

Synopsis

In the afterlife, the six wives of Henry VIII gather for their monthly reunion, only to be interrupted by Henry himself. As he attempts to defend his reputation, the wives unite to mock, rank, and outwit him. This light-hearted dark comedy turns history into a hilarious tale of friendship and revenge.

Henry VIII: The Reunion

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Characters

- **Henry VIII** – Loud, dramatic, convinced he's the hero.
 - **Catherine of Aragon** – The unofficial leader of the wives.
 - **Anne Boleyn** – Sharp, mischievous, loves stirring trouble.
 - **Jane Seymour** – Sweet but secretly savage.
 - **Anne of Cleves** – The only one who clearly came out ahead.
 - **Catherine Howard** – Energetic, chaotic.
 - **Catherine Parr** – Calm, intelligent, delivers devastating one-liners.
 - **Messenger** – Occasionally appears with bad news for Henry.
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Scene

A comfortable lounge in the afterlife. There is tea, cake, and six armchairs arranged in a circle.

A sign reads:

"The Reunion"

The wives are happily chatting.

Anne of Cleves:

So then I sold one of the extra palaces and bought another palace.

Catherine Howard:

You had extra palaces?

Anne of Cleves:

Of course.

Jane Seymour:

What does one even do with two palaces?

Anne of Cleves:

Look down on people with only one palace.

(The wives laugh.)

(Suddenly, a trumpet sounds.)

All Wives:

Oh no.

(Enter HENRY dramatically.)

Henry:

Ladies!

Anne Boleyn:

Nobody invited him, did they?

Catherine Parr:

I specifically checked.

Henry:

Wonderful to see you all again!

Anne Boleyn:

That makes one of us.

Henry:

I've come because I feel history has been unfair to me.

(The wives stare.)

Henry:

What?

Jane Seymour:

Nothing.

Anne of Cleves:

We're just trying to figure out where to start.

Henry:

I was a great king!

Anne Boleyn:

You were certainly a king.

Henry:

And a loving husband.

(The wives immediately burst out laughing.)

Henry:

Come on now.

Catherine Howard:

Sorry. I wasn't prepared for jokes this early Henry.

You know, we've actually developed a game.

Henry:

A game?

Anne Boleyn:

Yes.

Henry:

Does it involve celebrating my achievements?

Anne Boleyn:

Not remotely.

Henry:

Excellent. Wait, what?

Catherine Parr:

The game is called "Things Henry Ruined."

Henry:

That sounds totally biased.

Anne of Cleves:

Round one.

Catherine Howard:

Marriages.

Jane Seymour:

Diplomacy.

Anne Boleyn:

Patience.

Catherine Parr:

Self-awareness.

Catherine of Aragon:

England.

(Everyone applauds.)

Henry:

This game is very mean.

Anne Boleyn:

Actually, while you're here, we finally settled the rankings.

Henry:

Rankings?

Anne of Cleves:

Of your wives.

Henry:

Wonderful! I assume I choose the winner?

All:

No.

Anne Boleyn:

Number one: Anne of Cleves.

Henry:

What?!

Anne of Cleves:

Thank you.

(Takes a bow.)

Henry:

On what grounds?

Anne of Cleves:

Married you briefly. Got rich. Left.

Catherine Parr:

It's difficult to argue with that strategy.

Henry:

Who's second?

Jane Seymour:

Me.

Henry:

Excellent.

Jane Seymour:

Because I spent the least amount of time listening to you.

Henry:

Oh.

(pause)

Catherine Howard:

Can we tell him?

Anne Boleyn:

Oh please tell him.

Henry:

Tell me what?

Catherine of Aragon:

The afterlife committee made a decision.

Henry:

A decision regarding what?

Catherine Parr:

Your punishment.

Henry:
Punishment?!

Anne Boleyn:
Nothing serious.

Henry:
Oh well that's good.

Anne Boleyn:
You just have to relive every awkward conversation you've ever had.

Henry:
That's not so bad.

Messenger enters.

Messenger:
Including all six wedding proposals.

Henry:
No.

Messenger:
Forever.

Henry:
NO.

Messenger exits.

Anne of Cleves:
Would you like to hear one?

Henry:
Not particularly.

Catherine Howard:
Too late.

(The wives gather around like excited children.)

Anne Boleyn (dramatic impression of Henry):
"My lady, I simply must have a son."

Jane Seymour:
"Have you tried being patient?"

Anne Boleyn:

"Absolutely not."

(The wives laugh.)

Henry:

That is not what happened.

Catherine Parr:

It's surprisingly close.

(The wives titter)

Catherine of Aragon:

Henry, we have a question.

Henry:

What?

Anne Boleyn:

Did you ever think perhaps the problem was you?

(Silence.)

Henry:

No.

All:

Exactly.

Henry:

Very funny. Have you quite finished?

Catherine Parr:

Actually, no.

Henry:

Oh dear.

Anne of Cleves pulls out a giant book.

Henry:

What is that?

Anne of Cleves:

A scrapbook.

Henry:

Of memories?

Anne Boleyn:

Of your embarrassing moments.

Henry:

That's absurd.

Catherine Howard:

It's seven thousand pages long.

Henry:

SEVEN THOUSAND?!

Jane Seymour:

We had a lot of material.

Catherine of Aragon:

Chapter one is called "Decisions That Could Have Been Emails."

Anne Boleyn:

Chapter two is called "Overreactions."

Catherine Parr:

Chapter three is simply titled "Why?"

(Henry slumps into a chair.)

Henry:

This reunion has been extremely hostile.

Anne of Cleves:

And yet very educational.

Henry:

Do any of you have anything nice to say?

(The wives think.)

Jane Seymour:

You were memorable.

Henry:

Thank you.

Anne Boleyn:

Mostly as a warning.

Henry:

There it is.

Catherine Howard:

Honestly, without you we'd never have become friends.

(The wives smile.)

Catherine Parr:

That's true.

Catherine of Aragon:

We make a wonderful group.

Anne of Cleves:

Best thing Henry ever gave us.

Henry:

That feels insulting.

All Wives:

It is.

(The wives raise their teacups.)

Catherine of Aragon:

To surviving Henry.

Anne Boleyn:

In one way or another.

Jane Seymour:

To friendship.

Anne of Cleves:

To palaces.

Catherine Howard:

To revenge.

Catherine Parr:

And to never marrying him again.

All Wives:

Hear, hear!

(They clink cups.)

(Henry sighs.)

Henry:

I suppose this could be worse.

Messenger rushes back in.

Messenger:

Good news! Next week's meeting is "People Henry Annoyed."

Henry:

Oh really? How many are attending?

Messenger:

The whole of England.

Blackout.

END