

= Jane Dudley , Duchess of Northumberland =

Jane Dudley (née Guildford) , Duchess of Northumberland (1508 / 1509 ? 1555) was an English noblewoman , the wife of John Dudley , 1st Duke of Northumberland and mother of Guildford Dudley and Robert Dudley , 1st Earl of Leicester . Having grown up with her future husband , who was her father 's ward , she married at about age 16 . They had 13 children . Jane Dudley served as a lady @-@ in @-@ waiting at the court of Henry VIII and was a close friend of Queen Catherine Parr . Reformed in religious outlook , she was also a supporter of the Protestant martyr Anne Askew .

Under the young King Edward VI John Dudley became one of the most powerful politicians , rising to be Earl of Warwick and later Duke of Northumberland . After the fall of Lord Protector Somerset in 1549 , John Dudley joined forces with his wife to promote his rehabilitation and a reconciliation between their families , which was symbolized by a marriage between their children . In the spring of 1553 Jane Dudley , Duchess of Northumberland became the mother @-@ in @-@ law of Lady Jane Grey , whom the Duke of Northumberland unsuccessfully tried to establish on the English throne after the death of Edward VI . Mary I being victorious , the Duchess sought frantically to save her husband 's life . Notwithstanding his and her son Guildford 's executions , she was successful in achieving the release of the rest of her family by befriending the Spanish noblemen who came to England with Philip of Spain . She died soon afterwards , aged 46 .

= = Family and marriage = =

Jane Guildford was born in Kent in about 1508 / 1509 , the only daughter of Sir Edward Guildford and Eleanor West , daughter of Thomas West , 8th Baron De La Warr . Her schooling occurred at home together with her brother Richard and her future husband , who was her father 's ward from 1512 . In 1525 , at about 16 , she married Sir John Dudley , who was 20 or 21 years old . The match had been arranged by their parents some years before . Jane Dudley gave birth to 13 children , eight boys and five girls . In most cases it is impossible to establish their birthdates exactly . An exception is Robert , the future favourite of Elizabeth I ; he was born in 1532 as the fifth son , and possibly after the eldest daughter Mary , who became the mother of the courtier @-@ poet Philip Sidney . The family life of John and Jane Dudley seems to have been happy and was free from any scandals ; around 1535 a poem praised the " love and devotion " of their marriage .

Sir Edward Guildford died in 1534 before he could draw up his last will . Since his son Richard had predeceased him , Guildford 's nephew , John Guildford , claimed the inheritance . The Dudleys maintained that Guildford 's daughter Jane was the natural heir . They finally won the resulting court case with the assistance of Thomas Cromwell .

= = Court life = =

Jane Dudley served as a lady @-@ in @-@ waiting to Anne Boleyn , and later to Anne of Cleves . She was interested in the Reformed religion and , with her husband , moved in evangelical circles from the mid @-@ 1530s . In 1542 John Dudley was created Viscount Lisle . He was on friendly terms with William Parr , whose sister Catherine became Henry VIII 's last queen in July 1543 . As one of her closest friends , the Viscountess Lisle was among the four ladies leading her to the altar on the marriage day . Jane Dudley belonged also to the courtly sympathizers of Anne Askew , whom she contacted during her imprisonment in 1545 ? 1546 . The forthright Protestant was burnt at the stake as a heretic in July 1546 on the contrivance of the religiously conservative court party around Bishop Stephen Gardiner .

Renaissance humanism and science figured large in the Dudley children 's education . In 1553 Jane Dudley herself commissioned two works from the mathematician and Hermeticist John Dee about heavenly configurations and the tides . Jane Dudley was close to her children ; her eldest son , Henry , had died during the siege of Boulogne in 1544 , aged 19 . A postscript she wrote in 1552 under a letter by her husband to their then eldest son , John Dudley , 2nd Earl of Warwick , reads : " your lovyng mother that wyshe you helthe dayli Jane Northumberland " . She also had health

problems : In 1548 her husband was unwilling to leave her side , because she " had had her fit again more extreme that she had any time yet . "

Under Edward VI John Dudley , Viscount Lisle was raised to the title of Earl of Warwick , while Edward Seymour , Earl of Hereford became Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector . In October 1549 the Protector lost his power in a trial of strength with the Privy Council , from which John Dudley , Earl of Warwick emerged as Lord President of the Council and leader of the government . Somerset , who had been imprisoned in the Tower of London , was soon allowed to rejoin the Council . Before his release , the Duchess of Somerset and the Countess of Warwick had arranged daily banquets in order to reconcile their husbands . A marriage between their respective eldest son and daughter , Anne Seymour and John Dudley , was equally promoted by the two ladies . In June 1550 a grand wedding was staged at the palace of Sheen , attended by the twelve @-@ year @-@ old King Edward . Jane Dudley continued as a great lady at court during the ascendancy of her husband , who became Duke of Northumberland in October 1551 . She was influential with him ; the financier Thomas Gresham and the diplomat Richard Morrison sought her patronage , and she also interceded for Mary Tudor , who had stood godmother to one of her daughters in 1545 .

= = Mother @-@ in @-@ law to a queen = =

King Edward fell ill in early 1553 . He drew up a document , " My Devise for the Succession " , whose final version of June 1553 was to settle the Crown on his Protestant cousin Lady Jane Grey , overturning the claims of his half @-@ sisters Mary and Elizabeth . Jane Grey was the daughter of Frances Grey , Duchess of Suffolk , a niece of Henry VIII by his younger sister Mary . On 25 May 1553 three matrimonial alliances were celebrated at Durham Place , the Dudleys ' London town mansion . Two of their younger children were concerned : Guildford , aged about 17 , married Lady Jane Grey , while Katherine , who was between eight and ten years old , was promised to the Earl of Huntingdon 's heir , Henry Hastings . A few months later these matches came to be seen as proof of a conspiracy by the Duke of Northumberland to bring his family to the throne . At the time the marriages took place , however , their dynastical implications were not considered significant by even the most suspicious of observers , the Imperial ambassador Jehan de Scheyfye . Modern historians have considered them either as part of a plot , or as " routine actions of dynastic politics " , in the words of David Loades . The initiative for the matches had probably come from the Marchioness of Northampton .

After Edward 's death on 6 July 1553 Northumberland undertook the enforcement of the King 's will . Lady Jane Grey accepted the Crown only after remonstrances by her parents and parents @-@ in @-@ law . On 10 July the Duchess of Northumberland accompanied her son and daughter @-@ in @-@ law on their ceremonial entry into the Tower of London , where they were to reside for the rest of the short reign . According to Jane 's own exculpatory letter to Queen Mary a few months later , Guildford now wanted to be made king . The young people agreed on having him declared king by Act of Parliament ; but then Jane changed her mind and declared she would only make him a duke . " I will not be a duke , I will be King " , Guildford replied and went to fetch his mother . Furious , the Duchess took the side of her son , before she told him to leave the Tower and go home . Jane , however , insisted that he remain at court . According to her the Duchess also " induced her son not to sleep with me any more " , and it is clear from her writings that Jane disliked her mother @-@ in @-@ law .

= = Downfall and struggle for her family = =

To claim her right , Mary Tudor began assembling her supporters in East Anglia and demanded to be recognized as queen by the Privy Council in London . When her letter arrived on 10 July 1553 during dinner , the Duchess of Suffolk , Jane 's mother , and the Duchess of Northumberland broke into tears . Mary was gathering strength , and on 14 July the Duke marched to Cambridge with troops to capture her . As it came , he passed a tranquil week until he heard on 20 July that the Council in London had declared for Mary . On the orders of the Privy Council Northumberland

himself now proclaimed Queen Mary at the market @-@ place and awaited his arrest . His wife was still in the Tower , but was soon released . She tried to intercede personally for her imprisoned husband and five sons with Mary , who was staying outside London . However , five miles before reaching the court the Duchess was turned away on the Queen 's orders . She then wrote a letter to her friend Lady Paget , the wife of William , Lord Paget , asking her to plead with the Queen 's ladies for her husband 's life . Her plea , if it went not unheard , was in vain , and the Duke of Northumberland was executed on 22 August 1553 on Tower Hill after having recanted his Protestant faith .

Following Wyatt 's rebellion , Guildford Dudley was beheaded on 12 February 1554 shortly before his wife . Knowing the Queen 's character , in June 1554 Jane Dudley pleaded with the authorities to allow her remaining sons to hear mass . During 1554 the Duchess and her son @-@ in @-@ law Henry Sidney worked hard pleading with the Spanish nobles around England 's new king consort , Philip of Spain . Lord Paget may also have proved helpful , and Henry Sidney even travelled to Spain in their cause . In the autumn of 1554 the Dudley brothers were released from the Tower , though the eldest , John , died immediately afterwards at Sidney 's house Penshurst in Kent . At the same location Philip Sidney was born on 30 November 1554 . His godmother was his grandmother Jane Dudley , while his godfather was Philip of Spain .

Amid the confiscation of the Dudley family 's possessions in July 1553 , Mary had allowed Jane Dudley to retain her wardrobe and plate , carpets , and other household stuffs , as well as the use of the Duke 's house in Chelsea , London . There , she died on either 15 or 22 January 1555 , and was buried on 1 February at Chelsea Old Church . In her will she tried to provide for her sons financially and thanked the Queen , as well as the many Spanish nobles she had lobbied . The Duchess of Alba was to receive her green parrot ; to Don Diego de Acevedo she gave " the new bed of green velvet with all the furniture to it ; beseeching him even as he hath in my lifetime showed himself like a father and a brother to my sons , so shall [I] require him no less to do now their mother is gone " . She also remembered " my lord , my dear husband " , and stipulated : " in no wise let me be opened after I am dead I have not lived to be very bold before women , much more I should be loth to come into the hands of any living man , be he Physician or Surgeon . " She avoided to be specific on religion , but stressed that " who ever doth trust to this transitory world , as I did , may happen to have an overthrow , as I had ; therefore to the worms will I go as I have before written . "

= = Ancestry = =