

CHWNE Module 4 Lesson 5

Catherine De Medici's Daughter

Marguerite of Valois (1553-1615)



Family and Early Years



Marguerite was the daughter of **Henry II** and **Catherine de Medici**.

She was the sister of three Kings of France: **Francis II**, **Charles IX**, and **Henry III**.

Eventually she became the wife of **Henry III of Navarre / Henry IV of France**.



Marguerite of Valois





Her sister, **Elizabeth of Valois**, became the third wife of **Philip II of Spain**.

Her brother **Francis II** was married to **Mary Queen of Scots**.



Marguerite was born in **Chateau St. Germain en Laye**, but grew up in **Chateau d'Amboise**.

She had a classical education and was competent in horsemanship and dance. She also learned French, Greek, Latin, Italian and Spanish.



Between **1564 to 1566**, the four years when the **Peace of Amboise** held, she accompanied **Charles IX** and her mother Catherine de Medici on the ‘**grand tour of France**’, where she became familiar with the political situation and the art of mediation.



This was because of the political climate of the time.

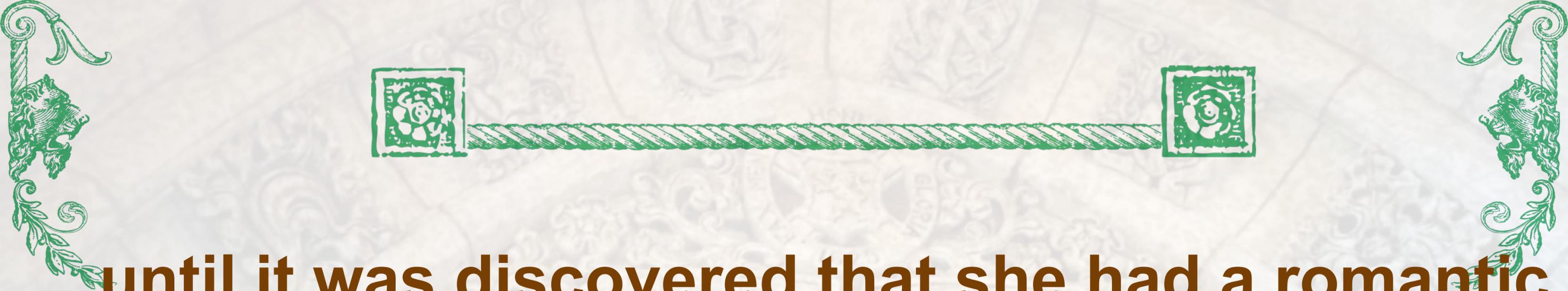
In 1562, the Massacre of Wassy had triggered the first of the French Wars of Religion.

Francis Duke of Guise was killed while taking **Orleans 1563**. The Peace of Amboise ended that first war.



In 1565, Catherine attempted to arrange a marriage of convenience for Marguerite with princes of various realms without success.

It is said that when she was 15 years old, she and her brother, Henry III were very close friends...



... until it was discovered that she had a romantic relationship with Henry of Guise, son of deceased Francis of Guise, whom she was planning to marry.

It is said that she was beaten by her brother, and **Henry of Guise** was sent away from the court.

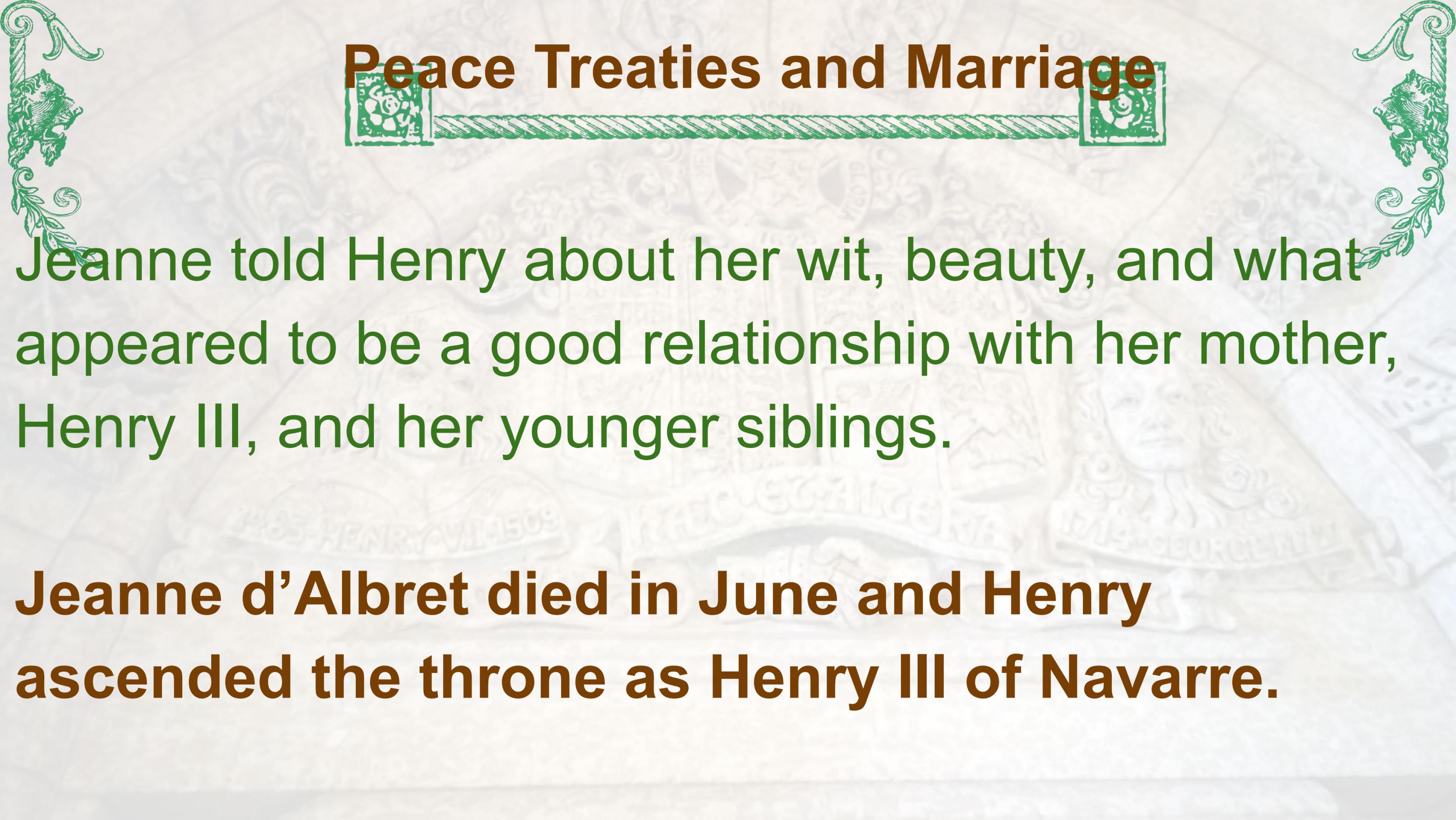
Peace Treaties and Marriage



In **April 1572**, Marguerite was betrothed to **Henry III of Navarre** as part of the conditions for the Peace of St Germain en Laye.

It is said that she had made a good impression on Jeanne d'Albret.

Peace Treaties and Marriage



Jeanne told Henry about her wit, beauty, and what appeared to be a good relationship with her mother, Henry III, and her younger siblings.

Jeanne d'Albret died in June and Henry ascended the throne as Henry III of Navarre.



Marguerite's marriage to Henry III of Navarre was part of the conditions of the peace treaty (**St Germain En Laye**) signed between Catherine de Medici and Jeanne D'Albret.

This peace treaty was signed after the **Second War of Religion** which was fought from 1568 until **France ran out of money in 1570.**



The treaty had restored **freedom of worship for Protestants** and allowed them to hold public office again.

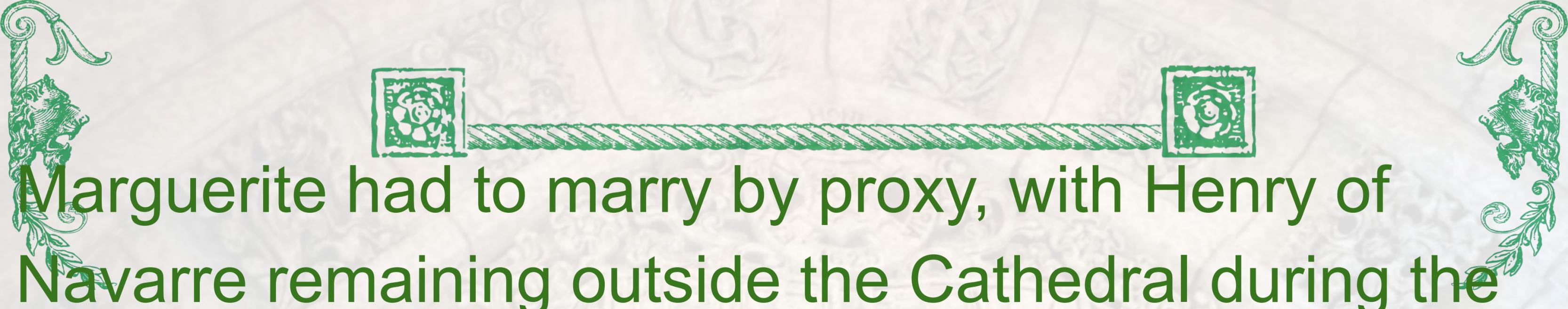
It also allowed them to keep some **fortified cities.**

These freedoms were taken away from them by Henry II.



On August 18th, Henry and Marguerite were married in Paris.

It was a controversial marriage because Henry was a Protestant marrying a Catholic.



Marguerite had to marry by proxy, with Henry of Navarre remaining outside the Cathedral during the mass and her brother, **Francois, Duke of Alencon** standing in for him.

Pope Gregory XIII refused to grant a dispensation that would allow Henry to be married inside the church.



In her memoirs, Marguerite described her appearance as 'set out in a royal manner' with a crown on her head, dress of ermine, and blazing with diamonds.

Her robe was blue with a long train supported by three princesses.



They were married by **Cardinal Charles de Bourbon**, uncle of Henry of Navarre, with a lot of pomp and ceremony.

Six days after the wedding, the St. Bartholomew Day's Massacre took place.

St. Bartholomew Day's Massacre

Many of the most wealthy and influential Protestants were in Paris for the wedding and had stayed to celebrate the Feast of St. Bartholomew.

They were slaughtered by instructions from **Charles IX**, with agreement by **Catherine de Medici** and the **Catholic nobles of Paris**.



Henry pretended to convert to Catholicism so his life was spared.

The fragile peace between the Catholics and Protestants shattered with the massacre of the Protestants who had stayed in Paris for the **Feast of St. Bartholomew** after the wedding.



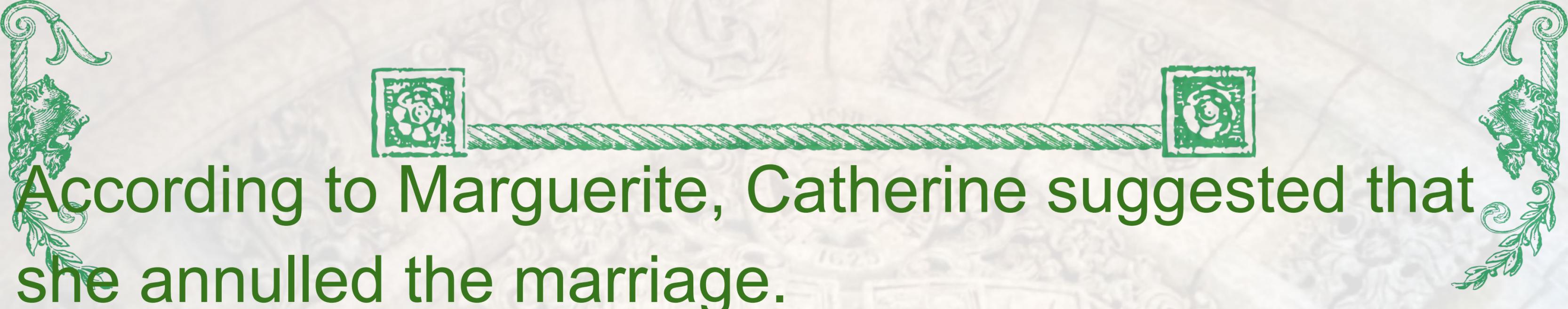
The murder of Protestants in Paris and throughout France continued for months after that.

In her memoirs, Marguerite recounted that she saved the lives of many prominent Protestants by keeping them in her apartment and refusing to admit the assassins.



Her eye-witness account in her book, 'Memoirs' inspired **Alexandre Dumas'** novel of **1845**, called ***La Reine Margot***, and in the **1994** movie that can be found here

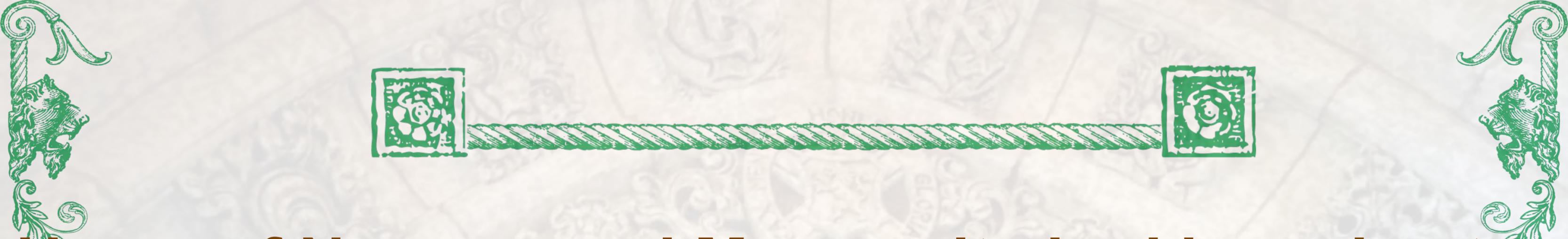
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amA-R6e4_Z



According to Marguerite, Catherine suggested that she annulled the marriage.

She refused, saying that the marriage was already consummated, and she was 'in every sense' Henry's wife.

She suspected that the plan was to separate her from her husband to 'work some mischief on him'.



Henry of Navarre and Marguerite had been kept in the court in Paris after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.

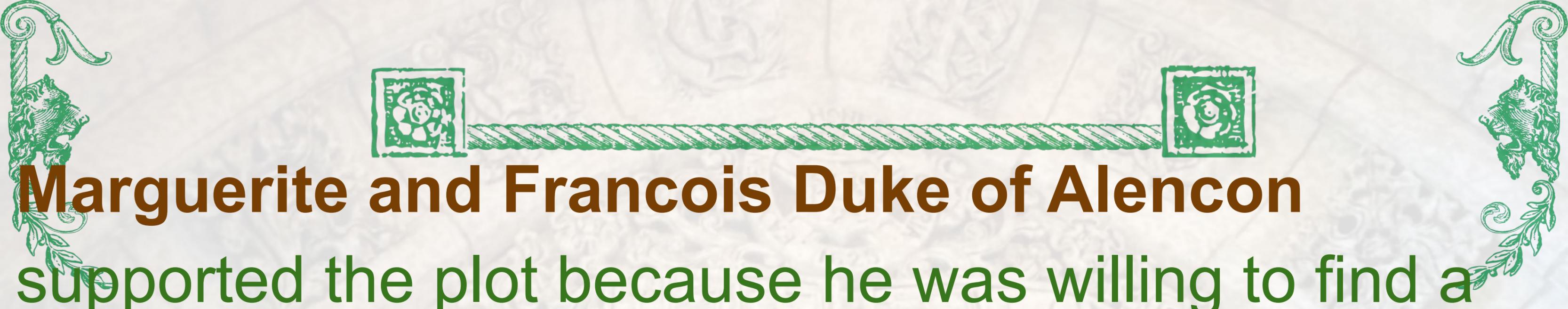
Henry was not allowed to join his fellow Protestants when they flocked to La Rochelle for safety, and another war was raised against them.

Plots and Power

In 1573, Henry III of France was crowned King of Poland. His call to that throne ended the siege of La Rochelle.

Charles IX was in a fragile state of health.

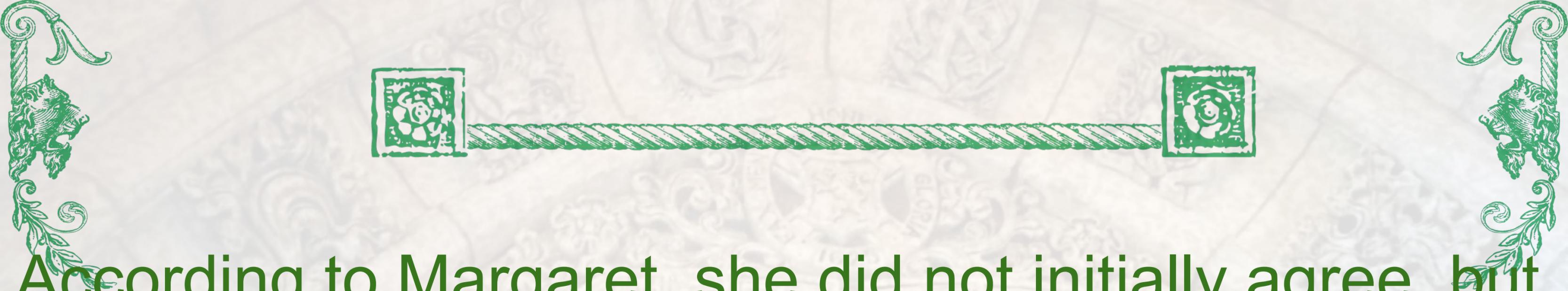
Moderate Catholics (**the Malcontents**) developed a plot to install Marguerite's youngest brother, (**Francois Duke of Alencon**) as King.



Marguerite and Francois Duke of Alencon

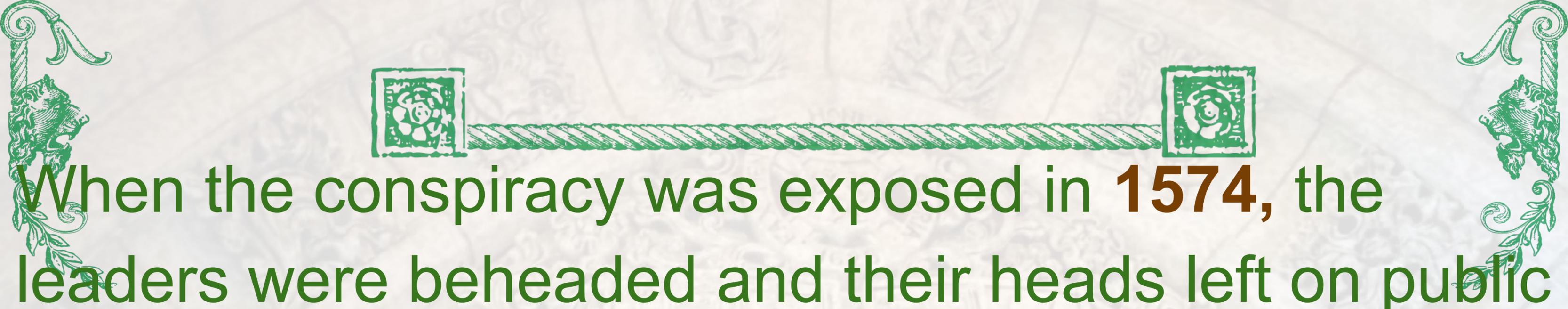
supported the plot because he was willing to find a compromise position between Catholics and Protestants.

This group (**The Malcontents**) was tired of the wars and violence. They created several plots in alliance with the Protestants, in order to seize power.



According to Margaret, she did not initially agree, but changed her mind with the hope of being a liaison between her husband's Protestant supporters and moderate Catholics.

She was an active participant in the coup, together with two of Catherine's ladies-in-waiting.



When the conspiracy was exposed in **1574**, the leaders were beheaded and their heads left on public display. In **1574**, **Charles IX** also died.

Henry III of France had been crowned **king of Poland /Lithuania** in **1573**. He abdicated that **other throne to become France's king**.



Both Francois and Henry of Navarre were held as prisoners in the Chateau Vincennes, as accomplices in the coup.

Marguerite records that she wrote an intercessory letter on her husband's behalf.



That letter helped Henry and Francois to be better prepared to defend themselves, much to the surprise of their accusers.

Henry of Navarre accused **Marguerite** of **betrayal of the plot**, and this caused a rift in their marriage.



After **Charles IX** died, **Henry III** ascended the French throne. **Henry of Navarre** and **Francois** were freed from their prison but kept under surveillance.

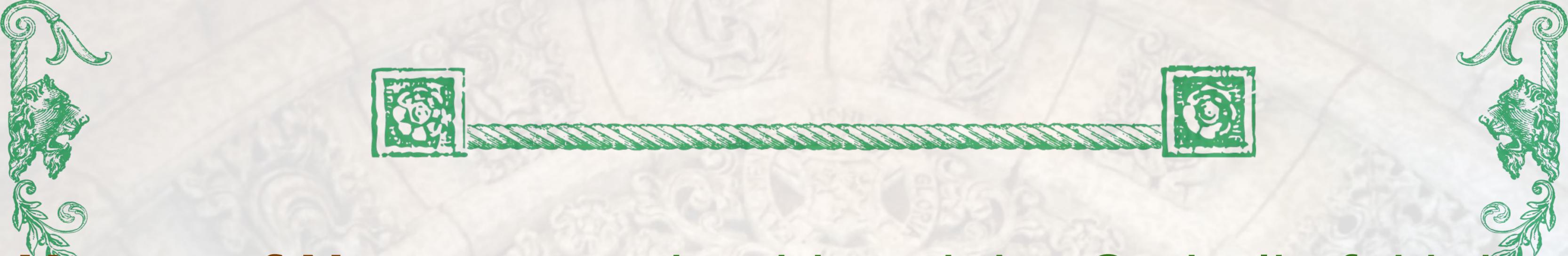


In September of 1575, both Francois and Henry of Navarre escaped, giving no warning to Marguerite.

She was confined to her chambers at the Louvre as a suspected accomplice in their escape.



*She used the time of confinement **to indulge herself** in reading many of the books in the library, which she said, **'incited a passion for study'** like she had **not previously experienced** in her life of frivolity.*



Henry of Navarre again abjured the Catholic faith in **1575**.

He wanted Marguerite to join him in Navarre, but **Catherine and Henry III** would not release her.

They thought that one of two things would happen.



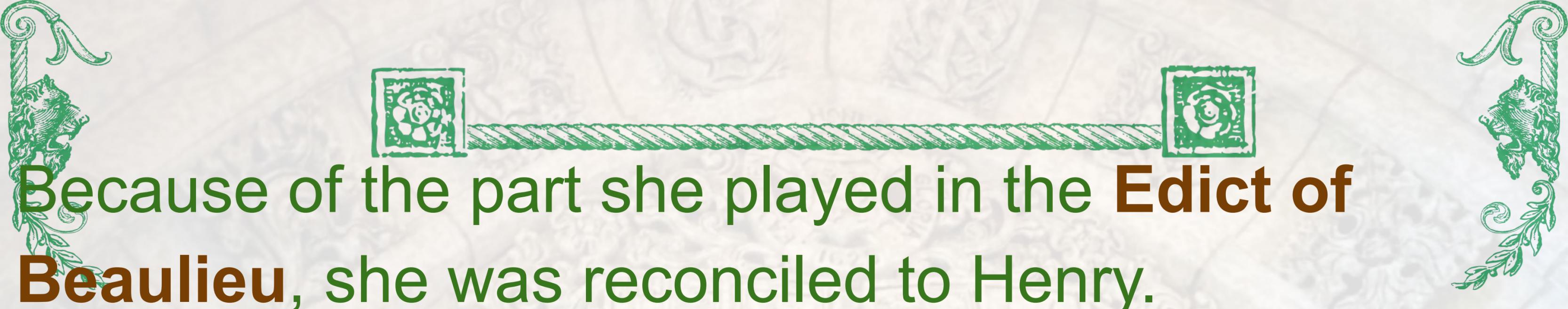
She might either be used as a hostage by the Protestants, or she would strengthen the bond between Francois and her husband.

Catherine was not above using Marguerite as bait to draw Henry of Navarre back to Paris, since she was of the opinion that Henry might be willing to change religion again.



In May of 1576, Francois took up arms with other Protestants and **refused to negotiate unless Marguerite was freed.**

She was useful in the peace talks which resulted in **'The Edict of Beaulieu'**, which gave many concessions to the Protestants and Francois.



Because of the part she played in the **Edict of Beaulieu**, she was reconciled to Henry.

She wrote him letters which gave him updates of the events taking place at the Paris court.

This **Edict of Beaulieu** spawned **The Catholic League**, led by **Henry Duke of Guise**.



Seven days after the edict was proclaimed,
Henry III called a special meeting of the Parlement
(lit de justice) to sign the edict, in support of his
younger brother, Francois.



What Good Is An Edict?



Between **1576** and **1579**, the **Edict of Beaulieu** went through a few changes because of failure to implement the terms.

In **1577** the **Edict of Beaulieu** was modified to eventually become ***The Peace of Bergerac 1579***



In The Edict of Beaulieu

- Protestants had the right to public worship of their religion throughout France except at the court and in Paris.
- The official name of their religion was the religion prétendue réformée ("supposed reformed religion")



- They had the right to build and own churches.
- They had the right to hold consistories and synods.
- They had the right to occupy eight fortified towns.



- They had representations on 8 judicial chambers with 50% split of Protestant/Catholic judges
- The families who suffered loss from the St. Bartholomew Day's Massacre were to be financially compensated, and returned to their positions of prominence.



In The Peace of Bergerac

- *Protestants were not free to worship all over France. Only in suburbs of 1 town in each judicial district.*



- *Only senior noblemen could invite other people to worship in their homes and on their lands, but **only if they were present;***
- *junior noblemen could worship in their homes but **only with their families***



- *They had access to universities and towns again*
- *They had 8 security towns, for a 6-year period.*
- ***Henry of Navarre and 25 nobles had to swear to return those cities after 6 years.***
- *They received seats on only 4 judicial chambers, with a $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ split in representation.*



Because of the failure to implement many of the terms of the Peace of Bergerac, Conde seized La Fere in 1579, which was supposed to be given to him as Governor of Picardy.

This almost triggered another war.



Henry of Navarre sent a complaint letter to Henry III that the terms of peace were being ignored.

Henry of Navarre also had not received the lands due from Marguerite's dowry.



Henry of Navarre seized Cahors, which had been promised to Margaret. It fell after street fighting.

Armies of Henry III took back Fere while Conde was away looking for help from Germany.

The Peace of Bergerac was re-issued to read that:



Protestants could live anywhere in France, worship freely, no compulsion to celebrate Corpus Christi, all noblemen and officials swore to uphold treaty, and they were allowed to hold their security towns for another 4 years.