about the situation, but I think it's again, this point where she's able to look at the situation and go actually, can you really trust a man who says that he wants to marry you, because is he there for **you**, which I think he very much was at the beginning for Katherine. Or is he there for the power, which I think is potentially what it develops into. But again, is this moment where it, as you say, it looks like this happy marriage for Katherine and Thomas. Katherine is pregnant. And this is her first child that she will have given birth to. She's been a stepmother before, but this will be her first child. And she dies of basically what we call childbed fever, complications, infection after the birth. And so again, we see this, from the outside happy, couple. And the woman ends up dead in a sense because of it. And as much as we say, infant mortality is not uncommon at the time and dying in or after, because of childbirth/pregnancy is is not unheard of. These still are real people who form real connections with each other. And even though you know that's a very real possibility that your child will not live to the age of 4, or that your spouse will not live through her pregnancy, it doesn't make that any less meaningful of a connection while they are alive. And I think that that surely has to play into how Mary is seeing the world.

AT: And speaking of death. So this is all before Mary even takes the throne. So let's talk about

Edward's death and how Mary came to the throne because it certainly wasn't, shall we say, simple and uncontested.

JS: No, if only. I don't think anything after 1533 was easy for Mary. So Edward VI, as you say, comes to the throne at Henry VIII's death in 1547. He rules for six years. Edward is very much a Protestant. He is very much of the, as they would call it, reformed religion, is very much in opposition to Mary's Catholicism. And this really plays a role in the relationship that they have. And Edward knows that even though Mary is still illegitimate, Henry VIII's will left the throne to Edward, and then to Mary and Elizabeth. So basically to Edward and any kids he has, once they either are not born or die, it will go to her.

AT: And what's really interesting when we're getting into religion, because of course that comes back to the whole Catherine of Aragon, split from the Catholic Church because Henry didn't want to be married to her anymore. And so the whole Catholic/Protestant thing is also very personal for Mary and her background in addition to just, that's how she was raised. I could see with all the upheaval she faced in her teens, maybe she turned to religion as sort of the only solace she may have had in that situation. Whereas, yeah, the other two kids are just like, "well, we have to justify dad's behavior." And what I find really interesting about the will is that you can't have it both ways, technically. Henry did whatever he wanted. He's like, "I'm the king, I can do what I want." So, but from a logical standpoint, which logic never had anything to do with anything Henry did, as far as I can tell. But logically, Mary and Elizabeth can't both be legitimate, because if Mary's legitimate, then the marriage to Catherine was legitimate, and Elizabeth is a bastard. But yeah, for Elizabeth to be, and vice versa for Elizabeth, for his marriage to and to have been legit, then the marriage to Catherine can't have been legitimate. And therefore, so it doesn't make any sense.

JS: No, and that's, that's one of the biggest things is when, Henry marries Anne Boleyn, those who don't view that marriage as legitimate, when it comes to 1536 and Catherine dies, there is this perception that, "well, he's single again, he can get married," because they don't recognize the marriage to Anne. And so it's, it's this whole thing. But absolutely, as you say, if the marriage to Catherine is legitimate and Mary is legitimate, then that marriage lasts until Catherine dies, 1536. But if the marriage to Anne is legitimate, and Catherine isn't, then Mary is illegitimate and Elizabeth is, and it's, you can't have a both/and in this situation. But Henry tries to make it because he realizes that he only has one son. And it just becomes this complicated situation, which then Edward makes even more complicated when he writes, and again, there's a lot of discussion, how much of this is Edward, how much of this is John Dudley. So in case you thought that the fighting was just between the Seymour brothers, it is not. So I know, sorry to shatter illusions. So the Seymour brothers are duking it out for power. Thomas Seymour is eventually executed, which leaves Edward Seymour. Edward Seymour eventually is part of some power tensions with other members of the council, and he and John Dudley, the Duke of Northumberland, are very much set up as these two opposing factions. Edward Seymour is also eventually executed. And John Dudley is the real leader of the council.

AT: So weren't the Dudleys the ones who tried to put Jane Grey on the throne?

JS: Oh, yes. Yeah. So John Dudley basically has control of the Privy Council of basically Edward's advisors while Edward is in his final months. And how much of this is Edward? How much of this is Dudley? We might never know. But there's a push that Edward's heir cannot be Catholic because Edward's reign has been all about Protestant and taking out Catholicism. And so this fear that he's going to give this to a Catholic who will basically turn back to before Protestantism is very scary for him. And so someone, I will use the generic "they," look for a solution. And it's at this point that John Dudley marries his son, Guildford Dudley, to Lady Jane Grey, who then becomes Jane Dudley. And it's at this point, or slightly thereafter, that Edward signs the Devise for the Succession, which originally states that Edward is going to leave the throne to Jane's, so Jane Grey, now Dudley, to Jane's heirs (male), basically not leaving it to Jane. He's leaving it to whatever children she might have because she's now married and naturally she would have children. So how this comes into play is to make this as least complicated as possible. Jane's mother, Frances, is a cousin of Henry, kind of by few removals, but they are cousins. She is next in line after Edward, Mary, Elizabeth, Frances. Frances Grey, who was not a Grey the time, marries Henry Grey, she is now Frances Grey, they have Jane. So Jane is in line for the throne after her mother because she doesn't have any brothers. Of course brothers take precedence. Jane marries Guildford Dudley, and Edward's original Devise for the Succession, as it's called, puts Jane's future children in line before Mary and Elizabeth. And then Edward, or someone realizes that Jane's not pregnant yet and we're running out of time. And so the second draft has "heirs (male)" crossed out and the throne is going to be left to Jane. And so in July 1553, when it officially comes out that Edward VI has died, Jane is brought to the Tower of London and is proclaimed queen. For anyone who's going, but the Tower of London is a prison, why would they bring her to a prison? The Tower is also the traditional place where the monarch would spend the days and especially the night before their coronation, before they're then processed to Westminster Abbey, where the coronation happens. So no spidey senses are tingling and at this point the Jane is in the Tower.

AT: But it does prove to be foreshadowing because Jane doesn't last very long.

JS: She does not. So for poor Jane, she does come into the Tower as a queen, or is made queen while she's there. So it very much seems like it will be, "well she's just staying there until the coronation, no big deal. We've done this for ages." But Mary is up in East Anglia, which is kind of the eastern region of England, where she has property. And she finds out that Edward is dead. And she goes, "well, I'm the queen now, fantastic." Then she hears, no, in fact, Jane has been proclaimed queen. And Mary basically goes over, "my dead body is she queen and not me." And so Mary very much puts up a fight. And one of the mistakes, as Melina Thomas has pointed out in previous work, she's another historian who looks at Mary and her networks, is that Henry VIII specifically said that Mary should be given money instead of property when Henry died. Because if you give her money, there's there's no territory, there's no loyalty of people that comes with it. It's money. If you give her property, that brings tenants. It brings people who will be loyal to her. And so Mary has this property because Edward makes the mistake of giving her the property instead of just giving her the monetary equivalent. And so little does he know that

this is going to play a massive role in how Mary's able to come to the throne. So she is in East Anglia at Framlingham Castle, which is basically her home. She hears that Jane has been proclaimed queen. And she goes, "no." And she basically raises an army, not necessarily an army in how we might think, she's going to march on London and take Edward hostage. But she uses the loyalty of the East Anglian people, of people that she's the neighbor of, that she is landlord too. They look at this and go, "hang on a second. Who's Jane? Like where did she come from?" And they go, "no, Mary is the rightful queen." Regardless of whether they agree with her for religion, regardless of how they feel about the whole situation, most of England goes, "no, Jane can't be queen. It's Mary next. That's how everything should be laid out." And one of the very technical issues with Edward's Devises for the Succession is that it is signed by the monarch, but it is never passed through Parliament. So it doesn't have the legal standing that Henry VIII's will did. And so there's then a challenge to this Devises for the Succession. And Mary, with this popular support, it changes that current until fewer and fewer people are willing to pledge allegiance to Queen Jane. And eventually those around Jane who have in whatever way supported or put her into power, they realize, in a sense, "we've backed the wrong horse." And there's a very public turning from Jane and a very public proclamation that Mary is queen. So Jane is technically queen for about 12 days. Often it's nine days because there's time after Edward dies, where basically they have to solidify power. And so they can't say that the king is dead until they're ready to present the next monarch. And so that's I think where we get this 9 / 12 discrepancy.

AT: It's less than two weeks either way.

JS: Yes, it's less than two weeks. So Jane effectively is stripped of the title, is now just Lady Jane Dudley again, is no longer Queen Jane and Mary comes into power as queen. And often, I think, especially in the Tudor dramas that we see on TV, it's often portrayed as Jane is queen, Jane is not queen, Mary is queen, Mary executes Jane. And what happens in that space between Mary is queen, Jane is executed, sorry for the spoiler, Jane is executed, is Mary needs to secure her spot on the throne. She knows she has popular support, but Jane's, especially her in-laws, maybe don't think the most far ahead as they could. And they, I think, especially John Dudley, even to an extent, Jane's father, still try to challenge Mary as queen. And so during the first few months of Mary as queen, there are plots to replace her with Jane again. And so Mary has to make this decision. If Jane is going to be alive, people will continue to rally to Jane. So can she leave Jane alive as a point of rebellion and as a point of challenge to Mary's reign. And initially, in those first few days, the sense is, "yes, Jane can stay alive, we'll just keep an eye on her, it'll be fine." But the in-laws, the parents, they continue to raise basically rebellions in Jane's name. And it's at that point that Mary goes, leaving her is a liability. And so Jane and Guildford are sentenced to be executed, basically because it's too dangerous to leave them alive, which I think obviously again, please don't just go and execute people. But I think this is again, a very important caveat there that it's not that Mary comes to the throne and goes, "kill Jane." It's that Jane is a threat and is a proven threat to her security. And it becomes a case that Mary in a sense has to do with. It's not nice. It's not one of the nicest things she does during her reign. But you can absolutely see why she saw it as being absolutely necessary.

AT: I mean, I think it is a lot more justified than a lot of other executions, see: like half of her stepmoms. But also, and I feel bad for Jane, obviously, because Jane was a teenager. She was doing what the powerful adult men in her life pushed her into. She really didn't have much say in the matter. She was also very intelligent. She was a scholar. She was very religious in her own way. It sucks for Jane. But what she did was also arguably treason, even if she really didn't have any control over it because she's a teenage girl doing what she's told. But there's also her younger sister, Katherine, because there's so many Catherines. But remind me how Katherine Grey was neutralized so that she wasn't - because you could easily see, "oh, well, Jane's dead. So now we're going to chuck Katherine out there as the symbol for everyone to rally around."

JS: It's very complicated. As every girl dreams when they're little, everyone dreams of having a triple wedding. So Jane and her sisters are basically, oh, it's very incestuous. Please don't think too hard about it. They basically are a bunch of sisters married to a bunch of like brothers and cousins. And so these two Dudley and Gray families are now very much intertwined by marriage. And obviously, Jane's marriage does not end the best, because she and her husband are executed. But Jane's sisters, part of the kind of tension there is, a marriage for royals, in a sense, was not really a marriage until the marriage was consummated. And so Jane is basically allowed to sleep with Guildford because they need a they need a child. But there's some debate over the other sisters' marriages, of basically, do we let them sleep with their partner? Because if they do, then we can't claim that it was never a marriage.

AT: They want an out if things go bad. So they're playing both sides with this teenage girl's life.

JS: Yes, yes, with both of them. And so I believe it's Katherine is married. And then basically when it falls with Jane and they go, "just kidding! They never did the act. They're not married anymore. It's great. It's fine. Everything's fine." And it gets so complicated. Katherine stays relatively quiet during Mary's reign. But then when it comes to Elizabeth's, she's again a threat. She's put in the Tower. She's married again secretly. And Elizabeth is outraged, fair enough, because the next person in line to the throne has married without the monarch's permission, which is treason. And so Elizabeth takes offense at this and goes to the Tower with both of them. And seems like you should end it. They're not allowed to be imprisoned together. They are in separate rooms. They're not supposed to have any contact with each other till somehow Katherine gets pregnant. And then you go, hold on a second. Like who will let this happen? So again, Elizabeth is outraged. It's a whole thing. But basically by the time Elizabeth is at the height of her power, the Grey family has very little, if at all, power in terms of the monarchies.

AT: With Katherine during Mary's reign, did the Dudleys just sort of give up? Like "we saw what happened with Jane, and we don't want to do the same stupid thing again."

JS: The big thing is John Dudley is executed.

AT: That'll do it.

JS: Yeah. Poor buddy.

AT: No, don't feel bad for me. No, he doesn't get sympathy.

JS: It is a lot with anyone that's executed.

AT: But he had it coming.

JS: He did. He did. He did some actions. He should have known the consequences, then the consequences happen. So he gets executed. And that really, obviously, puts a damper on the rest of the family. And for anyone who's thinking kind of, oh, Dudley, why do I know this name? You're probably thinking of Robert Dudley, who is one of Elizabeth's, I must say, best friends. And he obviously survives all of this drama to make it to Elizabeth's reign. And so I think the rest of the Dudley family really takes a step back and goes, "listen, we've already lost a lot. We cannot keep doing this." And so I think it very much becomes a waiting game in a sense, or at least a "just shut up, don't call attention to us, just live your life." And so those, those issues continue to simmer through Mary's reign. But there are some early power moves in those executions that I think really secures Mary's place, especially from the Dudley family who has previously tried to oust her.

AT: I mean, it is a strong way to start your reign is booting an imposter off of the throne and executing them and other co-conspirators. And especially given that, as you said, everyone knows she's in the right. Like there's no, you know, "who's legitimate, who's not" drama. Nobody's really thinking perhaps as hard as they maybe should about the religious implications. It's just, "well, no, it's Mary's turn." And so that that righteousness as well as the strength was, I mean, it's a, it's a bold power move for how to start your reign.

JS: Yes, it's that kind of equivalent. So I'm part-time teacher. And then the rest of my time is research. And one of the things that we jokingly get told as we start is "don't smile until Christmas," is like go in hard so that students know and then you can ease up. And I think that's very much what Mary does, is she goes in, she's like, "listen, I'm the queen, deal with it." And then she can start to develop how she wants to be as a queen. But she comes in with these bold power moves being like, "no, I'm the queen, who is Jane? And I'm the queen. That's just basic fairness, is I'm next. "And then neutralize in, in the best way she can, any threats to the throne, which I think works because by the time we have, I'm gonna skip ahead a bit and then we can come back. When there are, there is a significant uprising in Mary's reign in 1554 led by Thomas Wyatt. And it kind of gains some momentum and then they get to London. And the entire city basically goes, "nobody asked you to do this, Thomas. Nobody wants this." And basically all of his supporters just disappear. And so I think these, these strong moves at the beginning very much set the tone for the reign of Mary as the queen. If you don't like what she does, deal with it. But she is the queen. And this is how it's going to work. And we don't see massive rebellions against her authority. And the one that we do see is basically ended, not because Mary goes out with the military and they have this massive battle, but because support

for that rebellion basically disappears when people go, oh, actually, not sure I support this.

AT: So she come to the throne in 1553, and she was born in 1516. So she's well past 30, like she's into her mid- to late 30s, which to me raises the question of particularly in the context that during Edward's six-year Protestant reign, they wanted to neutralize Mary. They didn't want her to come to power. And frankly, it seems like Edward was kind of sickly for a while. So, you know, the odds of him producing an heir were questionable at best. Why didn't anyone marry her off to like a foreign prince, send her out of the country and get her away? Because you mentioned, you know, it was stupid of Edward to give her that power base by giving her property. But it seems even dumber that they didn't use the political capital. And for that matter, that Henry didn't marry her off, which makes you wonder if Henry was still thinking of her as an heir. But even then, why not marry her to an English aristocrat? So, why wasn't Princess Mary married?

JS: Yes, not for lack of trying. Melita Thomas in her book that King's Pearl talks a lot about these early betrothals for Mary. And basically, a betrothal is kind of a fancy engagement. You're promising that you're going to marry someone. And most of the time for royals, it happens as a political move. It doesn't necessarily mean, "oh, you've been betrothed. So now you're of course going to get married." And so Mary has quite a few betrothals, when she's very little. Then of course, the whole thing with Anne comes into play. And so Mary's not seen as a marriage asset anymore. She's illegitimate. She's not the heir anymore. Why would a prince want to marry her? And then the issue, actually when it comes to Edward's reign is there's a lot of debate. Basically, "she's a powerhouse. We have to in some way stop her." And there is a lot of debate. "Do we marry her? If we marry her, that means she leaves the country. This is great. It's a win win" for Edward, at least. And the issue is that Mary basically puts her foot down and goes, "I will not marry a Protestant because they will not let me practice my my faith. And if I can't practice my faith, I'm not going to marry them." And there again comes this tension of Edward is the king and Mary is a subject, but Edward is also a brother and Mary is his sister. And so there is again this weird tension, I think, of, the best political move is marry her off to a Protestant no one somewhere else. So she's not your problem anymore. But at the same time, Mary puts her foot down and goes, basically, "no, this is not how it's going to happen. I'm not leaving the country." And I think Edward gets caught in that. And there is during Edward's reign, there is a plan that Spain obviously has a vested interest in Mary as Catherine of Aragon's daughter. And they want her to be safe. And there's a plan that happens that basically there will be a Spanish ship that is sent to the English coast. And if Mary happens to get on that ship, and if she happens to be brought to Spain for safety, so be it. And Mary knows the plan, basically is told "this is an option if you would like to take it." And she puts her foot down and says, "if I leave the country, I'm giving up everything that I've worked for. I'm giving up my presence in the country." And she again says, no. As much as I think we would all love to be safe and happy and in a happy court, she knows that she has to stay in England. She can't leave the country because that effectively gives up control. And so there are definitely plans in Edward's reign to try and kind of neutralize this threat. But they never happen. Partly, I think because of Edward and the regime, partly because of Mary. But it does happen that when she becomes queen at 36, 37, she is unmarried. She obviously does not have children. And so that becomes the first or a first massive

discussion that they need to have when she's queen is right. You need an heir. How are we going to do that?

AT: And we'll definitely be getting into that more when we talk about her reign as queen Mary, I in part two. But you do have to wonder how much of Edward not forcing the issue because he could say, "I'm the king, I say so, and you'll do it." But Mary is not only much older, like she's certainly old enough to have been his mother. And there's a good chance she was the only really consistent maternal-type figure in his life because of the ever-changing stepmother situation and even Katherine Parr died young. His own mother died in childbirth. And so you have to think that there is an additional sway that she would have had on him.

JS: Yeah. And I think you hit the nail on the head there, is that Mary is so much older than Edward. And she does take on this kind of parental role that she's less, I mean, obviously she's still a sister, but she's less a sister and more of this mother role to him. And I mean, that's then got to be difficult to make a decision where you go, "this is what's best for me, but this is what will make her happy." And there's got to be a difficulty in making that decision when those two things don't overlap in any way. And I think that again, complicates it. And I mean, welcome to the Tudors, I think. They all struggle with, "this is what is the best move politically. And this is what's going to make the most number of people happy." And those two things rarely overlap.

AT: To be fair, I don't think Henry was overly burdened with an abundance of concern for what other people would be made happy by.

JS: No, I think he's he's the outlier in that one that it is very much. This is what will make Henry happy. And everyone else can just deal with it.

AT: So why didn't her father marry her off? Because she was like 30 by the time he died.

JS: A lot of it with Henry is that he's he's trying to play for the best, the best match and what will get him the most in return. And so there is some marriages set up. And one of the marriages falls through because I think it's the one with Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, who is the father of Mary's eventual husband, who will become Philip II of Spain, that basically Charles needs money. And Mary is at this point quite young. So she won't be married to him immediately. And so the money that she will bring with her in the marriage, Charles won't have access to immediately. And so he basically goes, "that's a slight problem because I kind of need the money more than the person." And so he breaks off their betrothal because he needs the money. And so I think a lot of it is just Henry trying to find that perfect match that will bring him the most. And then the proposed husbands also needed to agree to that when they have their own set of things that they need coming from a marriage.

AT: So it's more like the stars didn't align and things didn't match up perfectly. Okay.

JS: Yeah, yeah. And then obviously she's declared illegitimate. It's a whole thing. And then kind of by the time we get to the end of it, it's Edward's reign.

AT: Because you said she wasn't, when was she made, because she wasn't made legitimate again before Henry died. So was she ever officially re-legitimized?

JS: Her first, I think it's her first act as queen is getting it through Parliament that her parents' marriage was valid and that she's legitimate again. So from the 1520s, early '30s, when she's declared illegitimate, she remains legally illegitimate and her parents marriage isn't valid until she declares it in 1553.

AT: During Edward's reign, part of her refusal to leave and knowing that if she leaves, then she may never get what she was raised for. And we're coming back to the fact, not only that for the first 15 years of her life, that is what she was raised to be. That was what she grew up believing was her destiny and her birthright. But it's also what her mother fought for because if her mom had given up and said, "okay, we were never really married," then she wouldn't have suffered in exile for years. Like she could have been there with Mary and you have to wonder how much of it is knowing that if she gives in, then her mom went through all of that for nothing and like she's failing what her mother wanted for her.

JS: Yeah. And I think I've been watching, finally, *Becoming Elizabeth* for a talk I'm getting ready for. One of the lines there that really struck me was a conversation between Mary and Elizabeth. And Elizabeth basically goes, "why do you keep fighting it? Just like accept it. It is what it is." And Mary goes that basically she's just trying to follow the path that she believes God has in store for her. And I think that that is basically what sums it up is that for Mary, this is not just what she was born into. This is what, being a queen is what God has called her to do. That is her mission in life. And I think that explains so much then of why her early life kind of up to queenship plays out the way that it does, because she sees this as her calling in life. And I think what got me about that scene is Elizabeth then saying basically, well, "if this is what God wanted, wouldn't it have been easier.?" And I think that is basically the entire tension between Mary and her siblings is that she knows she was born to be a queen. She was born to be the heir. And her perspective on what God is calling her to do is very different than the perspective of what God is perhaps calling her siblings to do. And it just embodies this whole tension. And this sense that what Mary sees her life leading towards is very different than what others might see her life leading towards.

AT: Join us for part two to hear about Mary I's reign as queen of England. And remember, well-behaved women rarely make history.