

Audio: Lady Jane Grey

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Lady Jane Grey's Letter to her sister before her martyrdom

Lady Jane Grey (married name Lady Jane Dudley; 1536/1537 – 12 February 1554), also known as The Nine Days' Queen, was an English noblewoman and de facto monarch of England from 10 July until 19 July 1553. She was subsequently executed. The great-granddaughter of Henry VII through his younger daughter Mary, Jane was a first cousin once removed of Edward VI.

In May 1553 Jane was married to Lord Guildford Dudley, a younger son of Edward's chief minister, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland. When the 15-year-old King lay dying in June 1553, he nominated Jane as successor to the Crown in his will, thus subverting the claims of his half-sisters Mary and Elizabeth under the Third Succession Act. During her short reign, Jane resided in the Tower of London. She became a prisoner there when the Privy Council decided to change sides and proclaim Mary as Queen on 19 July 1553. She was convicted of high treason in November 1553, though her life was initially spared. Wyatt's rebellion in January and February 1554 against Queen Mary's plans of a Spanish match led to her execution at the age of 16 or 17, and that of her husband.

Lady Jane Grey had an excellent education and a reputation as one of the most learned young women of her day. A committed Protestant, she was posthumously regarded as not only a political victim but also a martyr.

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