

Beware, Princess Elizabeth Study Guide

Beware, Princess Elizabeth by Carolyn Meyer

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Plot Summary

Beware, Princess Elizabeth is a novel by historical writer Carolyn Meyer. Princess Elizabeth is the youngest daughter of King Henry VIII. Upon his death, Elizabeth's world begins a roller coaster ride that will end with her ascension to the throne of England. The path begins with romance, treachery, and death, teaching Elizabeth the pitfalls of allowing herself to become too close to anyone, especially men with ambition for power and wealth. In the end, Elizabeth knows she can only rely on herself and it is this belief that will one day make her a long reigning and successful queen. Beware, Princess Elizabeth is a historical novel that gives young audience the perfect insight into what it must have been like to be third in line for the throne of England for young Princess Elizabeth Tudor.

Elizabeth is told of the death of her father, King Henry VIII, three days after his death. Together with her younger brother, Edward, Elizabeth goes to London for her father's funeral and her brother's coronation. Upon arriving, Elizabeth and Edward are greeted by Queen Catherine, Henry's sixth wife, and Thomas Seymour, Edward's uncle on his mother's side. Elizabeth notices a connection between Thomas and Catherine that causes her some concern and her fears are confirmed later when her governess, Kat, tells her that there are rumors of a romantic connection between Catherine and Thomas.

After witnessing her brother's coronation, Elizabeth is asked to live with the dowager queen, Catherine, at her estates in London. Elizabeth is thrilled to live with her stepmother. Elizabeth's delight only increases when she realizes that Thomas Seymour is a regular visitor at Catherine's home. As Elizabeth's adoration for Thomas grows it is fueled by Kat's comments that Thomas might be interested in marrying Elizabeth when she grows closer to an acceptable marrying age. However, Elizabeth soon learns that Thomas and Catherine have married in secret. Despite this, Elizabeth continues her crush on Thomas, but is soon banished from Catherine's life when she is seen kissing Thomas. Soon after, Catherine gives birth to a daughter and dies from a subsequent infection.

Elizabeth learns a short time after Catherine's death that Thomas has been arrested for attempting to kidnap the king. It is thought that Thomas had plans to marry Elizabeth without her brother's permission and that several of Elizabeth's servants were in on the plot. Kat and several others are arrested and Elizabeth is submitted to questioning day and night for several months. Finally Elizabeth is cleared of wrong doing, but Thomas is executed. A short time later, Thomas' brother, Edward, is also arrested for treason and replaced as the lord protector by John Dudley.

Kat is eventually released from the Tower of London and returned to Elizabeth. Elizabeth lives a fairly quiet life for the next few years, attempting to appear as a devoted sister in her brother's court while avoiding his and Lord Dudley's attempts to arrange a marriage for her. Elizabeth's brother then becomes ill and Lord Dudley begins to plot to make his own son king. Lord Dudley has Lady Jane Grey declared King



Edward's successor shortly after her marriage to Lord Dudley's younger son. However, the common people of England will not accept Lady Jane as their queen and join Mary in the fight to regain her throne.

Mary is a tyrannical queen. Due to her fanatical belief in the Catholic Church, attempts to make Catholicism the only religion in England and burn all who will not conform to her wishes. Mary is an older woman, desperate for love, and has two hysterical pregnancies during her reign. Mary is also frightened of being pushed from the throne by Elizabeth or her conspirators, so Mary places Elizabeth in the Tower of London, eventually releasing her but never reinstating her freedom. When Mary dies, she reluctantly makes Elizabeth her successor as their father had originally intended.



Prologue and Chapters 1-3

Prologue and Chapters 1-3 Summary

This novel is a historical novel based on the true story of Elizabeth I, Queen of England from 1558-1603. The novel tells the story of Elizabeth's life from the time of her father's, King Henry VIII, death until the death of her sister, Mary, made her Queen of England.

In the Prologue, upon learning of the death of her sister, Mary, Elizabeth reflects on their difficult relationship and the path her life took from the death of her father to her own ascension to the throne.

In Chapter 1, Elizabeth learns about the death of her father three days after it took place on January 28, 1547. Elizabeth and her household immediately prepare to travel to London to attend her father's funeral. Elizabeth is joined by her brother, Edward, Henry's only son and heir to the throne. When they arrive in London, Elizabeth and Edward are greeted by the queen, Catherine, Henry's sixth wife, and Thomas Seymour, Edward's maternal uncle. Elizabeth immediately notices something odd between Thomas and Catherine, later learning from her governess, Kat, that there has been a rumor of a romance between the two. Mary, Elizabeth's sister, her father's eldest child, arrives a short time later. Elizabeth finds their reunion awkward. Mary has never really liked Elizabeth because of the situation that caused the end of Henry's marriage to Mary's mother and her marriage to Elizabeth's mother. Elizabeth has tried to be close to Mary in the past, but was rebuffed and never really tried again.

In Chapter 2, after the ceremony and actual funeral of King Henry VIII, Edward is crowned. As Elizabeth watches the pomp and circumstance of the ceremony, she imagines what it would be like if she were the one being crowned. After the coronation, there is a celebration. Elizabeth finds herself torn between two men, Thomas Seymour who is older, charming, and seems quite interested in her, and an old friend, Robin Dudley.

Chapter 3. The Lord Admiral. After the coronation, the dowager queen, Catherine, asks Elizabeth to come live with her at Chelsea Palace in London where Catherine can oversee her education. Elizabeth agrees readily and quickly packs up her household for the move. Catherine is quite kind to Elizabeth and provides her with great luxury in her household. Upon her arrival, Elizabeth also discovers that Thomas Seymour is a frequent visitor, something that excites Elizabeth. At thirteen, Elizabeth finds Thomas's unconventional behavior thrilling. When Kat suggests that Thomas might want to marry Elizabeth in a few years, it only adds to Elizabeth's crush on Thomas. A short time later, Elizabeth learns that both Thomas and Edward have received new titles from King Edward. Edward Seymour has also been appointed lord protector, meaning he will rule in Edward's name until Edward is eighteen.



A very short time after Elizabeth's arrival at Chelsea Palace, Catherine tells Elizabeth that she and Thomas have married in secret. Elizabeth is saddened by this news even though she wishes happiness for Catherine. The news is kept quiet for several more months because Catherine is supposed to wait a year after the king's death to remarry. However, when Thomas's frequent visits to Chelsea Palace become gossip, they make the news public. Thomas moves in, bringing with him his ward, Lady Jane Grey. Elizabeth is happy to have a companion even though Lady Jane is several years younger than she.

Prologue and Chapters 1-3 Analysis

The prologue introduces Elizabeth on the day she learns of her sister's death, a death that makes her Queen of England. Elizabeth, feeling nostalgic by the tragedy of her sister's death, begins to look back on the road that has brought her to this place. Elizabeth is the daughter of King Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn. Elizabeth is the second of Henry's children, but the third in the line of secession he left spelled out in his will. When Henry dies, Elizabeth is saddened by the loss of her father, but because they were never close and she has always lived under the pall of her father's decision to fabricate charges against and execute her mother, she is not overly devastated.

In the aftermath of her father's death, Elizabeth's brother, Edward, becomes king even though he is only nine years old. Elizabeth, often distant from events taking place in the court, does not feel a part of her father's life and experiences. However, while living with her stepmother, Catherine, Elizabeth learns of changes in the court and how those changes are impacting the kingdom.

Elizabeth is thirteen years old when her story begins. As a thirteen-year-old girl who has been raised by servants amid rumors of her mother's life and death, Elizabeth does not feel particularly close to any of her siblings or family members and the idea that she will one day become queen is a fantasy that she indulges with a child's imagination but understands she will more than likely never achieve in reality. Instead, Elizabeth becomes enthralled with an older man, making almost a nuisance of herself as she revels in her feelings for him.



Chapters 4-6

Chapters 4-6 Summary

In Chapter 4, during the Christmas after her father's death, Elizabeth goes to court where she is allowed to spend time with both her brother, Edward, and her sister, Mary. Edward has changed, embracing the role of king with a young boy's enthusiasm that puts a damper on Elizabeth's relationship with him. The following winter, Elizabeth's tutor dies and she uses her influence with Thomas to get a new tutor of her own choosing. A short time later, Elizabeth and Thomas share a forbidden kiss and are caught by a pregnant Catherine. Elizabeth is shortly afterward shuttled off to the home of an acquaintance while Catherine and Thomas go to their summer estate to await the birth of their child. Elizabeth is horrified by her own behavior and ashamed of her banishment. The following September, Elizabeth learns of the birth of Catherine's daughter, but soon afterward learns that Catherine has died.

The following January, Elizabeth's governess, Kat, and another servant are arrested. Elizabeth is told that Thomas Seymour was arrested in an attempt to kidnap that king and it was learned that he had planned to marry Elizabeth without the king's permission. Kat and the other servant are thought to have participated in the scheme. Elizabeth spends the next several months being questioned day and night, but eventually her servants are released and life returns to normal for Elizabeth. However, Thomas is beheaded. A short time later, Elizabeth learns that Edward Seymour has been arrested and replaced as lord protector by John Dudley, Robin's father.

In Chapter 5, Elizabeth goes to Edward's court in 1549 for Christmas. Mary does not attend despite an invitation from Edward himself. Elizabeth learns that Mary's reluctance to come to court has to do with her practice of the Catholic faith. During her visit to court, Elizabeth again meets Robin Dudley, only to learn that he is to be married the following summer. Elizabeth tells Robin she never intends to be married. Elizabeth returns to Edward's court for Easter and learns that Mary again has declined an invitation. Edward tells Elizabeth that Mary's insistence on following her Catholic faith is causing a great deal of trouble for him and his Protestant reign. Edward has been advised to have Mary arrested and executed, but he is clearly reluctant to do so. The following summer, Elizabeth attends the wedding of Robin Dudley and his bride, Amy Robsart.

In Chapter 6, Elizabeth learns shortly after her seventeenth birthday that Lord Dudley is negotiating a marriage for Elizabeth with several possible suitors. Elizabeth insists that she never intends to marry, but Lord Dudley ignores her wishes. Several years pass and Elizabeth can see at her visits to the court that Edward is growing frail. When Edward grows ill, Elizabeth tries to visit him but is turned away by Lord Dudley's men. Not long afterward, Elizabeth learns that Lady Jane Grey, who is only fourteen, has been betrothed to Dudley's son, Guildford. Elizabeth is immediately suspicious of this union.



Soon after the wedding, Elizabeth learns that Dudley has announced to the privy council that Edward has created a document, called The Device for the Succession, that strikes Elizabeth and Mary from the succession on the grounds that Mary is an illegitimate child and that it is unfair to allow Elizabeth to succeed if Mary cannot. The document then names Lady Jane Grey as Edward's successor because her mother and then she were next in line after Mary and Elizabeth and her mother has relinquished her claim to the throne. Now Elizabeth realizes that Lord Dudley wants Lady Jane Grey to become queen and appoint his son king.

Chapters 4-6 Analysis

Elizabeth is indicated in treason when Thomas Seymour attempts to kidnap the king and it becomes known that he intended to marry Elizabeth without King Edward's approval. This causes Elizabeth to lose two of her beloved servants for a short time and to undergo constant interrogation by King Edward's men. Elizabeth is traumatized by this event and it leads her to decide she will never trust another man as she trusted Thomas and will never marry. This is cemented when Elizabeth learns that her beloved friend, Robin Dudley, is to be married.

Elizabeth goes back to her quiet life, watching the struggles the throne has for her brother from a distance. Elizabeth also learns about the deep faith Mary has in the Catholic Church and how it is becoming a problem for her in Edward's Protestant country. It is a difficult situation for them all as Mary worries that Edward will have her arrested, as Edward finds himself faced with the possibility of having his beloved sister and surrogate mother arrested, and Elizabeth finds herself stuck in the unenviable position of having to choose sides.

Edward has always been a sickly child and as the stresses of his throne grow, he begins to struggle with his health. At the age of fourteen, Edward becomes very ill and his death seems eminent. Lord Dudley, Edward's new lord protector, takes advantage of Edward's situation and maneuvers to make his son king by marrying him to Lady Jane Grey and making Lady Jane next in the line of succession. This is a risky move for Dudley, his family, and Lady Jane Grey that could end in tragedy should they attempt to make it happen.



Chapters 7-9

Chapters 7-9 Summary

In Chapter 7, while suffering a fever, Elizabeth learns that her brother is near death. Kat, however, refuses to allow Elizabeth to go to her brother, insisting the summons could be a trap. News of Edward's death comes soon afterward. Elizabeth hears later that Mary was almost trapped in London by Dudley, but instead learned of her brother's death and the danger to her before she reached London and was able to get away. Dudley immediately had Lady Jane declared queen, but Lady Jane refused to appoint her husband as king. Dudley sent his son, Robin, in chase after Mary, but the people of England threw their support behind Mary and she was able to raise an army quickly. Lord Dudley himself went after Mary, but was soon forced to give up. Dudley, Lady Jane, and all the conspirators were soon arrested and Mary crowned queen.

In Chapter 8, soon after Mary's coronation, Elizabeth is summoned to her court. Elizabeth is surprised when Mary insists that Elizabeth change her faith to Catholicism and attend church often. Mary wants to make Catholicism the primary religion in England and wants Elizabeth to help set an example. Elizabeth is unhappy with this, but agrees to show her loyalty to the queen. Soon after returning home from court, Elizabeth receives a visit from recently freed political prisoner, Edward Courtenay, and then from her cousin, Catherine Knollys. Catherine tells Elizabeth that she and her husband are leaving the country because they are Protestant and are afraid of Mary's mandate that Catholicism be the only religion in England. Catherine urges Elizabeth to leave England as well, but Elizabeth refuses.

In Chapter 9, Elizabeth learns from Sir William Cecil that Mary intends to marry. A short time later, Elizabeth receives word that Mary intends to marry Prince Philip of Spain. Most Englishmen are unhappy with Mary's decision because they dislike Spaniards. Upon another visit to Queen Mary's court, Elizabeth is grilled on her religious beliefs and is accused of being the daughter of Mark Smeaton rather than King Henry VIII. This frightens Elizabeth, making her afraid that Mary feels threatened by her and might order her execution. Before leaving court, Mary gives Elizabeth several gifts. Then Elizabeth is stopped by two members of the council and warned that she is being watched and should not encourage a rebellion against the queen.

Chapters 7-9 Analysis

Power makes people ruthless. Elizabeth learns this when she hears the story of how Lord Dudley maneuvered to make Lady Jane Grey the next queen when her brother died in order to make his own son king. The plot does not work out for Dudley or his family, but Elizabeth can see what it means to cross the queen. Dudley and his conspirators are put to death brutally and Lady Jane Grey imprisoned.



Elizabeth tries to be a good, loyal subject to her sister. She is the first to declare her loyalty to Mary and she agrees to attend the Catholic Church even though her personal beliefs are those of the Protestant Church. Elizabeth does all she can to make Mary happy, but it is soon clear to her that Mary sees her as a threat because Elizabeth is the last left of the line of succession that King Henry left in his will.

Mary becomes a bloody queen, ordering the deaths of many who refuse to change their religious beliefs to the Catholic Church from the Protestant Church. Elizabeth learns that other Protestants are fleeing the country to avoid persecution at Mary's hands. Elizabeth, however, refuses to leave because she believes she can convince Mary of her loyalty. This foreshadows trouble in Elizabeth's future.



Chapters 10-14

Chapters 10-14 Summary

In Chapter 10, Elizabeth receives a letter from a man named Thomas Wyatt who claims to be leading a rebellion in her name. Elizabeth immediately tells the messenger she will have nothing to do with a rebellion and destroys the letter. However, a short time later Elizabeth learns that Wyatt led a small army against Mary and was captured. Wyatt named Elizabeth in the rebellion. A short time later, Lady Jane Grey is sentenced to death because of her father's role in the rebellion, as are Wyatt and others involved in the attempted rebellion. Elizabeth is called to court, but she does not see the queen but is instead imprisoned in a London estate.

In Chapter 11, Elizabeth is interrogated endlessly and forced to lie about her knowledge of Wyatt's plot to protect herself. In time, a group of guards come to take Elizabeth to the Tower of London. Elizabeth manages to delay her transport to the Tower for several hours by begging the queen for an audience, but her request is denied. Elizabeth is then taken to the Tower by the same gate her mother was taken to the Tower before her execution. Several weeks pass and Elizabeth daily worries for her own life. However, instead of execution, Elizabeth is taken away from the Tower.

In Chapter 12, Elizabeth is taken on a long journey and eventually finds herself at Woodstock Palace, a rundown hunting lodge of the Norse kings. Elizabeth is confined to the gatehouse with her servants and Sir Henry Bedingfield, her keeper. The queen has set a great many rules for Elizabeth that limit her freedoms.

In Chapter 13, eventually Queen Mary sends a member of her own household to Elizabeth to keep her entertained. This woman, Lady Elizabeth Sands, or Lady Bess, turns out to be a kind, entertaining lady who tells Elizabeth wonderful stories of the queen's wedding to King Philip. Elizabeth and Lady Bess become great friends, often lying awake late at night to talk about the future and Elizabeth's hopes of someday becoming queen. However, Queen Mary sends Lady Bess arrive. Shortly afterward, news comes that Queen Mary is pregnant.

In Chapter 14, Elizabeth is ordered to London as Queen Mary's due date nears. It is tradition for the next in line for the throne be present at the birth of the current monarch's child and possible new successor. However, the wait for the birth is long and boring. Elizabeth entertains herself taking long walks in the garden and one day meets with a gentlemen who tells her of the atrocities Mary has committed in her attempts to rid the kingdom of believers of the Protestant faith. Elizabeth is shocked by Mary's actions. A short time later, Elizabeth runs into King Philip while on a walk and asks him to say a kind word to Mary for her. Philip agrees. Sometime later, Elizabeth is summoned to the queen's chambers, but quickly realizes nothing has changed.



Chapters 10-14 Analysis

Elizabeth is caught in a conspiracy to remove Mary from the throne to be replaced with her. Elizabeth had nothing to do with the plot, but she finds herself accused anyway. Elizabeth knows that Mary can have her executed if she believes that Elizabeth was part of such a conspiracy, so she lies to protect what little she did know about the conspiracy from reaching Mary. Mary has Elizabeth imprisoned in the Tower of London, but clearly realizes that having Elizabeth executed without clear evidence of her treachery would only cause her more trouble with her unhappy kingdom. For this reason, Elizabeth is moved to one of the queen's many properties, but she is imprisoned just as much as she had been in the Tower.

It is difficult for Elizabeth because she has no idea what Mary might do about her in the future. When Mary tells everyone she is pregnant, Elizabeth is saddened that this could mean she will never be queen, but happy that this takes some pressure off of her in the eyes of Mary as a threat to the throne. However, it soon becomes questionable whether or not Mary is even pregnant and Elizabeth finds herself still treated as a prisoner and an outsider. It is a difficult situation and Elizabeth continues to struggle with the uncertainty of her situation. It is ironic in a way that Mary is treating Elizabeth so unfairly when Mary herself was in a similar position under her brother, Edward's, reign.



Chapters 15-18

Chapters 15-18 Summary

In Chapter 15, two months after Mary's baby was originally expected, Mary and her doctors acknowledge the fact that Mary was never really pregnant. Mary moves to Oatlands and Elizabeth is ordered to join her. Elizabeth learns that Mary is looking for a husband for her even though Elizabeth continues to insist that she does not wish to be married. The court moves a few weeks later back to London. King Philip comes to see Elizabeth and assures her that her situation will soon improve. King Philip leaves to oversee his new kingdom in Flanders. Elizabeth learns of several plots against her sister and feels bad for her.

In Chapter 16, Elizabeth is given permission to return to her home at Hatfield. Elizabeth is thrilled to return home and even happier to have the return of her loyal companion Kat. Time passes. Elizabeth learns of famine and hardship all throughout England as Mary continues her crusade against Protestants. Then Elizabeth finds many of her servants arrested once more and herself under suspicion as another attempt is made to raise a rebellion against Mary in Elizabeth's name. When no proof can be found, Elizabeth's servants are returned to her once more. Mary calls Elizabeth back to her court a short time later and tells her that a marriage has been arranged for her to Emmanuel Philibert, duke of Savoy. Elizabeth is adamant that she does not wish to be married.

In Chapter 17, Elizabeth goes back to court for Christmas where she spends time with Anne of Cleves, her father's fourth wife. Anne warns Elizabeth that the marriage Mary has informed her of is an arrangement made at the urging of King Philip. Mary would do almost anything for King Philip, but is reluctant to arrange a marriage for Elizabeth because it would force her to publicly admit that Elizabeth is the legitimate child of Henry VIII, not Mark Smeaton. Later, Elizabeth learns the marriage has been arranged, but during her Easter visit to court, she tells King Philip she does not wish to marry the duke. Later, Elizabeth learns that Mary negotiated the marriage, but refuses to force Elizabeth into the union.

In Chapter 18, England goes to war against France at the urging of King Philip. This is devastating for the country when England loses control of Calais, an important strategic and economic stronghold in France. Elizabeth then learns that Mary believes she is pregnant once again. Elizabeth is once again summoned to court, but Mary soon is forced to admit this is also a false alarm. Soon after, Elizabeth celebrates her twenty-fifth birthday. It is clear to Elizabeth and most of the kingdom that Mary is very ill. Elizabeth begins receiving many visitors. This includes Robin Dudley, who pledges his loyalty to her. Soon after, Elizabeth learns that Mary has public chosen Elizabeth as her successor. A short time later, Elisabeth receives word of Mary's death and her own succession to the throne.



Chapters 15-18 Analysis

It is suggested once again that Elizabeth should be married. Each time someone tries to find a husband for Elizabeth, it seems that the person has ulterior motives. This time it seems that King Philip wants Elizabeth married off for his own political reasons. Mary, however, is unwilling to arrange a marriage for Elizabeth because it would require that Elizabeth's right as successor be publicly acknowledged. Mary continues to believe that Elizabeth was fathered by one of her mother's accused lovers. If Mary admits publicly that Elizabeth is Henry VIII's child, then she must also admit that Elizabeth has a right to the throne, something that will not only make Elizabeth Mary's successor, but will give her more authority with those who want to replace Mary on the throne with Elizabeth. In the end, Elizabeth again escapes possible marriage and will never marry, becoming known in history as the Virgin Queen.

Mary becomes convinced that she is pregnant a second time, but this time Mary is clearly quite ill and her death becomes inevitable. In a short time, Mary names Elizabeth her successor and then dies. Elizabeth is the new queen and will reign much longer than either her brother or her sister. Twelve years after her father's death, Elizabeth finds herself the leader of a huge kingdom and finally given the freedom and the respect that her brother and sister never showed her or encouraged others to show her.



Characters

Elizabeth

Elizabeth is the thirteen-year-old daughter of King Henry VIII when the novel begins. Elizabeth learns that her father has passed away. Elizabeth does not know her father very well. Henry was always distant with Elizabeth, sometimes showering her with attention, but usually ignoring her in favor of his other two children, Mary and Edward. Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, was executed by her father when Elizabeth was only three years old. Elizabeth believes her father's distance with her is a result of her resemblance and his memories of Anne Boleyn.

Elizabeth has been named third in succession to the throne by her father shortly before his death. Elizabeth does not expect to ever become queen, especially since her brother, Edward, is quickly crowned after their father's death. However, when Edward dies at the age of fourteen, Elizabeth finds herself next in line to the throne after her sister, Mary. This places Elizabeth in a precarious position as Mary sees her as a threat. Elizabeth is imprisoned by Mary, first in the Tower of London and later in a distant estate belonging to the crown. Elizabeth could become involved in any number of rebellions against her sister, but she refuses and tries to be a loyal servant of her sister's kingdom despite Mary's ruthless ways.

In the end, Elizabeth finds herself named her sister's successor and the next Queen of England. Elizabeth is overwhelmed by this change in her situation, but grateful and convinced that she will be a much better queen than Mary.

Edward

Edward is Elizabeth's brother. Edward is the son of Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour. When Edward becomes king, he is only nine years old. For this reason, Edward's uncle on his mother's side, Edward Seymour, takes advantage of the young man and has himself appointed lord protector, making him the ruler of England until Edward is old enough to rule himself at eighteen. However, Edward soon finds reason to distrust both his uncles and soon replaces Edward Seymour with John Dudley. Edward is a sickly child, however, and at the age of fourteen dies and leaves Dudley to manipulate the throne to place his own child as king.

Mary

Mary is Elizabeth's sister. Mary's mother was Catherine of Aragon, King Henry's first wife. When Henry met Anne Boleyn, he had already been married to Catherine for more than twenty years and had yet to gain a male heir to succeed him to the throne. For this reason, Henry created the Protestant Church so that he might divorce Catherine and



marry Anne Boleyn. Mary was deeply scared by this action on her father's part and would never be close to Elizabeth.

Mary was raised a Catholic by her mother and continues to practice this religion her entire life, even when Edward threatens to arrest her. When Mary becomes queen, she desires to return Catholicism as the primary religion in the country. To do this, Mary begins burning those who refuse to return to the Catholic Church at the stake. Mary is ruthless and kills many people in this way.

Mary faces several challenges to her throne, beginning with an attempt on John Dudley's part to make Lady Jane Grey, his new daughter-in-law, queen in Mary's place. Mary manages to quell most of these attempts, but they leave her paranoid, so she places her own sister, her biggest competition for the throne, in the Tower and later as a prisoner at Woodstock Palace. Mary is an older queen when she is crowned and soon becomes ill. When Mary dies, Elizabeth becomes queen.

Kat

Kat, Catherine Ashley, is Elizabeth's governess when the novel begins. Kat is a kind, gentle woman who has been like a mother to Elizabeth. In fact, Kat knew Anne Boleyn and remembers her well. Kat is the source of most of what Elizabeth knows about her mother. Kat and Elizabeth are quite close, therefore it upsets Elizabeth greatly that each time there is a claim of treason against her for various reasons, Kat is arrested. However, Kat always comes back to Elizabeth.

Dowager Queen, Catherine

The dowager queen, Catherine, is King Henry VIII's sixth wife. Catherine took good care of the king in his final years of life and was at his side at his death. After Henry dies, Catherine takes Elizabeth into her home to watch over her and her education. Catherine and Elizabeth have always been close and this situation is a pleasant one for them both. However, it turns out that Catherine has been in love with Thomas Seymour for many years. After Henry's death, Catherine and Thomas marry in secret even though it has not been a full year since Henry's death. Catherine quickly becomes pregnant. Shortly after the birth of a daughter, Catherine dies.

Dowager Queen, Anne of Cleves

The dowager queen, Anne of Cleves, is Henry VIII fourth wife. Henry agreed to marry Anne based on a portrait, but when he met her he realized the portrait was not accurate. Henry and Anne married anyway, but the marriage was soon dissolved and Anne given a privileged position at court as the king's sister. Anne and Elizabeth have always been close. Anne becomes a confidant to Elizabeth and offers her important information during the reign of Mary.



Thomas Seymour

Thomas Seymour is the brother to Jane Seymour, the mother of Henry VIII's only surviving son. Jane shortly giving birth to Edward, but the fact that she gave Henry the son he so desperately wanted makes Jane and her family very important in Henry's kingdom. Thomas and Edward develop a close relationship. After Henry's death, Edward becomes king and bestows on Thomas several important titles. However, after the death of his wife, Catherine, Thomas makes an attempt to kidnap Edward for unknown reasons and to marry Elizabeth without Edward's permission. This leads to Thomas's arrest and execution.

Edward Seymour

Edward Seymour is Edward's uncle. Edward Seymour becomes the lord protector when Edward becomes king, making him ruler of England in Edward's name until Edward is old enough to rule himself. Edward Seymour becomes embroiled in accusations of treason soon after his brother, Thomas's, arrest and execution. After time, Edward is forced to order the execution of Edward Seymour as well.

John Dudley

John Dudley replaces Edward Seymour as the lord protector. When Edward becomes ill and it is clear the sickly boy will not live much longer, Dudley begins to maneuver to make his own son king. Dudley creates a document that removes Mary and Elizabeth from the line of succession written out in Henry VIII's will and makes Lady Jane Grey the next in line to the throne. Dudley hopes that Lady Jane Grey, who is married to his son, Guildford, will name her husband as king. Lady Jane Grey is shocked by all of this and refuses to name her husband king. However, after nine days, Mary reclaims her throne and John Dudley is eventually executed.

Robin Dudley

Robin Dudley is John Dudley's eldest son. Robin and Elizabeth's were childhood playmates and Elizabeth finds herself attracted to Robin as they grow older. Unfortunately, at the age of sixteen Robin is married to another woman. However, when it is clear that Elizabeth is to be queen upon Mary's death, Robin pledges his loyalty to her.



Objects/Places

Letter to Mary

When Elizabeth learns she is to be transported to the Tower, she writes Mary a letter begging to see her and plead her case. Mary ignores the request.

Prayer Book

Elizabeth has a prayer book that Edward gave her that she likes to wear around her waist. However, Mary tells Elizabeth that she can no longer wear the book because it is a symbol of the Protestant faith.

Gold Ring

Elizabeth is given a gold ring as a symbol of Mary's decision to name her her successor on her death bed.

Kat's Cabinet

Items that suggest a rebellion against Queen Mary are found in a cabinet belonging to Kat, causing her to be arrested and held a second time.

Device for the Succession

Device for the Succession is a document John Dudley claimed King Edward composed on his death bed that strikes Mary and Elizabeth from the line of succession and makes Lady Jane Grey his direct successor.

Latin

Elizabeth speaks to King Philip in Latin because he does not speak English and she does not speak Spanish.

The Tower

The Tower is a fortification in London where the king has traditionally made his residence and where the king and/or queen stay the night before their official coronation. The Tower is also where prisoners are held and executed. Elizabeth is kept at the Tower for a short time when she is accused of being part of a small rebellion



against Mary. The Tower is also where Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, was imprisoned, tried, and executed for treason against the king by infidelity.

Chelsea Palace

Chelsea Palace is a palace in London where Elizabeth lives with the dowager queen, Catherine, for a time after her father's death.

Hatfield

Hatfield is the name of the country estate where Elizabeth makes her home during most of her childhood and early adulthood.

Whitehall Palace

Whitehall Palace is one of the many palaces owned by the crown of England and this is where both Edward and Mary make their homes while on the throne of England.

Calais

Calais is a city in France that the English have held for more than two hundred years when Mary allows England to go to war against France for her husband and it is captured by the French. This causes a huge economic hardship for the English as it was an important defensive location as well as a highly lucrative trade local.



Themes

Family Discord

The children of Henry VIII all have different mothers and have experienced their father's multiple marriages from a different point of view. Mary is the eldest daughter of Henry VIII, in her late teens when Henry decides he no longer wants to be married to his first wife. Henry maneuvers in odd ways to rid himself of his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, going from an attempt to claim their marriage illegal because she was first married to his brother, to later creating the Church of England to enable him to procure a divorce. These actions had a profound impact on Mary. Therefore, Henry's subsequent marriage to Elizabeth's mother, Anne of Boleyn, remains a sore subject for Mary, making it difficult for her to accept Elizabeth as her sister.

Elizabeth has grown up with stories of her mother and of the false accusations her father made against Anne in order to allow him to have her executed. Elizabeth is a little bitter against her father for his actions against her mother, but she also has a difficult relationship with him because of his habit of often ignoring her. When Henry dies, Elizabeth is saddened, but it does not impact her life the way it might have had Henry been a more devoted father.

Edward is Henry's youngest son. Edward's mother was Jane Seymour, a quiet, unassuming woman who died shortly after Edward's birth. Hence, Jane is remembered with a great deal of affection in Henry's court. Henry also has desperately wanted a son and this desire motivated him to divorce his first wife and marry repeatedly. Therefore Edward is coddled by everyone, including his father, stepmothers, and sisters. However, when Edward becomes king, his behavior toward his family members change as his role as king requires and this places a strain on these relationships.

When Mary becomes queen, she must fight to gain her throne and to keep it. Hence, Mary finds herself distrustful of everyone around her, especially Elizabeth who is her strongest rival for the throne. Mary has Elizabeth arrested early in her reign and keeps Elizabeth restrained during much of her reign. However, in the end Mary decides to uphold her father's wishes and name Elizabeth as her successor.

Power Struggles

Power is a strong motivator. In this novel, the reader learns that many people desire to become king or queen of England. Hence, many characters in this novel use the rightful heirs to the throne as pawns in a game of power.

Edward Seymour uses his position as Edward's uncle on his mother's side to maneuver himself into the position of lord protector. In this role, Edward Seymour becomes ruler of England until Edward is old enough to rule himself. This sets up a power struggle between Edward Seymour and his brother, Thomas. Thomas is eventually arrested for



attempting to kidnap King Edward and for scheming to marry Elizabeth without permission of the crown. Edward Seymour is also arrested soon after his brother's execution for treason.

Edward Seymour is replaced as lord protector by John Dudley. John Dudley has several children and he decides to marry his youngest son to Lady Jane Grey, who is a cousin of King Edward's and fourth in the line of succession. After the wedding, Dudley shows the privy council a document that he claims King Edward composed that strikes Mary and Elizabeth from the line of succession. Lady Jane's mother gives up her claim to the throne, leaving Lady Jane next in the line of succession. Upon Edward's death, Dudley declares Lady Jane the rightful queen. However, Mary quickly raises an army and with popular support, takes her throne back.

As Mary reigns as queen, many rebellions begin to form against her in an attempt to remove her from the throne and replace her with Elizabeth. For this reason, Elizabeth is placed under arrest and watched carefully throughout her sister's reign. However, most of these rebellions fail and Mary eventually dies of natural causes, making Elizabeth the rightful queen.

Love and Betrayal

As a thirteen-year-old girl, Elizabeth is open to the possibility of true love and marriage. Elizabeth falls in love with Thomas Seymour, the good-looking uncle of her brother, Edward. Thomas encourages this crush and even is rumored to be thinking of a marriage to Elizabeth. Elizabeth makes a fool of herself mooning over Thomas until one day she steals a kiss and is discovered by Thomas's wife, Catherine. Soon afterward, a shamed and exiled Elizabeth learns of the death of Catherine and is deeply affected by it. Not long after that, Thomas is arrested and Elizabeth learns that he had wanted to marry her only so that he could have the power that comes with her role as second in line to the crown.

As Elizabeth grows older, many marriages are suggested and attempted to be arranged for her. However, Elizabeth quickly discovers that many of her possible suitors are more interested in her position in the kingdom and her money than they are in her. This turns Elizabeth off of romance. Then, when Elizabeth learns that her beloved childhood friend, the only other man she has ever been interested in, is to be married, Elizabeth decides that she will never marry. Elizabeth is disillusioned about love and romance and multiple betrayals by those who are supposed to love her leave her determined to become what history will later call her, the Virgin Queen.

Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the first-person point of view. The novel is written as though Elizabeth herself is telling the story as she looks back on her life on the day she learns that she will be queen. Elizabeth tells her story beginning with the death of her father, King Henry VIII, and ends with the death of her sister, Queen Mary.

The point of view of the novel offers an intimate look into the mind of one of the most famous women in history. The novel takes place from the time Elizabeth is thirteen until she is twenty-five. Over these years, Elizabeth finds herself treated like a second class citizen, the forgotten sibling in a family of three children, the one that no one truly believes will ever be queen. Elizabeth shares with the reader her thoughts and feelings about her father, her siblings, and even the men she thought she might love. It is a point of view that allows the reader a great deal more insight into such a historical figure than a non-fiction book might ever provide.

Setting

The novel is set in England in the mid-1500s. The novel begins with the death of King Henry VIII in 1547 and progresses through the reign of his children, both Edward and Mary, until Mary's death in 1559. The setting moves from Elizabeth's home in Hatfield to London and back and forth many times as Elizabeth suffers under her brother's indifference and her sister's oppression.

The setting of the novel is important on several levels. First, the setting is appropriate to the historical significance of the story. The novel is fictional, but it tells a story about real people who really existed in the history of England and made a significant impact on the country as a whole. Second, the setting is appropriate because it allows the reader to go back in time and see how it must truly have been for Elizabeth during these scary, parentless days. For these reasons, the setting works well with the overall plot of the novel.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple English. The novel is written for a young audience, therefore much of the language in the novel is simplistic and easy for its audience to follow. However, the novel is a historical novel, therefore there are quite a few words in the novel that readers might not be familiar with, such as words that describe types of clothing worn by Elizabeth and her servants as well words that describe some of the food and drink Elizabeth would have eaten or drunk.



The language of the novel is appropriate to its intended audience because it remains fairly simple and does not include a great deal of foreign phrases that are not easily explained in the text. The language is also authentic to the time period in which the novel is set and the characters that populate the plot as the author uses many words that are particular to this time period without making the language too formal or too overwhelming for young readers. Hence, the language of the novel is ideal for the plot and intended audience.

Structure

The novel is divided into eighteen chapters and a prologue. The novel is structured in such way to make it seem that Elizabeth is looking back on her recent history and telling the reader how she came to become queen on the day of her sister's death. The story is told in the first person point of view and is told in a linear fashion even though the author often makes comments that reminds the reader that these events are in the past and Elizabeth is looking back on them.

The novel contains several plots and subplots. The main plot of the novel deals with Elizabeth's role as daughter of Henry VIII and her position in the line of succession. The main plot also includes stories of how Elizabeth came to view marriage as unpleasant, difficult, and not ideal for her. A subplot follows Elizabeth's search for love and how it failed. Another subplot follows Mary's attempts to keep Elizabeth from treason even though Elizabeth did not intend to commit treason against her own sister. Each plot comes to a satisfying conclusion at the end of the novel.



Quotes

"There was a time, long ago, that I loved my sister" (Prologue, p. 7).

"I was thirteen, poised on the brink of womanhood, but at that moment I felt like a child myself" (Chapter 1, p. 9).

"London was noisy and dirty, unlike my quiet country home at Hatfield, where the only noise came from flocks of sheep in the nearby fields. But London was also exciting" (Chapter 3, p. 22).

"In January of 1548 London suffered another outbreak of the plague, which carried off my tutor, William Grindal" (Chapter 4, p. 32).

"Another year passed, during which Dudley succeeded in permanently removing his chief rival, Edward Seymour, by ordering his execution" (Chapter 6, p. 49).

"Poor Jane! She was a brilliant scholar, but she as completely innocent in the ways of the world" (Chapter 7, p. 56).

"The choice of a husband for the queen, then, was of the greatest importance, not merely for her own happiness but for the good of the country" (Chapter 9, p. 70).

"The Tower! My blood ran cold at the thought of it" (Chapter 11, p. 86).

"Now, instead of relishing the crowds that would turn out to cheer me, I feared that they'd give the queen the excuse she needed to send me to the Tower and then to the block" (Chapter 14, p. 103).

"It was at that moment that the fragile flicker of hope I had been nurturing for months now burst into flame: I will triumph, and I will rule" (Chapter 16, p. 117).

"I smiled; if anyone would recognize the difficulties of marriage to an impossible husband, it was my father's fourth wife" (Chapter 17, p. 124).

"Today I am Elizabeth, queen of England" (Chapter 18, p. 137).



Topics for Discussion

Who is Elizabeth? Why is she important to the throne of England? Why does Elizabeth feel that she has always been treated as a second class citizen? Why is Elizabeth treated so distainly by many of the noblemen of her time? Who is Elizabeth's father? Who was her mother? Why was Elizabeth's mother executed? How does Elizabeth feel about this execution?

Who is Thomas Seymour? What role does he play in Elizabeth's life? Why does Thomas marry Catherine? Was he in love with her? Was Catherine in love with him? Does Thomas have feelings for Elizabeth? What kind of feelings? Why does Thomas attempt to kidnap the king? Why is Thomas accused of trying to marry Elizabeth? What benefit might there have been for Thomas had he married Elizabeth? What happens to Thomas?

Who is Robin Dudley? Why is he important to Elizabeth? Why does he tell Elizabeth that he is to be married? How does Elizabeth feel about this? Why does Elizabeth announce that she will never be married? What is Robin's role in the attempt by his father to make Lady Jane Grey queen? Why does Robin pledge his loyalty to Elizabeth shortly before she is made queen? What does Robin want from Elizabeth? How does this compare with what the other men in her life have wanted from Elizabeth?

Who is Anne of Cleves? Why is Elizabeth close to her? What role does Anne play in Elizabeth's life? What does Anne tell Elizabeth is Mary's motivation for avoiding a marriage arrangement for Elizabeth? Why does Anne suggest Mary is feeling pushed into making a marriage arrangement for Elizabeth? How does Anne's death impact Mary?

Who is King Edward? What kind of king is he? How does Elizabeth feel about Edward? Why does Edward suggest he might one day have to have Mary arrested and executed? What does Elizabeth advise him about this situation? How is Edward being used in his role as king? How does Edward die? What happens immediately after his death to help determine the next in line for the throne?

What is Catholicism? What is the Protestant Church? Why does Mary want to rid England of all Protestants? What is behind this action on her part? How does Elizabeth feel about Mary's actions in this regard? What religion does Elizabeth practice? What religion did Elizabeth's father practice? Why does Mary hold different religious beliefs than her siblings? How did the many marriages of her father impact Mary and her eventual reign as queen?

Where is the Tower? Why does Elizabeth go there? Why does she avoid looking at certain portions of the Tower grounds? How does Elizabeth feel about what happened to Lady Jane Grey? How many people were executed in the name of Queen Mary?



Why were they executed? Why was Elizabeth afraid she might one day be executed as well? Why was she not executed?