

Lady Jane Grey

by Simonetta Carr

with Illustrations by Matt Abraxas



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Lady Jane Grey

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CHAPTER ONE
Raised to Be Queen



We don't know the exact date or place of Jane's birth. We know that she was born sometime in 1537 and spent most of her life in a large country home in a forest area called Bradgate Park. Her mother, Frances, was



KEVIN TALBOT

Bradgate Park

the king's niece, and her father, Harry, was a rich nobleman who was interested in the latest studies and discoveries. He liked helping students and preachers, so Jane's house was always full of fascinating people. Harry and Frances were only about twenty years old when Jane was born. Later, they had two more daughters and two sons.



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The ruins of Bradgate House, where Jane used to live.

A few months after Jane's birth, the kingdom celebrated a very exciting event! King Henry and Jane Seymour, who was his wife at that time, had a baby boy, and they named him Edward. It was a time of great joy because the king had long waited for a son to take his place on the throne! Sadly, Jane Seymour died only two weeks after her son was born. In those days, people didn't know as much as we do today about cleanliness and infections, and women often died soon after they had babies.

As Lady Jane Grey grew up, she probably visited the royal palace from time to time, where she met her important cousin. Both children were smart and studied under the best teachers. In fact, Edward's teachers were so good that King Henry didn't seem to mind if they believed and taught the gospel as it was explained by the Reformers.

Lady Jane received a similar education. Since the Greys were closely related to the royal family, her parents taught her to behave like a princess. As most parents at that time, they were strict with her.



Prince Edward and Young Jane

In January 1547, when King Henry died, his son, Edward, became king under the name of Edward VI. He was only nine years old. Before dying, King Henry had appointed a council of sixteen men to help his son rule until he turned eighteen. They, in turn, appointed one of the young king's uncles, Edward Seymour, to act in his place. The most important and influential men on this council agreed with the teachings of the Reformers and thought that it was the right time to introduce them to England.

The excitement spread to other Christians all over Europe. At that time, people had to follow their ruler's religion, so many came to England from other countries to worship according to their faith.



King Edward VI



Thomas Seymour

In the meantime, just one month after King Henry's death, Jane was invited to live at the house of Edward Seymour's brother Thomas. In those days, many noble families sent their children to stay with other noblemen, where they could get an excellent education. Thomas was now married to Katherine Parr, who had been King Henry's last wife.

Katherine and Thomas had fallen in love some years before, but because King Henry asked her to be his wife, and refusing a king would have been very unwise and dangerous, they had not been able to marry. Now they were free to be together again. Their home was always busy. Not counting the visitors, over 150 people usually lived with them.

Jane liked Katherine, who was a very kind woman with a special love for children. Jane and Katherine shared a passion for books, fine clothes and jewels, music, art, and dancing. Most of all, however, they both loved the message of the gospel. In fact, Katherine had written a book in which she explained how long it had taken her to understand that message because she had been trying to merit heaven by doing good things. When people do that, she said, they treat everything Jesus did as unimportant.

Usually, in the mornings and evenings, everyone in the palace—family, visitors, and servants—gathered to read the Bible and pray. Both Katherine and Jane attended faithfully. On the other hand, some said that Thomas often skipped these family devotions. Jane enjoyed life with the Seymours and learned much while she was under their care.



Jane and Katherine shared a passion for books, fine clothes, art, music, and especially for the gospel.

About nine months after Jane moved in with the Seymours, something wonderful happened to Katherine! She had always wanted to have a child and found out that God was going to answer her prayer. A baby girl was born in August 1548, and Katherine named her Mary. It was a happy time for all, but not for long. Sadly, only six days later, Katherine died.

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Katherine's tomb

For many days, Thomas Seymour was heartbroken and couldn't think of anything else, so when Harry Grey asked him to send Jane home, he did. A few days later, however, Thomas changed his mind. He still had great plans for the young girl. In fact, he was hoping to arrange a marriage between her and King Edward.

At first, Jane's parents were not sure that it was a good idea for her to return to Thomas's house. Now that Katherine was dead, the only woman who could take care of her there was Thomas's mother, who was very old. They were also concerned because they felt that Jane needed more discipline than she had been getting with the Seymours. Finally, they agreed to let her go. Jane was happy and wrote a letter to thank Thomas for his offer. She said he had always been to her "a loving and kind father."



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Sudeley Castle,
where Jane lived for some time
with Katherine and Thomas.