

Catherine of Aragon - fact file:

Born: 16th December 1485

Parents:

Ferdinand and Isabella - the most remarkable royal couple of their time. Both of them were rulers of countries in their own right.

Isabella was queen of Castile, the largest country of all the countries that made up Spain. In some ways she was more important than her husband. She was a very devoted Catholic and spent a lot of time praying to God.

While most women would spend their pregnancy taking things easy, Isabella spent hers fighting battles.

Ferdinand was a quiet clever man who was always thinking of plots to make him more powerful. He was king of Aragon which was a smaller country than Castile, but it had the important trading city of Barcelona.

Brothers and sisters

Catherine was the youngest of five children. She was a bit of a favourite. Ferdinand actually said that he loved her the most, whilst Isabella showed her love for Catherine in other ways, such as holding her up to see a bull fight and allowing everybody to see. This might not seem very special now, but back in Tudor times important people hardly talked to their children, let alone held them.

Education

Isabella was in charge of her children's education, but she left some pretty surprising gaps!

Catherine knew how to dance, but she had no other musical skills. Music was thought to be very important in Tudor times.

When most Tudor women were learning love poems, Catherine was reading stories about King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

Catherine could speak two languages, Spanish, which nobody outside Spain could speak and Latin which was only spoken by Priests, nuns, monks and people involved in politics.

Summary

Catherine was loved by her parents, but she also had an important job to do. Her job was to make powerful men fall in love with her.

Tudor men expected "girly girls" who could play music beautifully, sing like angels and dance like fairies.

Tudor women were expected to know lots of poems about love and be able to remember these and recite them to possible husbands.

Here Catherine had a slight problem. Tudor men wanted their wives to talk about love poetry, not battle stories about King Arthur!

Even if she did know any poems, nobody outside of Spain would be able to understand her anyway!

Catherine could dance, but she couldn't sing or play an instrument. In short, she was about as musical as an Electric drill.