

Elizabeth I Study Guide

Elizabeth I by Anne Somerset

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Plot Summary

Elizabeth I by Anne Somerset is the interesting story of the life of Elizabeth I and her nearly forty-five year rule. Elizabeth made her way in a man's world. She selected her advisers wisely and ruled without a husband. Even though she relied heavily on her advisers, she made her own decisions. She led her nation through wars and various financial difficulties and survived numerous assassination plots. She died of old age at the age of seventy, naming James of Scotland as her successor.

Elizabeth's mother was Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII. Henry had his marriage to Catherine of Aragon dissolved. He had a daughter, Mary Tudor, with Catherine. Both wives were executed. Henry then married Jane Seymour who produced a son, Edward. Both daughters were declared illegitimate but their legitimacy was restored by Act of Parliament in 1543.

Elizabeth is thirteen years of age when her father dies and her brother, Edward, becomes king. He embraces Protestantism in his teens and dies in 1553. Mary Tudor becomes Queen. Mary remains suspicious of Elizabeth for the rest of her life. Mary's marriage to Philip of Spain results in the reinstatement of Catholicism to England and years of persecution for the people due to the Inquisition. When Mary dies in 1558, Elizabeth becomes the Queen of England at the age of twenty-five.

Elizabeth is not married and for the first twenty to twenty five years of her reign, she is under intense pressure to take a husband. It was felt that a woman was not strong enough to rule alone and that a husband would be someone she could lean on and share the decision making with. However, this is not what Elizabeth wanted. She had watched her sister ordered around and dominated by her husband, despite being Queen. Elizabeth considered a great many suitors but rejected them all. She would not produce a male heir.

Elizabeth had adopted Protestantism when her brother did and had no desire to return to Catholicism. Religious reform was at the top of her agenda but she wanted to ensure that her subjects would not be prosecuted for their religious beliefs, and she was successful in this. The result of her views and concern were reforms that resulted in the Anglican Church. This set England against many other countries in the Holy Roman Empire as Elizabeth helped the Protestants in other countries. England was in conflict with Spain and had numerous wars during the reign of Elizabeth.

Somerset examines the different aspects of Elizabeth's personality, religious beliefs, sexuality, and her handling of various domestic and foreign conflicts in this thorough, yet lengthy book. The book will appeal to anyone who has an interest in this era.



Chapter 1, pgs. 1-19

Chapter 1, pgs. 1-19 Summary and Analysis

Henry VII is trying to have his marriage to Catherine of Aragon dissolved but Pope Clement VII refuses, following the wishes of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, the nephew of Catherine. In January 1533, Henry marries Anne Boleyn, the woman he loves. Parliament passes the Act of Restraint of Appeals which prohibits appeals to Rome for divorces. Chapuys, a representative from Rome, comes to discuss the issue with Henry. The King has a daughter, Mary, by Catherine, but wants a male heir. Anne is pregnant at the time of their secret marriage.

A few days later, Thomas Cranma, Archbishop of Canterbury, declares the marriage to Catherine invalid. Anne is crowned on June 1. In September, Anne gives birth to a daughter. The baby is named Elizabeth and she is sent to Hatfield to live. Anne has two more pregnancies but miscarries. Since she couldn't produce a male heir, the king has Anne tried for adultery and beheaded. Four years before this, he had had the marriage annulled, leaving the legitimacy of Elizabeth in question.

Henry VIII has a son, Edward in October 1537, by Jane Seymour, one of Anne's ladies in waiting. Elizabeth is four years old at the time. She is well educated but not with the intent of ruling a kingdom. She does not learn about ruling until she is Queen.

Henry has several other wives but his three children are raised away from the court. In 1546, Mary and Elizabeth are brought to live at the Court. Both of the daughters have been reinstated in succession by Act of Parliament in June 1543. Henry is leaving for a campaign and defines the rights of succession in his will.

Henry VIII dies on January 28, 1547 when Elizabeth is thirteen years of age. Her brother is now King Edward VI.



Chapter 2, pgs. 30-29

Chapter 2, pgs. 30-29 Summary and Analysis

During Edward's minority, the Privy Council was supposed to rule but Edward, Earl of Hertford has himself appointed Lord Protector and Governor. Her younger brother is named Baron Seymour of Sudeley. Seymour marries the Queen Dowager in 1547. Elizabethan first lives with them until she is sent to live in Cheshut.

Elizabeth involves herself in her studies with Roger Ascham. In 1548, Katherine Parr dies after giving birth to a daughter. Elizabeth's governess, Kat Ashley, promotes a match between Elizabeth and Seymour. Seymour makes his London home available to Elizabeth should she come to London.

The Lord Protector learns of Seymour's marriage plans and has the Council investigate. Parry and Kat are sentenced to the Tower. Elizabeth defends Kat during the weeks of questioning. An investigation instigated by the king resulted in Seymour being beheaded. Elizabeth manages to have Parry and Kat released and returned to her employ. She begins to handle her own financial affairs.

John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, ousts the Lord Protector. At this time, the king, in his teens, embraces the Protestant religion. Edward contracts tuberculosis in 1553 and devises a line of succession that excludes both Mary and Elizabeth. Mary is alerted to the change and the plans to arrest her and leaves for Norfolk. The Council declares for Mary and she is proclaimed Queen of England on July 19.



Chapter 3, pgs. 40-72

Chapter 3, pgs. 40-72 Summary and Analysis

On July 31, Elizabeth rides out of London to meet her sister Mary for the ride into the city. Even though Mary warmly greets Elizabeth, she still resents her because of the way Henry VIII treated her mother. Her adviser, Simon Renard, warns her about Elizabeth being a danger. Religion is a major problem for Mary and Elizabeth. Elizabeth has adopted Protestantism while Mary remains a Catholic. Elizabeth ostentatiously adopts the Catholic religion to appease her sister.

When Parliament meets, it revokes the divorce of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon which casts suspicions on the legitimacy of Elizabeth and her right to ascend to the throne. Her October 29 decision to marry Philip of Spain is not well received by her subjects who want her to marry someone from within the kingdom.

Mary remains suspicious of Elizabeth and eventually Elizabeth moves to the country. Edward Courtenay who wants to marry Mary plots against her marriage to Philip. They want to lead a rebellion, depose Mary and put Elizabeth on the throne. Courtenay would then marry Elizabeth. The planned rebellion is moved from March 1554 to January when the government begins to investigate the plot. The rebellion is quelled.

A sick Elizabeth is summoned to London but sends word that she is too ill to travel. Despite her protests, she is brought to London. She is suspected of being a part of the plot, accused of treason and confined to the Tower. Since there is no evidence against Elizabeth, she is moved to Woodstock, in Oxfordshire, where she lives under house arrest. She remains popular with the people.

Mary marries Philip of Spain on July 26, 1554. The Papal Legate absolves England of its repudiation of Rome. The Inquisition begins and many people are burned at the stake, earning Mary the nickname Bloody Mary.

Mary becomes pregnant and Philip decides to bring Elizabeth to the Court. If neither Mary nor the child survives, Philip would need Elizabeth's protection. Mary, as it turns out months later, is not pregnant. Philip leaves for a trip abroad and Mary allows Elizabeth and her household to return to Hatfield.

In December 1555, there is another plot to replace Mary with Elizabeth. Several members of Elizabeth's household are arrested.

Philip tries to arrange a marriage between Elizabeth and a member of his family. If Elizabeth is declared illegitimate and Mary dies without an heir, Mary, Queen of Scots would ascend to the throne and this is something that Spain does not want. Elizabeth refuses the offer anticipating her ascension to the throne, begins to consolidate her power. The Privy Council pressures Mary to name Elizabeth as her successor. Mary dies on November 17, 1558.



Chapter 4, pgs. 73-117

Chapter 4, pgs. 73-117 Summary and Analysis

Elizabeth is proclaimed Queen on November 17, 1558. She is twenty-five years of age. There were questions about her abilities after the reign of her sister. Even though Elizabeth had lived in the country she kept herself informed and this helped in her transition to the throne.

Elizabeth appoints Sir William Cecil as her Principal Secretary of State. This makes him her chief adviser.

When Elizabeth arrives in London, she first stayed at the residence of Lord North, and then stayed at the Tower. After a week, she moves to Somerset House and then to the Palace of Westminster. The staff from her own household is given official positions. She has to select the men for the Privy Council. In addition to advising the Queen, they implemented policy and perform many administrative duties that reach to all parts of the kingdom. Elizabeth retains only ten of the men who had served under Mary. She relies heavily on the Privy Council during all the years of her reign. While relying on them, she also retains her independence in policy making.

The formal coronation is held on January 15, 1559 at Westminster Abbey. A great banquet follows the ceremony.

After the coronation, Elizabeth focuses on religion. England cannot formally repudiate the Roman Church without the possibility of a Holy Roman War. She differed with the Roman Church on only a few points but these are crucial points. Parliament considered numerous bills. Elizabeth wants to ensure that Protestants could not be persecuted. The result is the creation of a Church with broad appeal. Many of the bishops refuse to take an oath to the new Church and are imprisoned for three years. She selects Matthew Parker as Archbishop of Canterbury. He has served as chaplain to her mother. For the Church's hierarchy of bishops, she has to accept exiles. Most of the lower levels sign the oath even if they don't like the idea of vestments. The new laws make the monarch Supreme Governor of the Church.

Most people are sure that Elizabeth will marry and that she will want a man to help her rule. There are pros and cons to her marrying and Elizabeth feels the cons outweigh the pros.



Chapter 4, pgs. 118-162

Chapter 4, pgs. 118-162 Summary and Analysis

Marriage presents a problem for Elizabeth whether she marries a foreigner or an Englishman. A potential husband has to be of royal blood. Legally a wife does not have many rights at the time and any husband she has would want to be crowned king, a fact that caused problems in her sister's marriage. Elizabeth will not give any of her power to a husband. The only thing she would gain with a husband would be an heir and Somerset hypothesizes that Elizabeth is affected by the execution of the wives of Henry VIII. There are also many rumors that Elizabeth could not have children.

There are rumors that Elizabeth had numerous affairs but Elizabeth herself says that she is never alone and can't understand where the rumors come from.

The reason for the interest in Elizabeth marrying and producing an heir is her refusal to name a successor. She is fearful of all of the plots that had occurred in Mary's time. Succession is a problem because with the exception of Mary Queen of Scots, everyone else has the stigma of illegitimacy.

King Philip of Spain proposed marriage and when he was rejected, tries to arrange marriages with other members of his family. Many Englishmen also vied for the hand of the Queen. Men like Arundel and Pickering hosted lavish parties for her. For a while Lord Dudley is her companion, even though he has a wife in the country. Prince Eric of Sweden is another suitor.

When Elizabeth is told that Mary Queen of Scots is making unkind remarks about her and has her eye on Elizabeth's throne, Elizabeth supports the rebels against Mary. Since Mary is also Queen of France, the French send troops to Scotland. Elizabeth has to enter into a treaty to protect Scotland to prevent a French invasion. The talks with France failed and English troops are sent to Scotland. Under the terms of the peace treaty they negotiate with the French, Mary gives up any claims to the English throne.



Chapter 5, pgs. 163-203

Chapter 5, pgs. 163-203 Summary and Analysis

Elizabeth is not happy with the Treaty of Edinburgh which Cecil negotiated. He has been pressuring her to marry and produce an heir.

When Dudley's wife is found dead, Elizabeth is forced to order an investigation. He is eventually cleared but the public remains suspicious. If Elizabeth marries Dudley, the country would be plunged into civil war. The Queen gives Dudley an apartment next to her own and in 1561, Dudley is considered a strong contender for Elizabeth's hand much to Cecil's dismay.

Elizabeth's cousins, Katherine and Mary, both secretly married, incur the Queen's wrath. She has them imprisoned.

England is in financial crisis at the time. English coins did not contain enough precious metal and are being refused by foreigners, who demand payment in gold. The result is a gold drain. Cecil and Elizabeth lower the value of the coins. Old coins are melted and new coins are minted thus averting a financial crisis.

Mary Queen of Scots is living in France since her husband died. She decides to move back to Scotland, which is now Protestant. Cecil is sent to negotiate with her but Mary refuses to accept the Treaty of Edinburgh without consulting her Scottish advisers. Elizabeth refuses to allow Mary to travel through England so Mary has to travel by sea. Mary wanted the terms of the treaty rewritten so she is recognized as heir to the throne.

France, with Catherine di Medici as regent, is on the brink of civil war between the Catholics and Huguenots. Cecil wants the Queen to intervene on behalf of the Protestants but Elizabeth is more interested in meeting with Mary. The meeting has to be postponed because of the outbreak of civil war in France. English troops are sent to France.

At this point, Elizabeth becomes ill with smallpox. The Privy Council debates the issue of succession but reaches no conclusion. When Elizabeth regains consciousness, she says that Dudley should be the protector of the kingdom. The Queen recovers so her instructions never have to be carried out.

When Parliament convenes in 1563, succession is the main topic. The question of succession is not resolved but Elizabeth secures financing for the war in France. An epidemic of the plague begins in June in Newhaven, killing many soldiers. The troops withdraw and the returning soldiers bring the plague home with them.



Chapter 6, pgs. 204-243

Chapter 6, pgs. 204-243 Summary and Analysis

Mary Queen of Scots is interested in remarrying and producing an heir. A strong marriage for Mary would reinforce her claim on Elizabeth's throne. Cecil believes that the only solution is for Elizabeth to marry. When a representative of Mary's comes to see Elizabeth, she suggests that Mary take Dudley as a husband. Elizabeth confers a title, Earl of Leicester, on Dudley to make him more attractive to Mary. At Cecil's urgings, Elizabeth sends Lord Darnley to Scotland as a suitable husband for Mary. Leicester also favors the move because he doesn't want to be paired with Mary.

Darnley arrives in Scotland on February 17, 1565 and Mary falls in love with him. If Mary marries Darnley, this would lend weight to her claim on the throne according to the Privy Council. When Elizabeth summons Darnley to return to England, he refuses, in spite of his mother being imprisoned in the Tower. Darnley is proclaimed King of Scotland and marries Mary on July 29.

The marriage caused problems in both countries. There are plots against Mary in Scotland. In England there is fear that a Catholic coalition will attempt to overthrow Elizabeth and that Mary is part of the coalition. The happiness in Mary's marriage does not last for long but she becomes pregnant. She gives birth to a son, James, in June 1566 and Elizabeth agrees to be the child's godmother. Elizabeth sends word that if Mary does not press her claim to the throne that Elizabeth will guarantee that no laws would be passed that prejudiced Mary's claim.

Mary's situation results in increased pressures on Elizabeth to marry. She rejects the King of France as being too young. Archduke Charles is another suitor as well as the Earl of Ormonde. During all of this Leicester continues his pursuit of Elizabeth. The Queen is also under pressure from Parliament to marry and name a successor. Elizabeth says that she will marry when it is convenient for her to do so. When Parliament is dissolved, none of the major issues have been resolved.



Chapter 7, pgs. 244 - 307

Chapter 7, pgs. 244 - 307 Summary and Analysis

In February 1567, Darnley's house near Edinburgh explodes and his dead body is discovered outside. Mary is not with him at the time. There are rumors that Mary is involved in the plot. Rumors are that James, Earl of Bothwell is involved in the murder. Mary did not take steps to have a thorough investigation and the case against him is dropped for lack of evidence. Bothwell marries Mary on May 15.

Elizabeth wants Prince James brought to England where he will grow up under her protection. Elizabeth will not assist unless she is given custody of the Prince. There is a great deal of opposition to Mary and Bothwell in Scotland. Mary is eventually captured and incarcerated. Elizabeth does not care about Mary but she does care about the institution of monarchy and send Sir Nicholas Throckmorton to intervene. While he is there, the French ingratiate themselves with the lords who imprisoned Mary.

Mary is forced to dedicate and Prince James, who is thirteen months old, is crowned. The Earl of Moray, Mary's half-brother, is named Regent.

Elizabeth again promises Parliament that she will marry. The Earl of Sussex is sent to Austria to negotiate with Archduke Charles on Elizabeth's behalf but Charles refuses to convert to Protestantism as the Queen demands. Religious differences prevented the match.

Mary escapes and flees to England. Elizabeth invites her to Court only because of her cousin's royal status. Cecil and others advised Elizabeth against this. When the Scottish announce that they have proof of Mary's involvement in the murder plot, Elizabeth has Mary sent to Lord Scrope's castle in Carlisle. Since Mary wouldn't cooperate in an investigation, the English hold her in the country. Mary finally agrees to Elizabeth's terms.

Elizabeth sees the evidence against Mary and feels it is so convincing that it should not be publically revealed. Mary would most likely succeed Elizabeth if Elizabeth dies. They agree that if Mary is found guilty, James will be recognized as king. The hearing reaches no definite verdict, but Elizabeth succeeds in disgracing Mary. Mary will be kept in England.

Religion continues to be an issue throughout Europe as the Inquisition is in progress. The reactions against papacy continue to grow. King Philip of Spain sends an army to quell unrest in the Netherlands. Elizabeth has Spanish ships detained in English harbors. As a result, Netherlands refuses to trade with England. The English switches their shipping to Hamburg.

The Duke of Norfolk is at the center of numerous conspiracies at this time, such as the attempt to unseat Cecil. There is also a plot for him to wed Mary and have Mary's crown



restored and named as heir to Elizabeth. They gain support but need Elizabeth's consent. Leicester finally confesses to Elizabeth, who summons Norfolk and reprimands him. Eventually he is arrested and imprisoned in the Tower.

A rebellion in the North is put down by the Earl of Sussex. The participants are dealt with harshly with many executions. Elizabeth realizes that her rule is threatened as long as Mary is in England.



Chapter 8, pgs. 308-348

Chapter 8, pgs. 308-348 Summary and Analysis

Moray is assassinated in Scotland and Mary's supporters take control. The French still support Mary. Elizabeth agrees to allow Sussex to lead troops to Scotland for very limited action. The French send word that they want Mary restored to the throne. Elizabeth has a list of conditions drawn up to begin negotiations.

In 1570, Elizabeth is excommunicated by the Pope. This put English Catholics in the position of having to choose between Pope and Queen. Parliament meets and expands the definition of treason. They also make it a forfeiture of the right of succession if the person tries to usurp the throne.

By the end of 1570, most of the details regarding Mary's restoration have been worked out but the emissaries of King James will not accept them. A conspiracy forms to have the Pope's forces invade England. Philip and Alva want to depose Elizabeth and put Mary on the throne.

Elizabeth opens talks with France about marrying the Duke of Anjou. An alliance with France would strengthen Elizabeth against Spain but Anjou refuses to convert to Protestantism.

Norfolk's role in the plot to invade England and place Mary on the throne is becoming known. He is arrested and taken to the Tower in September 1571. He confesses to all but knowledge of a foreign invasion and intention to harm Elizabeth. He is executed on June 2, 1572. A few weeks later Parliament passes a bill preventing Mary from ever being Queen of England but Elizabeth won't sign it. This enrages the Parliament that had been acting out of concern for her safety.

When France learned of Mary's plots with Spain, they signed a mutual aid treaty with England in the event that either of them is attacked. Walsingham advises the Queen to support the Netherlands in their plans to attack Spain but Elizabeth would not consent. She eventually sends one thousand troops there.



Chapter 9, pgs. 349-421

Chapter 9, pgs. 349-421 Summary and Analysis

Elizabeth visits various people in the Midland region in summer of 1572. News of the massacre in France, arranged by Catherine di Medici, results in a breach between England and France. Elizabeth's advisers think there is a large possibility of war throughout Christendom and that England should prepare for it.

Elizabeth agrees to be godmother to the daughter of Charles IX, but relations between England and France remain cool in October 1572. Charles IX dies in May 1574 and is succeeded by Henry III. Soon the warring factions in France stop fighting.

Fighting breaks out in Scotland and Elizabeth sends troops to assist in quashing the last of the Marian supporters. Elizabeth can not ignore the situation in the Netherlands in what would happen if either France or Spain gained control. The Dutch want English help but the Queen is trying to mediate the problem. A massacre in Antwerp unites the Dutch provinces against Spain.

The Puritans are people who want changes in the Protestantism of England. They want stricter discipline within the Church and other changes. To Elizabeth, they are a threat to unity within the Church. The wearing of vestments is a big issue as well as the prayer book. Elizabeth opposes any changes proposed by Parliament. After the death of Archbishop Parker in May 1575, Edmond Grindal succeeds him and introduces some reforms. He clashes with Elizabeth on numerous issues, especially that of prophesyings, which are meetings. Elizabeth has him confined to Lambeth Palace. He dies in September 1583.

Philip sends troops back into the Netherlands in August 1577 and the Dutch appeal to Elizabeth for assistance. The Council advises him to intervene in the Netherlands and Elizabeth offers to sponsor the German mercenary John Casmir. The Dutch turn to Alencon for help and sign a treaty with him on August 13, 1578.

The Duke of Alencon sends a representative to negotiate a marriage with Elizabeth. The Duke comes for a two week secret visit. Elizabeth is forty-six years of age now and there are questions about her ability to produce an heir let alone the possibility that she could die in childbirth. A sizeable number of clergy and the population oppose the match. The Council also will not endorse the marriage. In addition, Leicester marries the Countess of Essex in 1578.

In 1580, Alencon becomes Prince of the Netherlands. Francis Drake also sails to Plymouth Harbor during this year. He goes on to claim much of the Americas for the Queen in defiance of Spain and the Pope. None of the confiscated treasures is ever returned to Spain.



Chapter 10, pgs. 422-488

Chapter 10, pgs. 422-488 Summary and Analysis

Elizabeth is adored by her Court and they find it difficult to be away from her for any amount of time. She sparingly hands out peerages in order to maintain the prestige attached to them. She could also give annuities and individual monopolies as well as extends loans.

Walter Raleigh comes to Court in 1581 when he is in his late twenties and becomes a favorite of Elizabeth. In April 1585, he receives favors and a title from Elizabeth and becomes wealthy because of the favors he receives. Some members of the Court become wealthy due to the favors Elizabeth bestows on them; others have to sell assets to survive. The Queen controls approximately twelve hundred positions. Her ladies in service can't marry without her consent and she punishes promiscuity.

Elizabeth's clothing is made in pieces which are fastened together when she wears them. This allows for a large number of combinations. Her clothes are luxurious with her following the fashion trends rather than setting them. The Queen also exchanges gifts with her leading subjects on New Year's Day. Elizabeth likes gifts of clothing. She likes jewelry and wears a lot of it, most of it inherited or gifts.

Elizabeth has fifty houses and sixty castles but many are in states of disrepair. Her main London residences are Whitehall and Hampton Court. Her largest palace is Richmond. She spends most of the summer at Windsor Palace. Elizabeth doesn't undertake any major building projects of her own but she does enjoy the gardens at her various houses. She frequently changes residences because of the stench of the Court. Elizabeth is concerned with matters of personal hygiene and has her own bathroom at her residences.

The Queen enjoys celebrating holidays and there are always festivities at the Court at this time. She would join the attendees in playing cards and hunting. Shakespeare often performed for the Queen and she is also a big supporter of church music. In the summer, she likes to travel and meet her subjects.



Chapter 11, pgs. 490-563

Chapter 11, pgs. 490-563 Summary and Analysis

The government thought that Catholicism would die out in England given enough time but in the mid 1570s, the religion experiences a resurgence. Much of this is due to Dr. William Allen who founded a seminary at Douai in 1568 for Englishmen. The surplus graduates are sent to England as missionaries. Some of them are executed. Another seminary is founded in Rome and the priests, including Jesuits, continue to pour in to England.

Harsh laws are enacted by Parliament to deal with the Catholic threat. In the event of an invasion, they felt the Catholics would support the Pope against the Queen. Campion, sent by Rome, is captured, sent to the Tower and tortured. He is executed for treason with other priests. The following years, eleven more priests are executed. A total of one hundred eighty three Catholics are executed during the reign of Elizabeth.

The presence of Mary Queen of Scots in England gives hope to Catholics. Since Elizabeth remains healthy, Mary begins to involve herself in various plots. In Scotland, James has reached his majority and is proving difficult for Elizabeth to deal with. There is talk of sending an invasion force to rescue Mary and restore Catholicism. James wants to guarantee that he will continue on the throne. Mary wants to rule jointly. James is taken prisoner by the Lords Enterprise, a group of nobles, but manages to escape.

Throckmorton is found to be part of a plot with the French and Scottish. He confesses while in the Tower. Mary is involved in the plot, again proving the danger of keeping her in England. James wants to reach an agreement with Elizabeth that excludes Mary and Elizabeth agrees.

Murder plots against Elizabeth begin to surface. The British expand their spending on intelligence. The population rallies to the support of their Queen. Parliament passes the Bond of Association saying that if anyone harms the Queen, that person and their heirs could not ascend to the throne. Elizabeth has the part referring to the heirs taken out.

Elizabeth sends troops to the Netherlands after the death of the Prince of Orange under Leicester, who is also supposed to try to bring about an end to the conflict. He sails in December 1585. He accepts the position of Governor General of the Netherlands. His disobedience is known in England. The Queen is enraged.

The controls on access to Mary are tightened. All of her correspondence is read before reaches her, as is her outgoing correspondence. In this way, they learn of Mary's involvement in a plot to kill Elizabeth and are able to capture and execute the leader, Babington and his six accomplices. Mary is also arrested and tried. She is executed on February 8, 1587.



Chapter 12, pgs. 564-596

Chapter 12, pgs. 564-596 Summary and Analysis

Relations between England and Spain remain tense, and in 1583, Pope Gregory wants Philip to include England but Philip declines. By 1585, Philip is talking about invading. Philip wants one of his own daughters to inherit the English throne.

In March 1587, Elizabeth gives Francis Drake permission to attack Spanish ships and Drake is very successful in doing this. Elizabeth hopes that a negotiated peace could be achieved with Spain's Duke of Parma and Philip. Philip has to accept Protestantism in the Netherlands for the two years it will take the States General to reach a religious settlement. Leicester doesn't think that Spain will negotiate.

France experiences another outbreak of civil war in September 1585. Elizabeth finances the mercenaries of German John Casmir to assist the Huguenots in 1587, but the funds are not sufficient. Peace talks with Spain are held in 1588, but are unproductive and the English navy sails off to war. The Queen has taken precautions to strengthen the defenses of England but is worried that the Spanish Armada will attack while the British ships are at sea. The two fleets meet in the Channel and after several encounters, the Spanish flee.

Philip is not confident that the Spanish could win a land war and instructs Parma to negotiate if this is the case. His condition is that Catholics be allowed to exercise their faith.

Many of the Spanish Armada war ships are wrecked on the way back to Spain.

Leicester dies on September 4, 1588 and Elizabeth is profoundly sad at the loss.



Chapter 13, pgs. 592-664

Chapter 13, pgs. 592-664 Summary and Analysis

Elizabeth is consoled by Robert, Earl of Essex who is the twenty-two year old son of the deceased Earl of Essex. He first appears at Court at the age of eighteen and is extremely popular even though he has frequent clashes with others.

In 1588, the Queen is planning an expedition against Spain. They plan to destroy the Armada and invade by land through Portugal. The Earl of Essex joins the expedition which angers the Queen. The English fleet lands at Corunna where they suffer heavy casualties and illness. When they reach Lisbon, they do not receive the support from the population that they had hoped for. They return to England.

Then England's attention shifts to France. A takeover by the Catholic League would strengthen Spain so Elizabeth aids the monarch against them. In the summer of 1590, Spain enters the conflict. Essex takes troops to Normandy and meets with King Henry.

When the French settle their internal problems under King Henry, they still have problems with Spain since Philip wants his daughter to be Queen of France. Elizabeth leaves Henry to settle his own problems. These wars are very expensive for England who has been seizing the Spanish treasure fleet that yearly sailed from Havana. Spain manages to bring the seizures to an end.

Religious differences in the Anglican Church are wiped out by the mid-1590s and Essex becomes a member of the Privy Council around the same time.

In 1594 another plot against Elizabeth's life is uncovered involving the Queen's physician and the King of Spain. The physician is executed. Hostilities with Spain resume in 1595. Spanish troops enter France. When the English navy sails to the Azores to intercept the Spanish silver fleet, England is left virtually defenseless with the Armada approaching. The French signed a peace treaty with Spain in 1596. England signs a peace agreement with Holland in 1598. When Philip II dies in September, his twenty year old son becomes Philip III.



Chapter 14, pgs. 665-733

Chapter 14, pgs. 665-733 Summary and Analysis

Elizabeth has problems with Ireland for a number of years particularly in the Northern provinces around Ulster. The Irish experience a number of uprisings over the years. English troops serving in Ireland suffer from dysentery and malaria. The Queen has problems trying to find soldiers to serve in Ireland.

The tension between the Irish and the English goes beyond religion even though more Irish are becoming Catholics than Protestants. During the English war with Spain, the Irish unite against the English under Hugh O'Neil, Earl of Tyrone. His first rebellion is in 1595 and in April 1596, Essex leads troops into Ireland. Essex is not optimistic about defeating Tyrone so he keeps delaying going to Ulster. Outnumbered by Tyrone, the two meet secretly and conclude a truce. Essex returns to England without the permission of the Queen.

Essex's misconduct is investigated by the Privy Council. He is confined and the anger of the Queen grows when she learns that Tyrone wants the Pope named head of the Church of Ireland. Essex appeals to the Scottish King James for help and then becomes involved in an uprising against the Queen for which he is arrested. He is found guilty and executed on February 25.

Cecil comments that things are peaceful in June 1601. James of Scotland is considered as Elizabeth's successor and corruption increases in the English Court. This is due to the fact that they are not adequately compensated by the Queen.

Granting monopolies is a privilege of the Crown. An investigation by Parliament resulted in the repeal of the injurious ones in November 1601.

As Elizabeth ages, she grows harder to please. She is sixty-seven years of age in 1600. She still makes her summer trips and occasionally dances at festivals.

In 1601, the Queen has to send troops to Ireland and the Irish win a victory over Tyrone. Elizabeth accepts Tyrone's peace terms in 1603 to prevent further bloodshed.

There is talk of who should succeed Elizabeth upon her death. Philip of Spain wanted his infant daughter named Queen. Amid all the claimants to the throne, Elizabeth favors James but doesn't publically announce it. She dies on March 24, 1603 and James is announced as King. Elizabeth is interred at Westminster Abbey next to her grandfather.



Characters

Elizabeth I

Elizabeth I is born on September 7, 1533. She is the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. Born at Greenwich Palace, she is moved to Hatfield as an infant. Her mother was beheaded while she was a baby on her father's orders. Since the marriage was annulled, the legitimacy of Elizabeth was questionable. She is raised by Lady Bryan her governess. Elizabeth is educated by a group of scholars and her education contained elements of the Reformation but was not for the intent of ruling a kingdom. Elizabeth is thirteen years of age when Henry dies in 1547 and lives with the queen Dowager, Katherine Parr, in Chelsea but after her marriage to Seymour, Elizabeth is sent to Cheshunt. Elizabeth adopts the Protestantism that her brother Edward embraced but then returns to Catholicism when Mary becomes Queen. Mary has Elizabeth imprisoned in the Tower, believing that she was involved in a plot against Mary but has to release her because of lack of evidence. At Philip's suggestion, they try to persuade Elizabeth to marry a member of Philip's family, but Elizabeth refuses. When Mary dies in November 1558, Elizabeth becomes Queen at the age of twenty-five. Elizabeth wisely selected the men to serve on the Privy Council and relied on them throughout the years of her reign even though she didn't always do what they wanted. Throughout her reign, Elizabeth is under constant pressure to marry and produce an heir and to name a successor. Before she dies, she eventually names James of Scotland to succeed her even though she does not make it publically known. Elizabeth dies on March 24, 1603 at the age of seventy. She never married.

Mary I

Mary I is known as Mary Tudor. She is the daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. Her father divorced her mother to marry Anne Boleyn and when Elizabeth I is born, Mary is sent to Hatfield to live with the baby. She is denied her title as princess. Mary is well-educated but not with the intention to rule a kingdom. When her brother embraced Protestantism, Mary remains a Catholic in defiance of the Council rulings. Edward tries to alter the line of succession before his death on July 8, 1553. Mary is alerted and flees to Norfolk to avoid being taken into custody. The Privy Council decides in Mary's favor and she is proclaimed Queen of England on July 19, 1553. Parliament revokes the divorce of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. She decides to marry Philip of Spain on October 29 instead of deciding to marry someone from within the kingdom. Mary hoped to restore Catholicism to England and looked for ways to deprive Elizabeth of her right to succession. The government discovers a plot for a plan to depose Mary and place Elizabeth on the throne. Mary suspects her sister's involvement and has her imprisoned in the Tower and the, due to lack of evidence, moved to hours arrest in Oxfordshire. Mary marries Philip of Spain on July 26, 1554 and he prevents Mary from having Elizabeth delivered illegitimate because if Mary becomes ill in August, 1558, the



Privy Council pressures her into naming Elizabeth as her successor. Mary dies on November 17, 1558.

Mary Stuart

Mary Stuart is known as Mary Queen of Scots. She is the daughter of Margaret, the older sister of Henry VIII, and King James IV of Scotland. She is a cousin of Elizabeth I and becomes a rival in her bid to be named the presumptive heir. She has a son James, by Lord Darnley. When Darnley is murdered, she marries Bothwell. They are captured and she is incarcerated. She is forced to abdicate. She is eventually executed in England for a plot against the life of Elizabeth.

Sir William Cecil

Sir William Cecil is Elizabeth's Principal Secretary of State. He was born in 1520 and was the son of a minor official in Henry VIII's Court and was educated at Stamford Grammar School and St. John's College, Cambridge. He had been Secretary to King Edward. Elizabeth elevates him to Baron Burghley. Cecil dies on August 4, 1598.

Edward VI

Edward VI is the younger brother of Elizabeth. Born in October 1537, he becomes king in January 1547. Edward embraces Protestantism and in 1553 contracts tuberculosis. His will alters the line of succession determined by Henry VIII and excludes Mary and Elizabeth from the throne. He dies on July 8, 1553.

Robert Dudley

Robert Dudley is a married adviser to the Queen. He becomes very close to her and, after his wife's death, hopes to marry her. Elizabeth suggests that he marry her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots and bestows the title Earl of Leicester on him to make him more attractive. He marries the Countess of Essex in 1578.

Sir Francis Walsingham

Sir Francis Walsingham is a Protestant and member of the Privy Council. He is one of Elizabeth's advisers and represents her in her marriage negotiations with the Duke of Anjou. He has been in the service of the monarch since 1568.



Walter Raleigh

Walter Raleigh was born in Devonshire. He volunteered with the Huguenots in France and fought with the Queen's troops in Ireland. He came to Court in 1581 and was noticed by Elizabeth. He receives a title from Elizabeth in April 1583.

James VI

James VI is born in June 1566 to Mary Queen of Scots and her husband, Lord Darnley. His godmother is Elizabeth I. James is crowned when Mary is forced to abdicate. He is thirteen months old at the time.

Philip II

Philip II became the King of Spain in 1556. He is a former brother-in-law of Elizabeth's having been married to Mary.



Objects/Places

Greenwich Palace

Greenwich Palace is the home of King Henry VII and the site of the Royal Court.

Hatfield

Hatfield is the royal residence where Mary and Elizabeth lived as children.

Tower of London

Tower of London is a prison and royal residence in London.

Edinburgh

Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland which is ruled by Mary Queen of Scots and then James.

Newhaven

Newhaven is in Northern England where the British troops were stationed where they contracted the plague.

Kirk o'Field

Kirk o'Field is a royal residence outside of Edinburgh where Darnley, husband of Mary Queen of Scots, was killed.

Windsor Castle

Windsor Castle is one of the royal residences in England.

The North Country

The North Country is in Northern England and was the site of a rebellion in 1569. The rebellion was subdued by the Earl of Sussex.

The United Provinces

The United Provinces are a group of eighteen provinces known as the Netherlands.

Spain

Spain is a Catholic country that was hostile toward England throughout Elizabeth's reign.

France

France is a European country across the Channel from England that experienced numerous conflicts between Catholics and Protestants.



Themes

Religion

Religion is a dominant theme of the book. At this time Europe was a part of the Holy Roman Empire and under the control of the Pope. People who did not conform to the beliefs of the Church of Rome were persecuted and killed during the Inquisition. During the reign of Edward, England embraced Protestantism. Mary Tudor was Catholic and tried to restore Catholicism to England. This resulted in persecution for many of her subjects who were considered heretics giving Mary the nickname of Bloody Mary. Elizabeth, who was a Protestant, came to the throne after Mary's death. She would not return to Catholicism and repudiated the Church of Rome. She wanted England to be a Protestant country but she did not want any of her subjects to suffer persecution. Elizabeth wanted them to have as much religious freedom as possible. Thus her first major task was religious reforms and she worked closely with Parliament for years to implement the reforms that she wanted. The result was the Anglican Church with the monarch as the Supreme Governor. The result was the end of persecution for Elizabeth's subjects. The formation of the Anglican Church led to conflict with the Pope. Elizabeth is eventually excommunicated and always feared invasion by the forces of the Pope. Elizabeth was always willing to help Protestants in other countries, like France and the Netherlands, and was in conflict with Spain throughout her reign.

Plots

Plots and conspiracies are another theme of the book. This seems to be a way of life for royals at the time. When Mary Tudor was a queen, she was cool and hostile toward Mary. She eventually banished Mary to life in the country. At one point, Mary had Elizabeth confined because she believed that Elizabeth was involved in a plot against her. There was a plot against Mary but Elizabeth was not a part of it. When Elizabeth came to rule, she refused to name a successor until the end of her reign. She felt that the naming of a successor would lead to conspiracies against her and there were enough conspiracies and plots against her the way it was. Mary Queen of Scots was one of the biggest threats to Elizabeth. Mary Queen of Scots was Catholic and a deposed Queen of Scotland and Dowager Queen of France. There was a lot of support for her to be returned to her throne in Scotland. As a cousin of Elizabeth, she was also in line for the English throne. There were many plots to depose Elizabeth and replace her with Mary on the throne, some of which involved King Philip of Spain and the Pope. Mary lived in confinement in England until Elizabeth's people had enough evidence to convince Mary and have her executed. This ended most of the plots against Elizabeth. Plots to depose the ruling monarch were a part of the life of a royal and Elizabeth tried to minimize this throughout her reign.



Marriage

Marriage is another theme of the book. Elizabeth spent the first twenty years of her reign under intense pressure to take a husband. The pressure to marry began before her accession to the throne. When her sister married as a Queen, she saw how Mary was ordered around and dominated by her husband, even though she was the Queen. She watched Mary make decisions due to pressure from her husband. Elizabeth did not want this to happen to her. She wanted her decisions to be based on her own views and conscience, and not the domination of a husband. At this time it was not thought that a woman was strong enough to rule alone and that she needed a man to learn on. But Elizabeth was determined to be successful in a man's world and to do what was best for her subjects. She chooses her advisors wisely. But the pressure on Elizabeth to marry and produce an heir continued. Elizabeth defined her criteria for a husband and this included the adoption of Protestantism. This proved to be a major stumbling block that most suitors could not accept. There were many marriage negotiations during the first twenty years of her reign but none of them were successful. Elizabeth defeated every proposal because she decided early on that it was best that she rule alone. The pressure on Elizabeth to marry continued until she was past her child-bearing years.

Style

Perspective

The perspective of the book is the perspective of the author, Anne Somerset. The book is written in the third-person point of view with the author acting as narrator. This allows the author to provide all of the background material that is required for the reader to have a total picture of what was happening in the life of Elizabeth. It allows her to discuss the various characters and to present the rich history of the time. The use of the third-person point of view avoids the limitations involved with the first person point of view in which the knowledge of the reader is limited to the knowledge of the narrator. This severely limits the knowledge of the reader and this problem is avoided by the use of the third person point of view. This approach is the best approach for the book and works well for the book because it allows the author to provide all of the historical information that contributes to the completeness of the book.

Anne Somerset is well qualified to write a book of this kind. She was educated at King's College in London where she read history. She has written several other historical books including the *Life and Times of William IV* and *Ladies-in-Waiting From the Tudors to the Present Day*, as well as other books. Her books illustrate the depth of her research. This results in lengthy books that are very thorough in covering the topic. The reader has to appreciate the depth of Somerset's research and the completeness of the coverage of the topic.

Tone

The tone of the book is objective. The author writes the book in an academic manner presenting the facts in an objective manner and then trying to explain the actions of the characters or situations based on the facts. She basically lets the historical facts speak for themselves and as a historian, tries to interpret the historical facts and situations. This is the role of the historian, to present and interpret the facts to explain various situations in history and Somerset performs this role very well. She interprets objectively without interjecting her own views or opinions. She never says that Elizabeth should have done this or Elizabeth should not have done that. She presents the facts, interprets them, and leaves the reader to draw their own conclusions. She does not insult the intelligence of the reader by trying to force her own views and opinions on the reader. Her approach respects the intelligence of the reader by allowing them to form their own opinions. The readers can agree or disagree with different interpretation but the reader is forced to reach their own conclusions as to why Elizabeth did not choose Mary and why she would not select a successor to her throne, for example. The reader has to respect the approach that Somerset takes in presenting the material and allowing them to draw their own conclusions. The tone of the book is appropriate for the kind of book that Somerset has written.

Structure

The structure of the book is designed to provide information to the reader and the book is successful in this pursuit. The body of the book is divided into fourteen chapters, each with a title pertaining to the content of the chapter. Even though the overall framework is chronological, there is a lot of jumping around in time within the chapter as Somerset provided the information pertaining to a situation.

There is a brief Author's Note in which Somerset explains some of the methods she employed in writing the book as well as acknowledging those who provided her with assistance. There is also a List of Illustrations at the front of the book which explains where the various Illustrations came from. There are no page numbers but all of the Illustrations are located at one place in the center of the book. The Illustrations allow the reader to associate a name with a face and make the characters more real for the reader. There is also a Family Tree showing the descendents of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York.

At the end of the book, there is a copious section on Notes and a Bibliography showing the depth of the author's research. There is a well structured detailed index. All of these make it easy for the reader who wants to look up information.

The Table of Contents presents the titles and page numbers of all of these components.

The structure of the book works well for the book. Somerset provides a great deal of information and the structure facilitates the presentation of this information.

Quotes

"The extent to which her mother's execution cast a shadow over Elizabeth's later life is incalculable. It is certain that many of the charges preferred against Anne were false, and probable that she was innocent of all of them" (Chapter 1, pg. 8.)

"It is difficult to imagine a more traumatic experience for a fifteen-year old girl than to be relentlessly questioned about a compromising episode in her past, in the knowledge that her answers could result in a number of her most trusted associates being tried on a capital charge. But though Elizabeth was naturally upset - Tyrwhit reported with satisfaction that she burst into tears when she learnt that Parry and Mistress Ashley had been sent to the Tower - she did not panic" (Chapter 2, pg. 31.)

"Once the euphoria surrounding her accession had died down, Mary's bitterness welled up afresh for the daughter of the woman who had inflicted so much pain on Catherine of Aragon and herself, and her antagonism towards her sister was only sharpened by the fact that Elizabeth had many 'characteristics to which she resembled her mother'" (Chapter 3, pg. 41.)

"Between eleven o'clock and twelve noon on 17 November 1558, Elizabeth was formally proclaimed Queen outside the Palace of Westminster, and at various other points around the capital. The Londoners were clearly pleased by the announcement, for they had long since grown weary of Mary's rule" (Chapter 4, pg. 73.)

"Hence the Queen's aversion to matrimony was at a very fundamental level, and she rejected it not merely because her unique position would make it hard for her to find a husband who could suit her, but because she regarded marriage itself as inherently undesirable" (Chapter 4, pg. 120.)

"Like the Duke of Norfolk, the Secretary had not been fully reimbursed for expenses incurred while on service in the North, and this rankled a good deal. Much worse than this, however, was the fact that Cecil now found himself excluded from the Queen's confidence, for though Elizabeth still expected him to deal with the routine burden of administrative tasks, he was no longer admitted to frequent consultations with her" (Chapter 5, pg. 163.)

"The alarming prospect remained that having failed to resolve the nation's inner tensions at the last session of Parliament, the Queen would in addition soon have to face a threat from abroad" (Chapter 6, pg. 243.)

"It was, after all, obvious that it was scarcely in Elizabeth's interests to restore a Catholic queen with a claim upon the English throne to a neighbouring country that was at present English throne to a neighbouring country that was at present ruled by well-disposed Protestants" (Chapter 7, pg. 258.)



"It was the Pope who was striving to upset the uneasy balance that the Catholics sought to achieve between their Queen and their conscience; Elizabeth had no desire to make his task any easier" (Chapter 8, pg. 315.)

"As he saw it, the scene was already set for a titanic struggle within Christendom, and it was time for the Queen to gauge correctly the scale of the dangers that lay in store. Instead of waiting passively on events, she should shape them to her advantage, and by making common cause the European Protestants she could weaken the evil and reactionary forces that were bent on their mutual annihilation" (Chapter 9, pg. 352.)

"The careers of men such as Hatton and Raleigh illustrated the potential gains that could accrue from royal favour, but inevitably theirs were exceptional cases, for the Crown would have been bankrupted if Elizabeth had shown comparable generosity to more than a tiny minority" (Chapter 10 pg. 431.)

"One by one, the Marian clergy would surely die, and with their passing the Catholic priesthood in England would become extinct. This, at least, was what the Government expected, and they were therefore disagreeably surprised that during the mid 1570s, when Catholicism should have entered into irreversible decline, instead it experienced a new resurgence" (Chapter 11, pg. 491.)

"In November, it was observed that the Queen was 'much aged and spent, and very melancholy,' and those who knew her best affirmed that Leicester's death was to blame" (Chapter 12, pg. 596.)

"Knowing the Queen as he did, he had guessed that she would find Essex exceptionally appearing, and he hoped that the young Earl's appearance on the scene would have a detrimental effect on the career of Sir Walter Raleigh, of whom Elizabeth had as yet shown no signs of tiring" (Chapter 13, pg. 598.)

"The great expense of my time, the labour of my studies and the travail of my thoughts chiefly tendeth to...the government of you to live in a flourishing and happy condition', and certainly her dedication to her people was beyond question" (Chapter 14, pg. 733.)



Topics for Discussion

What were the conditions in the household of Henry VIII that resulted in Mary's hostilities toward Elizabeth? Were there hostilities justified?

What are the circumstances leading to Elizabeth's accession to the throne in 1558?

Why is the issue of marriage so important during Elizabeth's reign? What are her views on the subject? What are the views of her advisors?

Why are Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots rivals? What form does this rivalry take?

What role did religion play in Europe during Elizabeth's rule? What were the issues?

Why did Elizabeth agree to the execution of Mary Queen of Scots? How did James of Scotland react?

How would you characterize the reign of Elizabeth I? What were the major issues?