

## The First Wives' Club

Everybody remembers the first wife fumed Cathy, but not for all the right reasons.

She'd given Harry nearly 25 years of her life, her best years, to be swapped for the 'younger model'. When they had first met she had long auburn hair, pale creamy complexion and deep blue eyes, Cathy was a stunner, Spanish by birth but Harry used to call her his English Rose. She looked in the mirror, nearly fifty, the smoothness had now been replaced with crepe skin and age spots. Her eyes were paler and her hair had lost its richness of colour. She'd had a lot of admirers back in the day, but Harry was fun, he'd made her laugh. After their marriage, she'd helped him run the family business, they were a golden couple. Their success was known internationally.

When her husband had to go abroad she held the fort, negotiating many deals. Well respected, intelligent and well-liked by all that met her. Brushing her thinning hair, Cathy wondered if things would have been different if they'd had more children? Sadly the several failed pregnancies had taken the shine from the golden couple. Eventually she carried a baby to full term, Cathy remembered her darling son, a perfect bundle after all the disappointment, ten tiny toes and ten tiny fingers. The unmistakable smell of a new-born baby. Almost twenty years on, she still couldn't say his name out loud; she'd found him dead in his cot at just six weeks old. Both her and Harry were devastated and inconsolable, they threw themselves into their work. Then the miracle happened, five years later, a daughter. But instead of this bringing them closer, Cathy believed it was around that time Harry started seeing someone else. He drank heavily and stopped sharing her bed. Harry took no interest in their daughter. More trips away were announced and Cathy noticed he no longer looked her in the eye when he spoke, it was as if she repulsed him.

"I want a divorce." It was unbelievable how much turmoil those four words could cause. Cathy had known things were bad, but as a Catholic, she believed they would grow old together, he would get bored of the other woman and put Cathy and their daughter first. What about all their work? His decision would have a huge impact and put the family business in jeopardy.

Months of negotiations took place, Cathy could not accept her marriage was ending. Of course it turned out the 'younger model' had worked for them. And now Harry considered he was remarried and, as a final insult a new baby was on the way.

But Catherine wouldn't go quietly, until her dying day she would believe she was still married to Harry, she would always be remembered as the first of the six wives of Henry VIII and maybe had a fortunate escape considering the fate of her successor?

488 words