

Tudor wedding

London, England 14th November 1501



The fictional character Eva De Puebla, who is from Spain, is an interpreter and lady-in-waiting to the real-life Catherine of Aragon, who is also Spanish. Here Eva describes Catherine's wedding to King Henry VII's 14-year-old son Arthur. Arthur was the older brother of Henry ('Harry'), who later became Henry VIII.

The wedding. And what a day it's been! A whirlwind of colour and pageantry and feasting and wine – heavens, how these English drink! They are said to be the most truculent, law-resistant people in Europe, united among themselves only when fighting a common enemy, but their appetite for revelry is almost frightening. The King had caused the fountains to flow with burgundy wine after the marriage was celebrated, and the crowds were gulping it from their cupped hands, yelling and cheering, surging to and fro, careless of those who had fallen insensible and were being trampled over.

Catherine remained serene throughout it all. She looked lovely – as fresh and young as a girl making her First Communion – in her gown of white satin and with her long hair held by a circlet of gold and pearls. Those of us who had sat for so long stitching pierced seed pearls on to her veil with fine gold thread were rewarded when we saw her standing in that shimmer of delicate brightness. I wish Mama could have seen it – she would have been so proud.

Arthur, too, looked beautiful in his white clothes, and in the cathedral the pair of them stood out like two white swans against the deep, rich scarlet of the draperies and the massed gorgeousness of the courtiers. Margaret was gowned in cloth of gold as befits the future Queen of Scotland, and little Mary wore a dress of crimson velvet. Harry was in a richly embroidered tunic and a fur-trimmed cloak, and when the ceremony ended, it was he who escorted Catherine down the aisle to the waiting people massed outside. His face was proud and unsmiling, and I had the feeling that he was impatient with his youth, cursing it for casting him as the second son and not the elder.

We came in grand procession to Baynard's Castle, and feasted throughout the afternoon and evening. Gold platters gleamed in the light of hundreds of candles, and servants came in with course after course of soups and pies and roast meats (venison, rabbit, goose, swan and suckling pig) and then great cheeses and sweets (jellies and trifles and brandy-soaked cakes) – all served with an abundance of wine.

From *My Tudor Queen – The Diary of Eva De Puebla, London 1501–1513*
Alison Prince

1 Where did the bride come from?

1 mark

2 Give the meaning of the following words:

a) truculent: _____

1 mark

b) serene: _____

1 mark

3 A simile is a way of comparing two things that are not usually seen as similar – and it often uses the word 'like'. What simile in this text describes the wedding couple?

1 mark

4 Why might Harry have wished he were the older brother on the day described here?

1 mark

5 Three different shades of red are mentioned describing different elements of the celebrations, from the wine to the fabrics. Name the three shades.

3 marks

6 From how far through the book do you think this extract is taken? Explain your answer.

1 mark

7 Once Catherine had married Arthur, who was her father-in-law?

1 mark

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