

# The 13-Day Reign of Tudor Queen Jane

Late June and early July 1553: Edward VI created “Devise for the Succession,” to be implemented by Letters Patent; his Privy Council members signed it.

Day 1  
6 July 1553

- Edward VI died at Greenwich Palace. He had already outlined his plan for the succession and made it clear that, as he believed both of his half-sisters were not eligible because they were illegitimate, the crown should pass to Lady Jane Grey, granddaughter of Mary Tudor.
- Edward’s death was kept secret so John Dudley could take the necessary steps to secure the throne for Jane Grey (Dudley), who was his daughter-in-law.
- According to law and tradition, the heir becomes monarch at the previous monarch’s death: “the king is dead, long live the king” (up to this point, it had been a king).

Day 2  
7 July 1553

- Two of Charles V’s ambassadors informed him they believe Edward is dead. They had already heard rumors that John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, was trying to prevent Mary Tudor from becoming Queen. They also reported that Northumberland had taken control of the Royal Treasury. They were concerned that Northumberland would attempt to capture Mary.
- The ambassadors reported that they had heard Mary was determined to proclaim herself Queen and fight against Northumberland’s efforts. The ambassadors didn’t understand Mary’s actions because Northumberland’s position was so strong.
- The Spanish ambassadors did not think Mary had any chance of becoming Queen.

Day 3  
8 July 1553

- Mary set up her household at Kenninghall, one of her strongholds. She learned about Edward’s death. She had been warned not to go to London, and it was a good decision—at Kenninghall, she was surrounded by supporters. She told them that Edward VI was dead and that by the laws of God and the land, she was their rightful Queen.

<p>Day 4 9 July 1553</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back in London, Jane Grey was taken to Syon House to meet the Duke of Northumberland. Jane's mother was also there. Northumberland and several other senior members of the nobility told Jane that Edward was dead and that she had been named his successor. The news seems to have been a shock. All the nobles knelt and pledged their loyalty to Queen Jane.</li> </ul>
<p>Day 5 10 July 1553</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jane processed in great style to the Tower of London, with her mother carrying her royal robes. That evening, a lengthy document was read in several places in London proclaiming Jane as Queen of England. It had to explain why, as people had expected Mary to become Queen after Edward died. The proclamation explained that as Henry VIII had not been legally married to Katherine of Aragon or Anne Boleyn, their two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, were illegitimate and banned from inheriting lands or titles. That made them ineligible to inherit the throne. Therefore, Jane was the rightful Queen. (The proclamation skipped over the part about bypassing Frances Brandon Grey, Jane's mother, who was technically ahead of her in the line of succession. Frances seems to have been fine with her daughter becoming Queen.)</li> <li>• That same day, Mary had sent a letter to the privy council stating she was Queen according to the laws of the land and specifically the Succession Act of 1554. She demanded the loyalty of the council. Northumberland arrested the messenger who delivered the letter and replied that Mary should be quiet and obedient to their plans.</li> <li>• Mary had other ideas.</li> </ul>
<p>Day 6 11 July 1553</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With her supporters gathering in ever greater numbers, Mary headed to Framlingham Castle, another of her properties, which was larger and more secure. Many people joined her as she traveled. Local leaders, including the Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk, declared publicly their support for Mary as Queen of England.</li> <li>• Jane's supporters began to realize they had underestimated Mary's resolve and her popularity.</li> </ul>
<p>Day 7 12 July 1553</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mary's support reached the ships Norfolk had placed nearby to help Jane maintain control. Five ships were forced into harbor as the crews mutinied. The men put themselves under the command of Henry Jerningham, one of Mary's well-known supporters. As she gained control of the ships and the military, Mary's chance of success was increasing.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jane's supporters realized they would have to arrest Mary if they were going to keep Jane on the throne.</li> </ul>
Day 8 13 July 1553	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Even as Mary's support increased, Jane continued to write to her nobles as "Jane the Quene" and demand their support.</li> <li>The ambassadors of Charles V demanded to meet with Jane's council members. They were not, however, demanding that Mary be recognized as Queen. They still believed Jane would succeed. They did insist that Mary be safe and not imprisoned by Jane. They also officially offered the support of Charles V for Jane's reign.</li> <li>Despite what was happening around England, in London and across Europe, most still believed Jane would remain on the throne.</li> </ul>
Day 9 14 July 1553	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northumberland recognized his son Robert had not been successful capturing Mary, so he instructed Jane to send her father to pursue Mary. Jane refused and instructed Northumberland to go himself. Northumberland was realizing Jane was not going to be the quiet and submissive girl he could control, which was what he had planned. He was concerned that if he left London, Jane's inner circle would not remain committed to Jane and her reign. He called them together and reminded them of their oath to support Jane. Then he left.</li> <li>Jane was preparing to become Queen. She had the royal jewels brought to her, understanding the power of appearance in securing the loyalty of her people. She also started discussing her plans for her coronation. The Dudley family had assumed she would make her husband Guildford King, but Jane refused to do so. She said she would make him a Duke, but that she would rule alone as Queen.</li> <li>The Dudley family and Jane's supporters had underestimated both Jane and Mary.</li> </ul>
Day 10 15 July 1553	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mary continued to gather supporters at Framlingham Castle. Lord Wentworth came with a large army from eastern Suffolk, an area where Mary needed more support. It became clear that Mary's support was becoming more and more widespread across the country and across different levels of society.</li> </ul>
Day 11 16 July 1553	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still working to secure support for Jane, the Bishop of London preached a sermon at St. Paul's Cross that declared Mary and Elizabeth Tudor were "base born" and unworthy of the crown. He emphasized that by law, illegitimate children could not inherit their father's title or property. The people murmured against him. Even in</li> </ul>

	<p>London, the center of Jane's power base, most people outside of the inner circle of government were on Mary's side.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council strengthened the fortifications at the Tower.</li> <li>• Jane issued another royal proclamation emphasizing that she had been named as Edward VI's successor and was therefore rightful Queen. She continued to sign "Jane the Quene" to all her correspondence and proclamations.</li> </ul>
<p>Day 12 17 July 1553</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jane directed that the inner doors be locked, and the keys brought to her, as she realized that some of her council members were worrying about the levels of Mary's support and might try to leave the Tower. Northumberland had been right that without him there, the council members were not proving reliable.</li> <li>• Despite the efforts Jane was taking, the people continued to support Mary. Her council members began sneaking out of the Tower.</li> </ul>
<p>Day 13 18 July 1553</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was the final full day of Jane's reign. She was continuing to send letters asking for support, but her council was gone. Only her family and closest servants remained. She must have sensed how much things were changing despite her efforts to remain in control.</li> <li>• As Nicola Tallis wrote, "The tide was turning, and the council turned with it." Jane was abandoned.</li> <li>• Jane Grey Dudley went to bed the night of 18 July in the royal quarters as Queen of England. By the next night, she would no longer been queen, and she would be wondering what would become of her.</li> </ul>

19 July 1553: Mary Tudor proclaimed Queen of England.

Source: This 14-day period is more fully explored in Chapter 5 of *The Tudors by Numbers* (Carol Ann Lloyd). Other good books include *Crown of Blood* (Nicola Tallis) and *Lady Jane Grey* (Eric Ives).