Elizabeth the Great Study Guide

Elizabeth the Great by Elizabeth Jenkins

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Introduction

Elizabeth the Great (1958), by Elizabeth Jenkins, is a biography of Queen Elizabeth I of England, "Good Queen Bess," who reigned from 1558 until her death in 1603.

Elizabeth I was born in 1533, the daughter of King Henry VIII of England and Anne Boleyn. When Elizabeth was only two years old, her father ordered the beheading of her mother. When Henry VIII died in 1547 he was succeeded by his son, Elizabeth's half-brother, the nine-year-old Edward VI. After Edward VI died in 1553, Elizabeth's halfsister became Queen Mary I of England. Mary, who was Catholic, earned the name Bloody Mary for her persecution of Protestants during her reign. Because Elizabeth was Protestant and because Mary feared Elizabeth might plot against her life, Elizabeth was imprisoned throughout most of Mary's reign. Upon Mary I's death in 1558, Elizabeth was named Queen of England. Elizabeth was masterful at creating a public image for herself that appealed to the emotions of her citizens and allayed their concerns about being ruled by a female monarch. Elizabeth's refusal to marry, and therefore to bear heirs, was a significant point of conflict between herself and her Parliament throughout her reign. Meanwhile, she maintained a close companionship through much of her life with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whom she also refused to marry.

Throughout her reign, Elizabeth was threatened by various plots to murder her and place the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne. A number of conspiracies against her life and crown were uncovered, resulting in many executions for treason, including the execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587. However, upon Elizabeth's death, King James VI of Scotland, the son of Mary Queen of Scots, was named as her successor, making him King James I of England.

Author Biography

Margaret Elizabeth Heald Jenkins was born October 31, 1905, in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, England. She attended Newman College, Cambridge, from 1924 to 1927, where she studied history and literature. From 1929 to 1939, Jenkins taught English at King Alfred School. During World War II, she served as a British civil servant. After 1945, she became a full time writer.

Jenkins is best known for her two biographical works on Queen Elizabeth I of England and her biography of the writer Jane Austen. *Elizabeth the Great*, her biography of Elizabeth I, was first published in 1958. As a follow-up, Jenkins wrote a book about the relationship between Elizabeth I and the earl of Leicester in *Elizabeth and Leicester* (1961). Her book *The Princes in the Tower* offers a history of the controversy surrounding King Richard III of England and the imprisonment of his two young nephews in the Tower of London. Jenkins has written biographies of English novelists in *Henry Fielding* (1947) and *Jane Austen: A Biography* (1949). Her book *Ten Fascinating Women* (1968) provides information on ten notable English women in history, including Elizabeth I. Jenkins received the Femina Vic Heureuse prize in 1934 for her novel *Harriet*. Her other novels include ,*Virginia Water* (1930), *Doubtful Joy* (1935), *The Winters* (1947), *Honey* (1968), and *Dr. Gully* (1972). Jenkins lives in England.

Plot Summary

Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn

Elizabeth I was born in 1533, the daughter of King Henry VIII of England and Anne Boleyn, his second wife. Henry's first wife, Catherine of Aragon, had born him a daughter, Mary. When Elizabeth was two years old, Henry VIII ordered the beheading of Anne Boleyn, although Elizabeth did not learn of this fact until years later. Henry VIII's third wife, Jane Seymour, was the mother of his only surviving son, Edward. Henry VIII later married, in succession, Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard, and Catherine Parr.

Although all three children were of different mothers, Mary, Elizabeth, and Edward were raised together and generally treated well by their various stepmothers. Important early influences on Elizabeth were her governess, Mrs. Ashley, and her private tutor, the scholar Roger Ascham. Ascham was impressed with Elizabeth's intelligence, eagerness for learning, and facility with learning foreign languages.

Reign of King Edward VI

In 1547, when Elizabeth was fourteen, Henry VIII died, leaving the nine-year old Edward as heir to the throne. Edward Seymour, duke of Somerset, was named Protector to the boy king. Soon afterward, Thomas Seymour (a brother of Edward Seymour), married Henry VIII's widow, Catherine Parr. When Edward became king, Elizabeth went to live with Catherine Parr (her stepmother) and Thomas Seymour. During this time, Thomas Seymour developed a pattern of sexually harassing the teenaged Elizabeth. After his wife died, Seymour hoped to marry Elizabeth in order to gain political power. However, in 1549, Thomas Seymour was arrested for various political intrigues and beheaded on the order of his brother Edward Seymour. In 1552, Edward Seymour was in turn beheaded for treason. With the downfall of Edward Seymour, John Dudley, earl of Warwick, took over control of the government as a regent to the child king.

In 1553, King Edward VI died of tuberculosis. After Edward's death, a conspiracy resulted in the reign of Lady Jane Grey as Queen of England for nine days. John Dudley had arranged the marriage of his son to Lady Jane Grey, and convinced the dying King Edward VI to name her heir to the throne. However, Elizabeth's sister Mary, the rightful heir to the throne, had the popular support to overthrow Lady Jane Grey. The fifteen-year old Lady Jane Grey, who had been forced into the arrangement against her will by her parents, was executed for treason, along with her father, her husband, and her husband's father.

Reign of Queen Mary I

The thirty-seven year old Mary was named Queen Mary I of England in 1553. In 1554, Sir Thomas Wyat organized an armed rebellion of some 3,000 men against Queen Mary

I. The rebellion was swiftly put down, and Wyat was executed. These events, however, caused problems for Elizabeth, who was suspected of being an accomplice in the rebellion. Although there was no evidence against Elizabeth, Mary I's suspicion of her half-sister led to harsh treatment of the princess throughout her reign. Elizabeth thus spent most of Mary I's reign in various forms of imprisonment, first in the Tower of London, then as a prisoner in various households where she was held under constant suspicion of conspiracy.

In 1554, Mary I married King Philip II of Spain. The reign of Mary I created further difficulties for Elizabeth because, although they were halfsisters and had gotten along as children, Mary was a devout Catholic and Elizabeth was a Protestant. Mary's primary concern as queen was to restore England to Catholicism. During her five-year reign, Mary I earned the name Bloody Mary because of her harsh treatment of Protestants. In all, she oversaw the burning at the stake of some 300 Protestants, sometimes as many as eight at once.

Elizabeth Ascends the Throne

When Mary I died in 1558, the twenty-five year old Elizabeth was named Queen Elizabeth I of England. Upon gaining power, Elizabeth named William Cecil her secretary, and he remained her primary and most trusted advisor in affairs of state until his death. Throughout her reign, Elizabeth faced several recurring challenges. A significant threat to the reign of Elizabeth I was Mary Queen of Scots, the Catholic Queen of Scotland who repeatedly plotted against Elizabeth's life in efforts to secure the English throne for herself. Until her death, there was also constant struggle between Elizabeth and her parliament over the issue of producing an heir to the throne. Elizabeth never married or bore children, but cleverly kept her government and her nation guessing about whom she might choose to marry. Meanwhile, Elizabeth maintained a close romantic relationship with Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, who was not considered a suitable match for the queen in marriage.

Robert Dudley was soon named by Elizabeth to various positions of importance within the court and eventually granted various prestigious titles. Dudley seemed to think he might one day marry the Queen, although she never indicated that she would ever accept such a proposal. Dudley was already married but in 1560, his wife died by falling down a flight of stairs and breaking her neck. Dudley later secretly married another woman. Elizabeth remained close to Dudley until his death, although he sometimes angered her.

The Threat of Mary Queen of Scots

Mary Queen of Scots was considered by many Catholics to be the rightful Queen of England, rather than Elizabeth. Mary thus remained a constant threat to Elizabeth's life and throne. Throughout Elizabeth's reign, Mary was engaged in a number of plots and conspiracies to gain the English throne. In 1565, Mary married Henry Stewart, earl of

Darnley. Controversy was sparked when Darnley was strangled to death and his house blown up in 1567. Mary was suspected of having plotted the murder of her own husband to marry the earl of Bothwell, which she did three months later. As a result of this controversy, Mary was deposed as queen of Scotland, and her one-year-old son named King James VI of Scotland in her place. In desperation, Mary fled to England, where Elizabeth kept her in prison for the next eighteen years.

During this time, many plots against Elizabeth to place Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne were discovered and put down, as were several small rebellions in the name of Mary Queen of Scots. In 1569, the rebellion of English Catholics in the north of England was crushed by military force. In 1570, Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth I and encouraged English Catholics to rebel against their Protestant queen. This pronouncement led to harsher crackdowns on Catholics in England.

In 1571, the Ridolfi Plot was exposed. The Ridolfi Plot was attempted by the Florentine Roberto Ridolfi, who arranged to murder Elizabeth and coordinate a Spanish invasion of England to place Mary Queen of Scots on the throne. Although Ridolfi was safely out of England at the time the plot was discovered, Thomas Norfolk, the earl of Surrey, was implicated, leading to his execution.

In 1580, Pope Gregory XIII publicly encouraged the assassination of the Protestant Queen Elizabeth. In 1583, another plot against Elizabeth was discovered. Francis Throckmorton was at the head of a plot involving the invasion of England by France to put Mary Queen of Scots on the throne. After Elizabeth's secretary, Francis Walsingham, discovered the plot, Throckmorton was tortured on the rack until he confessed and was executed soon afterward.

In 1586, Walsingham was instrumental in foiling the Babington Plot against the queen. Anthony Babington coordinated an attempted plot to murder Elizabeth and place Mary Queen of Scots on the throne, with the help of Spain. Babington, along with six other conspirators, were executed for high treason. Later evidence implicated Mary Queen of Scots in the Babington Plot, which resulted in her execution for treason in 1587. Elizabeth made a show of opposing the execution, although she herself had ordered it.

Later Years

During the final ten years of her reign, Elizabeth's age began to show, and her popularity with the public decreased some. Beginning in 1586, Elizabeth's new favorite male companion was Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, the stepson of Robert Dudley, who was some thirty-four years her junior. In 1600, Devereux failed in a military assignment to put down an Irish rebellion, as a result of which Elizabeth deprived him of his political post and put him under house arrest. Devereux, backed by 200 to 300 men, attempted a revolt against Elizabeth in 1601. His efforts failed and he was executed for treason.

Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603. She was the last monarch of the Tudor dynasty, which had begun in 1485 with the reign of King Henry VII. She named as her successor King James VI of Scotland (the son of Mary Queen of Scots) as King James I of England.

Introduction

Introduction Summary and Analysis

The author's intention was to collect interesting personal information about Queen Elizabeth I. This point of view makes the book's shape irregular with important events briefly mentioned and minor ones detailed, since other historians have published books about the important people and events.

The author writes about the life of Queen Elizabeth I, daughter of Henry VIII, from Elizabeth's perspective, without explaining the importance of historical events. Elizabeth lived during the time of the Reformation when England broke away from the Catholic Church and the Pope's authority. Catholicism does not recognize civil or courtroom divorce. As is typical of history books written in the 1950s, the author cites numerous names, places, dates and events. The author is inconsistent in her use of names for the same person, making the book difficult to understand at times. She also introduces characters without explaining who they are or their relationship or importance to Queen Elizabeth. Elizabeth lived from 1533 until 1603 and was Queen of England for forty-five years, beginning at age twenty-five. While she reigned, Elizabeth established England as a major European naval and economic power and kept the country out of the on-going wars and insurrections at home and in Europe as long as possible. With peace came prosperity and modernization.

Last names are primarily geographically derived. England and Scotland, south of Hadrian's Wall, are divided into very large plots of land given, or in effect rented, to noblemen loyal to earlier kings. These noblemen were tax collectors for their land and had to provide soldiers for the Crown if asked. The primary landholders were barons, dukes and earls.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

English King Henry VIII dies in January 1547, survived by three children, Mary, Elizabeth and Edward, as well as his great-niece Jane Grey, granddaughter of Henry's sister Mary. Henry's children are extremely intelligent and well read. Mary, age twenty-seven at his death, sees her mother, Catherine of Aragon (daughter of the King of Spain) divorced under English law so that Henry can marry Ann Boleyn, Elizabeth's mother. Mary is Catholic. She watches her father throw off Papal authority and declare himself the Supreme Head of the Church of England. She is banished by the king and remains staunchly Catholic.

Henry's second wife, Ann, refuses his advances for six years until he obtains a divorce from Catherine. Ann gives birth to Elizabeth, instead of Henry's much desired son and male heir. When Ann catches Henry making love to Jane Seymour, Ann is arrested and taken to the Tower with baby Elizabeth. Ann is accused of high treason and becomes quite insane before she is beheaded when Elizabeth is nearly three years old. Henry marries Jane Seymour the next morning. Elizabeth's care is entrusted to a Lady Bryan. She is otherwise ignored by King Henry, who provides no financial support for Elizabeth.

Jane Seymour gives birth to Edward in October 1537 and dies within a week. Elizabeth returns to Court for Edward's christening. Edward and Elizabeth, being close in age, become natural allies. The king and his council move from Hampton Court Palace to another palace so that Hampton Court can be cleansed due to lack of sanitation. Indoor plumbing and even regular bathing is non-existent. Elizabeth is entrusted to a governess, Katherine Champernowne (later known as Kat Ashley), who recognizes the child's intelligence and loves and adores her. Elizabeth somehow finds out what happened to her mother, whose name she never mentions.

Henry's fourth marriage to Ann of Cleves is dissolved by divorce. His fifth marriage is to the second great passion of his life, Catherine Howard, cousin of Ann Boleyn. Catherine is particularly kind to Elizabeth and goes out of her way to be good to the child. Catherine's numerous other affairs are discovered, and she is accused of committing adultery while married to Henry. She is beheaded in 1542 on the same spot where her cousin, Ann Boleyn, was. From this time on, Elizabeth insists she will never marry.

In 1543, King Henry marries Catherine Parr. She is thirty. He is fifty-two and in deteriorating health. His will provides for his succession, first to Edward, next to Mary and then to Elizabeth. If either princess marries without the consent of the Privy Council, her claim to the English Crown will be cancelled. Catherine permits Edward and Elizabeth into the household and encourages them in their studies and interests in the teachings of the Reformed Church. Edward believes that salvation can be found only in a particular system of worship, that of the Reformed Church. Elizabeth is Christian and Protestant, but not a fanatic. Elizabeth remains Edward's companion and friend. Edward

is also on good terms with his cousin Jane Grey, who joins Catherine Parr's household at age nine.

Elizabeth at age thirteen has smooth, red-gold hair hanging straight down her back. Her fingers are long and delicate. She likes plain dresses. Elizabeth is fourteen when her father dies and her brother Edward is crowned King of England.

Chapter 1 Analysis

The Reformation begins in 1517, when Martin Luther posts his theses on a church door. The plague is causing death and illness throughout Europe. Unable to obtain a Catholic annulment from Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII breaks with the Catholic Church and establishes the Church of England. Prior to this time, the Catholic Church was the only recognized church in England, with considerable land holdings and other property. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the head of the Catholic Church in England. When Henry VIII declares himself Supreme Head of the Church in England, most of the English clergy join him and establish the Anglican Church.

With this background, the reader should note that the king or queen of England decides religious freedom in England at the time. England has no law specifically limiting the Crown to men only, and the succession to the Crown is vaguely governed by family relationships. Most attempts to overthrow the British monarchy in this historical period are over religion and political alliances. Spain is at the peak of its political and economic powers. Spanish explorers during this era are mapping the Americas and looting the natives.

The author fails to define "council" but refers to it constantly. This is the Privy Council, which includes the king's personal advisers. The Privy Council is the predecessor to the Cabinet. The author also fails to explain who or what body is authorizing the executions.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Elizabeth lives with Catherine Parr, now Queen Dowager, who secretly marries Thomas Seymour, Lord High Admiral. Seymour has designs on Elizabeth since his brother controls King Edward of Scotland. Seymour has "romps" with Elizabeth and is often alone with her. Catherine unexpectedly finds Elizabeth in his arms, and the child is banished to the house of Sir Anthony Denny at Cheshunt, in the company of Cat Ashley. Elizabeth develops migraines and pains in the eyes, as well as very irregular monthly periods, attributed to shock and emotional strain. Her emotional history is such that the author believes her nervous system and her sexual development are severely injured.

That August, Queen Catherine of Aragon dies within a week of childbirth. Lady Jane Grey attends her service. Seymour proposes that she stay and marry King Edward. Elizabeth wants to go to London to see her brother, but she has no housing for her 120-member household. Seymour loans her Seymour Place and further asks if Elizabeth will marry *him.* Seymour sends money to King Edward to gain his favor. On January 18, Seymour and confederates try to enter King Edward's bedroom and kill his dog. Seymour is arrested and taken to the Tower.

If the council can prove that Seymour proposed marriage to Elizabeth, he will be executed for high treason. If they can prove she accepted, she will also be beheaded. The council sends commissioner Tyrwhit to question Elizabeth. When Elizabeth learns that her governess and treasurer are imprisoned in the Tower, she cries for a long time and denies everything. The governess, Ashley, and treasurer, Parry, scared witless, tell all about Seymour's behavior with Elizabeth. Their disclosures are not what the council needs but they reveal mainly that the treasurer cannot balance his books. Elizabeth's new governess is Lady Tyrwhit. Seymour is condemned to death. Kat Ashley is released from the Tower but forbidden to return to Elizabeth.

The strain causes Elizabeth to weaken and collapse in the care of Lady Tyrwhit. The council sees Elizabeth more sympathetically. She is the victim of a scoundrel, and her state of health is alarming. Elizabeth's recovery is helped by the return of Mrs. Ashley and later of her treasurer Parry. Elizabeth now keeps her own household account books. A new tutor is appointed, and Elizabeth's education is broadened. She still has migraines.

King Edward, now thirteen, asks Elizabeth to send him her portrait. Elizabeth visits her brother at Court. She enters London with a retinue of 200 persons and goes to St. James' Palace, where she is warmly received. Elizabeth is a pale, erect young woman in plain dress, contrasting dramatically with the elaborate costumes of the Court. Her red-blond hair is smooth and uncurled, as is the fashion. Edward conveys Hatfield Palace to Elizabeth, where she and her brother have spent some of their happiest times

together. Edward catches smallpox, followed by measles. He recovers but has a bad cough.

Northumberland, formerly John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, becomes the king's Protector. He is convinced that he must prevent England's return to Catholicism and arranges for the marriage of his son to Jane Grey, who will claim the crown on Edward's death. Edward, running a high fever from tuberculosis, prepares a document proclaiming his Succession, in which he strikes out the claims of his sisters and settles the crown upon Lady Jane Grey and her male heirs.

Chapter 2 Analysis

The nature of the "romps" between Seymour and Elizabeth remains vague and left to the reader's imagination. Seymour's brother is King Edward's Protector, Somerset, who is removed from office by the council and replaced by the Duke of Northumberland. The brothers' schemes to control the Crown both fail.

Jane Grey is descended from Henry VIII's sister Mary and is listed as his great-niece among his survivors. Mary, married to the Catholic king of France, is Catholic and believes that Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon is not recognized under church law, making both Elizabeth and Edward illegitimate children. Northumberland's idea that Jane Grey becoming queen will prevent a return to Catholicism is confused. This difference in opinion between Catholics and Protestants is a constant theme and cause of conflicts and uprising throughout Elizabeth's reign.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Northumberland tries to seize both princesses and shut them in the Tower while he proclaims Jane Grey queen. Mary is warned, goes to Framlingham Castle and proclaims herself queen. Elizabeth remains where she is. Northumberland ends up in the Tower instead. Jane Grey, accused of treason, goes to the jailer's house near Beauchamp Tower, where her husband and his brothers are imprisoned.

Mary asks Elizabeth to meet her so they can ride into London together. They ride horses side by side to wildly shouting crowds and ringing church bells. Simon Renaud, ambassador from Queen Mary's cousin Hapsburg Emperor Charles V, wants to ally England and Spain through Mary's marriage to Emperor Charles' son Philip. He immediately sees Elizabeth as his enemy, since she resembles Henry VIII and the crowds adore her.

Mary reduces the blame cast on Jane Grey but keeps her and her husband in captivity. If Elizabeth reconciles with the Catholic Church, Mary says she will treat her as a sister. Mary is determined to restore Catholicism as the national religion and re-establish Papal authority. Elizabeth unwillingly goes to mass. Parliament revokes the divorce of Mary's parents and declares Elizabeth illegitimate. Mary announces her intended marriage to Philip of Spain. The majority of the people do not want a powerful Catholic alliance and hate foreigners, so Elizabeth remains highly popular as a non-Catholic. The act annulling Henry VIII's divorce alters Elizabeth's social position. Two of her cousins are permitted to walk ahead of her. Elizabeth leaves London for Ashridge.

Wyatt's rebellion begins, intended to stop the Spanish marriage and put Elizabeth and Edward Courtenay, a legitimate heir to the English crown, on the throne. The plot immediately falls apart, and Wyatt is taken to the Tower. Mary writes Elizabeth to come to London, but Elizabeth knows she will be imprisoned. She replies that she is too ill to travel. Queen Mary sends her own doctor to Ashridge to see Elizabeth, who apparently has a kidney infection. She is taken to London on the queen's litter, a horse-drawn carriage, and arrives the morning Lady Jane Grey and her husband are beheaded. Elizabeth remains in the palace for three weeks without seeing her sister. The council must prove that Elizabeth knew of Wyatt's plans. Even a communication with him will be enough.

Elizabeth denies any connection with Sir Thomas Wyatt. Because Queen Mary is leaving London for a Parliament at Oxford, Elizabeth is put in the Tower for safekeeping. On Palm Sunday, council members lead Elizabeth from her apartments to the river stairs in the rain. She lands at the Traitor's Gate, which she at first refuses to use. Then she mounts the stairs and sits down on a damp stone, declaring she will go no farther. The use of force is not an option because some of the warders are Elizabeth's supporters. Her usher begins to cry. Elizabeth rises, enters the gateway and is led to the

left, where she and her ladies are shut and bolted into a large chamber with a great fireplace, stone window seats and three latrines.

Council members question Elizabeth about Wyatt's letter to her, which advises her to remove to Donnington Castle. Panicked, Elizabeth denies knowledge of Donnington, which she owns. Next she answers that she did not receive the letter since the council has it. One of the Catholic council members is so affected by the sight of Elizabeth in this situation that he states she is speaking the truth and that he is sorry to have troubled her. Wyatt is executed. Elizabeth remains in the Bell Tower. She becomes weak and is allowed to walk in the Tower gardens. As the arrival of the Prince of Spain nears, Elizabeth is taken to Woodstock palace in Oxfordshire, where Lady Jane's scaffolding is still standing. Sir Henry Bedingfield is her jailer.

Elizabeth cannot be transported in secret. As her barge proceeds upstream, gunners in the steelyards fire a thunderous salute, and church bells ring. A banquet awaits her arrival. Elizabeth is imprisoned in the gatehouse, but Bedingfield lets her walk in the park.

Queen Mary's marriage preparations proceed. By August, the long imprisonment wears on Elizabeth's nerves, and she asks to be bled, a common remedy of the era. Queen Mary believes herself to be pregnant. Her confidence leads her to begin burning non-Catholics as heretics. Elizabeth, warned, takes communion according to the Roman Catholic rites. Mary is not pregnant but apparently has advanced ovarian cancer. Philip's only hope is to marry Elizabeth, who is summoned to court and asked to wear her richest clothes. Elizabeth is a pale young woman of twenty-two, with a "weird brightness like sea-fire, and hands of miraculous delicacy."

People begin to realize that Queen Mary is not pregnant. Catholics believe Elizabeth is Henry VIII's illegitimate daughter. When Mary dies, they believe the legitimate heir will be the descendant of Henry VIII's older sister Margaret, Mary, Queen of Scots. Mary, the future Queen of France, is already engaged to the king's son. Philip, a Spaniard, is determined to support Elizabeth's claims and not have an English-French alliance. He tells his wife that her policy towards Elizabeth must be conciliatory. Bedingfield, Elizabeth's lenient governor, is discharged. Sir Thomas Pope becomes the princess' governor. Elizabeth returns to Hatfield in October, riding through enthusiastic crowds and pealing church bells. Elizabeth is in weak health again, apparently not eating or drinking, and sends an emissary to the French Ambassador for support. The Bishop of Acqs tells the emissary that Elizabeth must not leave the country or she will not return and will never be queen.

Philip returns to Mary to arrange Elizabeth's marriage to his cousin and to bring the English into his war against the French. Elizabeth is summoned to court and refuses the proposed marriage. Relations improve between Mary and Elizabeth, who returns to Hatfield with Mary. Elizabeth receives a marriage proposal from the King of Sweden, which she refuses. Again she states that she wishes to live unmarried. Mary is very ill and miserable. Elizabeth watches the road away from London fill with horses and riders

streaming away from the capital of their dying queen. Mary dies on November 17. The lords of the council arrive at Hatfield to greet the queen, walking in the park.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Marriages are commonly used to make political alliances in this time period. Charles V is the Catholic Emperor of the Hapsburgs' Empire. He wants an alliance with England against France through marriage of his son Philip and Queen Mary. Henry II of France has already arranged the marriage of his son to eleven-year-old Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, one of the lineal heiresses to the English crown. This would leave Princess Elizabeth out of the succession, contrary to Henry VIII's will. This group has to do *something* about Elizabeth, who is quite popular and non-Catholic. High treason, an attempt to overthrow the queen, is the only act Elizabeth can commit that will cancel her claim to the English Throne.

Among the prisoners Queen Mary releases from the Tower are Edward Courtenay, imprisoned by Henry VIII, and Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, both prominent Catholics. Edward, the grandson of Katherine Plantagenet and great-great-grandson of Edward IV, is twenty-seven years of age and has spent half his life in the Tower. This is the "Courtenay" accused of participating in Wyatt's Rebellion organized to put Elizabeth and himself on the English throne. The author does not explain anything about Sir Thomas Wyatt other than his name. Elizabeth denies any role in Wyatt's Rebellion and is placed in the Tower anyway. The major political players witness Elizabeth's growing popularity and support her succession to the Crown. Even the Catholic members of the queen's Privy Council begin to support her.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Elizabeth is twenty-five years of age, tall, slender and straight. She loves to ride horses fast, dance and watch other people dance. She is young and appears fragile, with glowing white skin, red to gold hair and a long oval face. Elizabeth has inherited her father's abilities and physical magnetism and her mother's strain of hysteria and moments of paralyzing dread. She is remarkably intelligent and a political genius. Three days after her accession, she appoints the incorruptible William Cecil as her chief Secretary of State and primary adviser. Cecil, thirty-eight, is a quiet and formidable genius with "clear, pale eyes in a forehead oppressed by care," and a devoted Protestant. He and Elizabeth see England's future bound up with the Reformation. Both hate war as a waste of men, equipment and money and want to re-establish the national economy.

Lord Robert Dudley emerges as the queen's Master of the Horse. He is the same Robert Dudley imprisoned in the Tower with his brothers, one of whom married Lady Jane Grey, during Elizabeth's imprisonment. Robert Dudley helps Elizabeth financially. He is the same age as Elizabeth, tall with long, slender legs, a round face and a short beak-like nose. He rides, jousts and dances with perfection and manages horses well. Elizabeth thinks he is not terribly bright and lacks integrity. He would betray her. He obviously wants to marry Elizabeth, even though he has a wife.

Queen Elizabeth takes possession of the Tower of London, riding on horseback for the first of her great processions. The people throw themselves into a great personal demonstration of affection as she rides. She enters the Bell Tower and goes to the room where she was imprisoned. She remains in the State Apartments for a week and, with the council, begins resolving her government's pressing problems, including a peace treaty between France and Spain, religious compromises between Protestants and Catholics, poverty and labor unrest from bad harvests and the devaluing of the currency. Elizabeth also must deal with the claim of Mary, Queen of Scots, to the English throne since she is backed by the King of France. The queen and the Privy Council meet continuously. Cecil observes that Elizabeth has "shown herself to have the memory and penetration that goes with a mind of uncommon ability, and an inexhaustible interest in the theory and practice of government." She lacks experience, which Cecil has. Cecil is greatly concerned about the queen's marriage and succession. If she dies without a child, a Catholic revival under Mary Stuart will mean his execution.

Elizabeth also believes in astrology and clairvoyance. She is crowned queen on Sunday, January 15, 1559, an astrologically fortunate date.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Queen Elizabeth is portrayed as a beautiful woman with spirit, intelligence, good political instincts and definite disabling personality disorders probably caused by both circumstances and what appears to be a form of anorexia. She chooses a very able adviser in William Cecil, an anti-war Protestant prudent with funds. Prior kings and queens lived lavishly, and England has financial problems. Lord Robert Dudley emerges as one of the continuing loves of Elizabeth's life even though she realizes his shortcomings. The nature and validity of the claim of Mary, Queen of Scots, to the English throne remains an issue until her ultimate execution and is the cause of many uprisings and threats of invasions from European countries. The question of Elizabeth's marriage and succession to the throne also continues throughout her reign. The reader should remember that Elizabeth, as a child, vowed never to marry. She uses her singleness to postpone numerous insurrections and invasions by her promises to marry European leaders that are postponed at the last moment.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

The Saturday before Elizabeth's Coronation, she rides through London to Westminster in a chariot draped with crimson velvet for her recognition procession. Crowds line the streets. She stops to speak to individual subjects. Elizabeth is a straight and narrow figure in a golden dress with red-gold hair framing her delicate, oval, smiling face. Both she and her subjects are extremely happy and enthusiastic. The Catholic bishops restored by Mary still hold their positions. The Privy Council has forbidden public preaching but sanctioned Gospel reading and the Litany in English. No bishop is willing to crown Elizabeth until Bishop Oglethorpe of Carlisle consents.

Elizabeth, wearing a crimson velvet robe, is first anointed in the Abbey. She changes to gold robes worn the day before and is crowned with the Crown of St. Edward, the State Crown and the crown specially made for her late brother Edward. She is presented to the people, with trumpets sounding, pipes and drums playing, the organ pealing and the tower bells ringing. She changes to her purple velvet robe for the state banquet in Westminster Hall with 200 persons all dressed in red. The two earls in charge of the banquet ride on horseback around the hall. The banquet lasts until one in the morning. Elizabeth is exhausted and comes down with a cold.

Elizabeth attends the opening of Parliament. Under her guidance, the Privy Council and Parliament pass the "Act of Supremacy and Uniformity," defining the queen's title as Supreme Governor of the Church. The Act restores Edward VI's Prayer Book and includes specific concessions to the Catholics, who make up half of England's population. Large numbers of them still support Mary Stuart's claim to the English throne, but they are willing to be loyal to Elizabeth if concessions are made. Her government is a success. William Cecil firmly believes Elizabeth must marry and establish her succession. Elizabeth believes that marriage will eliminate her importance as a matrimonial catch for the crowned heads of Europe. Her availability becomes a valuable diplomatic weapon.

Elizabeth and Robert Dudley become inseparable. Rumors abound that the queen visits him in his chamber day and night. Lady Dudley has breast cancer, and Robert is waiting for her to die before he marries Elizabeth.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Queen Elizabeth is extremely popular with the Protestants and Catholics of her country. Her predecessor, sometimes called Bloody Mary, massacred Protestants. Elizabeth uses the splendor of the Crown well but not gaudily and guides the Privy Council and Parliament in making appropriate concessions to the Catholics. Her policies towards both segments make peace within the English and work to stop future predicted

uprisings of allegedly unhappy Catholics. The Church of England is the Anglican Church,

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

The Protestant Reformation threatens to engulf Scotland, and Elizabeth sees a chance to rid Scotland of the French. She sends money to pay the rebel army. The Scottish lords depose the Queen Regent, mother of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Privy Council, with Cecil leading them, urges Elizabeth to intervene. Elizabeth waits. Her reign is short of money, ships and men. She begins a pattern of action that continues throughout her tenure, waiting to see how things fall out, how others commit themselves, and then intervening at the last possible moment. Cecil sees that the risk of financial loss must be balanced against the perils of inaction, and he gets Elizabeth to act by threatening to quit his position. The queen sends fourteen ships to the Firth of Forth to destroy French shipping. The British naval success is followed by stormy weather disastrous to the French ships.

The Queen Regent is dying, and the French seek peace. Cecil goes to arrange the Treaty of Edinburg, by which King Francis II of France and Mary, Queen of Scots, will relinquish their claim to the English Crown. Elizabeth will be recognized as queen, and French forces will leave Scotland. Mary, Queen of Scots, refuses to ratify this treaty that renounces her claim to the throne. The French government accepts it, and England's prestige soars. English credit abroad improves dramatically.

Cecil wants to secure the allegiance of certain Scottish lords with money. Elizabeth declines and tells Cecil to pay for his own trip home. Two wealthy English lords intervene. Elizabeth's personal management of her finances, including household bills, contributes to the Crown's independence and power. Elizabeth is extremely conservative with money and encourages gifts to herself as demonstrations of loyalty and bids for royal favor.

The affair between Lord Robert Dudley and Queen Elizabeth continues. Ann Dudley lives apart from her husband in an isolated house near Oxford. One Sunday, she is found at the bottom of a staircase with a broken neck. This creates an appalling scandal, and Elizabeth sends Lord Robert away at once. The queen's involvement is questioned. Obviously, Elizabeth wants a romantic relationship with Robert Dudley, not a marriage. Lord Robert returns after the funeral, now both the son of a traitor and a suspected wife murderer. Elizabeth enjoys conducting courtships and marriage negotiations that she never intends to complete. Such talk exhilarates her, but she will not marry Robert Dudley.

Elizabeth's experience of how the heir to the throne is courted at the expense of the reigning monarch makes her unwilling to recognize a successor. Catherine Grey, the older of Jane Grey's two surviving sisters and the next successor by Henry VIII's will, expects to be named "heiress-presumptive." She becomes one of Elizabeth's ladies-in-waiting instead. Catherine Grey, secretly married and pregnant, with her husband in

Spain, tells her tale to Lord Robert in his bedchambers and is removed to the Tower. Elizabeth is furious because of the scandal and because the heiress-presumptive is pregnant.

Mary, Queen of Scots, her husband now dead, is in France. She decides to return to Scotland through England. No landing in England is permitted, and she goes to the other side of Hadrian's Wall in northern Scotland.

Chapter 6 Analysis

This complicated and condensed historical narrative shows the intricate relationships of the claimants to the English throne and the careful path that Elizabeth walks to maintain her position. Scotland is now full of Protestants who have tired of their Catholic king and queen. Elizabeth takes this opportunity to assist them. The sorry state of the queen's finances prevents her from taking full advantage of this opportunity. Her carefulness with her funds is clearly demonstrated when she tells William Cecil, who has negotiated the Treaty of Edinburg, that she has no money with which to bribe the Scottish lords or pay for his trip home.

Hadrian's Wall was built by the Romans to show where their control of England ended. North of Hadrian's Wall live Scottish clans who thrive on fighting and family relationships. South of Hadrian's Wall, the feudal system is well established.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Mary, Queen of Scots, a beautiful woman but an incompetent ruler, longs to be queen of England. She bargains with the English Parliament to name her Elizabeth's heir. She tries to make a marriage alliance with a Catholic power and seize the British crown. Her first choice is Spanish King Philip's son Don Carlos, a criminal lunatic. Philip is not willing to declare war on England. He doubts whether the English Catholics are interested in dethroning Elizabeth. Mary still believes herself to be the rightful queen.

Elizabeth revives the Royal Navy by increasing sailors' wages and producing the best-furnished fleet for navigation and war ever. She continues to defy royal dress traditions and commonly wears a fitted bodice with long sleeves, a full skirt and a small bonnet. She now displays all of the jewelry inherited from her father. She loves jewels and pearls. The latter suggest "Queen of the Sea" and are also a symbol of virginity. Lord Robert Dudley still intends to marry Elizabeth and pursues her with steady determination until rumors spread that they are indeed married and that Elizabeth is pregnant.

Queen Elizabeth delights in bathing her entire body in an oval bath, contrary to customs. Once she bathes and goes out, later developing a high temperature. She catches small pox. Her fever increases, but no spots appear. While running this high fever, Elizabeth indicates that the relationship between herself and Robert Dudley always stops short of the sex act. She asks that Lord Robert be appointed Protector of the Realm with a salary of 20,000 pounds per year. The doctors summon Cecil and tell him they do not expect the queen to live. The Privy Council gathers to consider her successor. Meantime, Queen Elizabeth becomes conscious and breaks out in spots. The scabs leave her face without permanent blisters. Her nurse, Robert Dudley's sister, catches small pox from her. As soon as the spots are gone, Elizabeth is out and about. The author concludes that Elizabeth, as a baby, connected sexual intercourse with terror and death; "if you give yourself to men, they cut your head off with an axe."

Chapter 7 Analysis

Hygienic conditions are not good during this period. Houses do not have running water of any kind, and heat is from fireplaces. Elizabeth is fastidious and has a bathtub, in which she delights. None of the modern vaccinations or treatments for diseases available, and whoever catches a contagious disease (and there are many) during this historical period must live or die without intervention.

Much has been written about the effects of early child abuse on the child's later behavior. The author here speculates that Elizabeth, who is three and absent when her mother is executed, connects sexual intercourse with terror and death. Whether this is

true or not can never be known. We do know that Elizabeth as a child said she would never marry, and nobody believed her. She repeatedly used her marital status as a negotiation strategy with other heads of state.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

The next Parliament, terrified of a Catholic revival under Mary, Queen of Scots, tries to force Elizabeth to marry and have a child. She assures them that she realizes her mortality and is considering the problem. The lords persist that the succession must be defined and that the queen must marry. Meanwhile, the imprisoned Catherine Grey, next successor by Henry VIII's will, becomes pregnant by her also imprisoned husband and has a second son. Mary, Queen of Scots, considers marrying Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley. The Catholics believe Darnley's claim to the English Crown to be nearly as good as Mary's. Queen Elizabeth and the Privy Council try to neutralize the impending danger of a struggle for the Crown between Mary and Catherine Grey by suggesting that Lord Robert Dudley marry Mary. This would reduce her chances of arranging a European marriage and alliance. Elizabeth will do anything to keep her Crown. Lord Robert decides his chances are better with Elizabeth and refuses this arrangement.

The plague rages through London, and Elizabeth goes to Windsor Castle. Catherine Grey, her husband and her two sons are sent from London to Essex. The Spanish ambassador dies, and a well-liked man, Don Guzman de Silva, visits Elizabeth. During a comedy that Elizabeth translates into Spanish for him, she tells him that black and white are her colors. In some books of the period, black and white are the colors of perpetual virginity. Elizabeth appoints her chief adviser, William Cecil, Chancellor of Cambridge University. King's College becomes the Court for the summer months.

Queen Elizabeth returns to London and makes her lover, Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester. This will become "the most famous, most envied and best-hated name in the length and breadth of England." Lord Darnley, a pretty boy of nineteen, goes to Scotland.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Parliament is yet again encouraging Elizabeth to marry someone and have a child, who will be her successor to the Crown rather that the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots. When the plague rages through London, Elizabeth and others escape from it by leaving London. Elizabeth's intelligence is shown through her translation of a comedy into Spanish for the Spanish Ambassador. Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, goes to Scotland, where he will marry Mary, Queen of Scots.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Queen Elizabeth insists that she does not need to marry anybody. Mary, Queen of Scots, is pressured by the Scottish Catholics and the King of Spain to marry Lord Darnley and declare themselves King and Queen of England. The Scottish Protestant lords proclaim it illegal to impose a Catholic king on Scotland without Parliament's consent. Nevertheless, Darnley is proclaimed king in Edinburg, and the next day he and Mary marry. Mary also has her long-coveted support of Spain in her endeavors.

Elizabeth has a bad summer. Kat Ashley dies, and Elizabeth grieves her loss. She is a faithful friend and always cries bitterly over deaths. Even though she and her lover Robert quarrel, he still believes he will marry her. Elizabeth continues to visit the sick and dying. Cecil draws a table for and against Robert as King-Consort. The "againsts" outnumber the "fors." As the year ends, the Spanish Ambassador is told by the French Ambassador that Robert slept with Elizabeth on New Year's night.

Chapter 9 Analysis

The claim of Mary, Queen of Scots, to the English Crown improves with her marriage to another claimant and the long-awaited support of Spain. Since the Scots are now Protestant and Mary is Catholic, problems will soon arise. Elizabeth has been and always will be very supportive and loving of her friends. She is a natural nurse and nurturer, as will be seen in her actions throughout the rest of this book.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Robert edges closer to marrying Elizabeth, who tells him that if she does marry an Englishman, it will be Robert. Mary, Queen of Scots, is pregnant. Lord Darnley is seen as a brainless, arrogant fool. Mary confides in her Italian secretary Rizzio, who manages the queen's correspondence and negotiations with the Pope and King of Spain. A group of Protestant lords murders Rizzio in the queen's presence. Even though Mary is seven months' pregnant, she collects herself and her husband and escapes to Dunbar, where she has a son. She invites Elizabeth to be the godmother. Elizabeth accepts but sends a stand-in and a beautiful gift to the baby's christening.

Parliament meets at the end of September. Its most urgent concern is to make Elizabeth marry and appoint a successor. Elizabeth promised an answer to their petition about her marriage and succession at the last session of Parliament. Elizabeth again evades a direct answer. Members of Parliament get into fistfights over what to do next. Elizabeth replies that she will marry when it is convenient and hopes to have children. She does not want to appoint one successor among the many claimants. Parliament tries to force Elizabeth by incorporating her promise to marry in the "Subsidy Bill," which Elizabeth refuses to approve. Parliament concedes and re-words the Bill.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Mary's life takes another interesting turn, one of many still to come. Her negotiations with the Pope and King of Spain are temporarily interrupted when the Protestant lords murder her negotiator in her presence. The English Parliament is still arguing with Elizabeth about marriage and children. Her growing popularity with the English people is tempering their demands, and the queen is growing older and out of childbearing age.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

The Protestant lords in Scotland and Queen Mary have had enough of Lord Darnley. Mary refuses to divorce him, so they blow up the house in which he is sleeping. When news of this reaches Elizabeth, she has the locks changed on the doors of her Privy Chamber and bedroom. Queen Mary takes up with the Earl of Bothwell, who is found "not guilty" of Lord Darnley's murder, stages an abduction of Mary, somehow obtains a divorce from his wife and marries Mary with Protestant rites. Mary's political importance is gone in Europe, and her activities are quite a spectacle. She seeks refuge in England, miscarries twin girls and abdicates the Scottish Throne. Her son James becomes King of Scotland at thirteen months old. Mary and her entourage land at Workington, England, and she writes Elizabeth demanding clothing suitable to her position. Elizabeth is incapable of sending her appropriate clothing and jewels, so one of her ladies in waiting sends a package containing two worn-out chemises, a length of black velvet and a pair of shoes.

Mary demands formal reception by Queen Elizabeth. Cecil and the council refuse. Elizabeth knows that if the subjects' obedience to the sovereign is over-ridden, no sovereign is safe. English commissioners question Mary about her role in Lord Darnley's murder and find no evidence of her involvement. Instead of letting her return to Scotland for the Scots to determine her fate, since the Scots have already refused to have her as queen, co-Regent or private person, Elizabeth sends her to Tutbury Castle where a miniature court is established for her.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Elizabeth's grace, cheapness and popularity are shown in her treatment of Mary Queen of Scots. Mary arrives suddenly seeking refuge when she is effectively thrown out of Scotland. Instead of imprisoning Mary, Elizabeth establishes a court for her in a castle suitable for her needs. Elizabeth's conduct is always appropriate to the circumstances.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Don Gerau De Spies, a new Spanish ambassador, arrives in London. He wants to restore England to Catholicism immediately and plots to have Mary, Queen of Scots, marry the Catholic Duke of Norfolk. He expects the English Catholics to rise and overthrow Queen Elizabeth. The Duke of Norfolk avoids involvement. The English Channel is swarming with pirates and ships that Elizabeth encourages because they obstruct Spanish communications through the Channel.

Four Spanish ships, carrying 85,000 pounds of gold in chests, take refuge from the pirates in English ports. Elizabeth seizes the gold and has the chests taken to the Tower. The Spanish head of the Netherlands imprisons the English merchants there and takes their goods. The English government seizes the property of the Spanish traders in England and arrests Ambassador de Spies. Mary writes de Spies, and the House of Commons gets the letter. Scottish lords form an army to invade England, expected to be supported by Norfolk in the south. Elizabeth summons him to Windsor Castle and questions him. Norfolk cannot make a decision about what to do this time either. He sends word to the Scottish lords to postpone the uprising. As he returns to Windsor Castle, he is arrested, taken to London and jailed in the Tower.

Chapter 12 Analysis

The author never identifies the Duke of Norfolk or his relationship to Queen Elizabeth or to Mary, Queen of Scots, except that he is a potential husband to Mary, who may or may not still be married to the Earl of Bothwell.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Parliament wants action taken against Mary, Queen of Scots, to reduce her threat to the Crown. Privy Council members question Norfolk, now in the Tower, but they cannot find enough facts to charge him with treason. Queen Elizabeth becomes indignant. Twice Norfolk has denied his intentions and reaffirmed his fidelity to *her* while keeping up his negotiations with Mary. When Elizabeth learns the Privy Council does not regard his acts as treasonable, she has a hysterical fit, threatens to have Norfolk's head off by her own authority and faints.

The Scottish lords involved in the uprising become desperate with Norfolk's arrest. They try to kidnap Mary from Tutbury, but the Privy Council has Mary moved to Coventry. These lords have now marched the length of four counties without any sign of a Catholic uprising against Elizabeth. They retreat and are driven over the Scottish border.

Elizabeth is most angry because the rebellion has cost her money. Since the death of Henry VIII, she is the only monarch who has cared about solvency. Now she has paid three bodies of troops sent after the Scottish lords and their soldiers. Elizabeth is furious because her religious policy of leniency and tolerance has been spurned by the northern Catholics. The country is at peace, however precarious. This means trade develops, taxes are lowered and energy is used for prosperity instead of destruction.

Elizabeth's system of religious tolerance works so well that in February 1570 Pope Pius excommunicates Elizabeth and makes it impossible to separate the religious from the political aspect of the Catholic faith. The Pope states that English Catholics are disobedient to the Pope if they are loyal to the queen and that they are traitors to the queen if they obey the Pope. This upsets Philip of Spain and Emperor Maximilian of the Holy Roman Empire, who are now England's enemies. They do not want this. The Papal pronouncement is not published in their counties. However, it shatters Elizabeth's religious compromise that makes the majority of Catholics tolerate her system and glorifies Catholic martyrs.

Protestant reaction is instantaneous. Bishop Jewel, in his "Answer to the Pope's Bull," says many things against the Pope and praises Elizabeth. He illustrates the rock on which England's love for Elizabeth is based: "God gave us Queen Elizabeth, and with her, gave us peace, and so long a peace as England hath seldom seen before."

Chapter 13 Analysis

This chapter describes another of the seemingly unending series of plots in England and Europe to put Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, on the English throne and end the Reformation in Europe and England. If Elizabeth dies without heirs, Mary will become

Queen of England. If Mary predeceases Elizabeth, then the throne will pass to Mary's son, a Protestant Scot. The Scottish reformation takes on international overtones as time passes, with John Calvin speaking in Geneva and his most determined follower being John Knox of Scotland.

Elizabeth is carefully implementing her religious policy of leniency and tolerance, creating a precarious peace throughout all of England. The country becomes prosperous. The Catholics still resist Protestantism in any form, to the extent that the Pope excommunicates Queen Elizabeth and states that Catholics who obey the queen are traitors to him.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Elizabeth is thirty-seven, twelve years into her reign as Queen of England. She uses cosmetics to maintain her pale complexion. During these times, hair is washed with lye. Teeth are cleaned by rubbing them with a special cloth and using toothpicks. Mouthwashes exist. Elizabeth is now dressing with splendor in clothing of black, violet, crimson or white. These colors show off her paleness and red hair. She loves silk knitted stockings, flowers and jewels.

Peacetime energy creates demands for glass, which is used everywhere - in bathing pools, houses and walkways. It gives a sense of magical luxury and riches. Queen Elizabeth now has many suitors, and she enjoys the flirtations immensely. England manufactures gunpowder to be sold abroad.

Chapter 14 Analysis

The author provides a glimpse into Queen Elizabeth's private life and the lives of others in this time period. Personal hygiene is different, based on what is available and known to be useful. Elizabeth is now dressing royally and enjoying luxuries, including knitted stockings and glass. It is surprising to learn how people once lived and the items they considered wonderful that we take for granted.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

England enjoys peace and economic prosperity. The country provides refuge to skilled workers from France and the Netherlands, creating even more prosperity for England. The workers make felt, thread, lace, woven silk, parchment, paper, glass and steel instruments. Sir Thomas Gresham sets up a seat of commercial exchange on Cornhill, consisting of three wings enclosing a courtyard. Queen Elizabeth opens it and names it the Royal Exchange.

Meanwhile, the French propose another plan for marriage to Mary, Queen of Scots, bringing back the threat of the French re-entering Scotland and using it as their base for a Catholic invasion of England in Mary's interest. Queen Elizabeth stops this one by hinting that she is deeply interested in marrying the man herself. During lengthy negotiations, neither marriage takes place.

The English are tiring of Mary's plots. She was concerned in four major plots during her eighteen-year imprisonment, and the question remains whether Mary herself plotted or connived at Queen Elizabeth's murder, thereby committing treason. Mary denies everything, including her abdication of the throne. Parliament meets and decides that Mary's action in declaring herself Queen of England during the lifetime of Queen Elizabeth is quite enough to justify her beheading. Norfolk, Mary's primary co-conspirator, is scheduled for beheading. After fourteen years of disuse, the scaffold on Tower Hill has fallen apart, and another is built. Mary is saved by Elizabeth's kindness.

Chapter 15 Analysis

England's commercial importance in the world increases. The English people like peace and are tiring of the continuing attempts of Mary, Queen of Scots, to interrupt their prosperity with her plans to take the English throne.

Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Catholics massacre large numbers of Protestants at the "Massacre of St. Bartholomew" in France. One Privy Council member tells the French ambassador that this is the greatest crime since the Crucifixion. Pressure mounts for execution of Mary, Queen of Scots. Elizabeth wants to sends Mary to Scotland to be executed by Scottish law, but Elizabeth's emissary is killed, and this plan fails.

Elizabeth's love Leichester, who has the reputation of a lecher, secretly poisons Lord Sheffield and pledges to marry his widow while continuing his relationship with Elizabeth. Leichester privately marries this woman four days before the first of his son, with her doctor witnessing the ceremony.

Chapter 16 Analysis

French Catholics again demonstrate their hatred of Protestants, creating yet more demands within England for execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, thereby eliminating a Catholic claimant to the English Throne.

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

In 1573, Queen Elizabeth pays off the debts owed the City of London by King Henry VIII and King Edward VI, greatly increasing her popularity with her people. Lady Lennox goes to Scotland in the fall to see her grandson, eight-year-old King James. The roads are impassible, so she stops at Rufford, owned by the Countess of Shrewsbury. There, she introduces her son, Lord Charles Stuart, another claimant to the throne, to her hostess' daughter, Elizabeth Cavendish. After the young people marry, both mothers are sent to the Tower for having arranged the marriage of a youth of royal blood without the Crown's permission.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Elizabeth accomplishes what her predecessors could not. She pays off the Crown's debts to the City of London. English law prohibits arrangement of a royal marriage of any kind without the king or queen's consent.

Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Elizabeth visits Dr. Dee and asks to see his speculum of magic glass. The summer after that, Leicester, in the last phase of his superb handsomeness (before he turns red-faced, bald and fat), provides much entertainment for Elizabeth at Kenilworth to show his continuing devotion to the queen. The furniture is grandly decorated. He has rows of glass dishes for cream. The great rooms are lit by glass candlesticks.

The queen and her entourage ride to hunt the hart one evening. When they return, Sylvanus, a wild man of the woods, meets them and spouts poetry as he runs besides the queen's horse. Another man, Deep Desire, steps out of a holly bush to express Leicester's words. Sylvanus breaks a sapling and hits the queen's horse on the head. The queen reins in the horse but walks the rest of the summer. There is much entertainment common to the era.

The Essex family visits, including the thirteen-year-old Lettice Devereaux, Elizabeth's cousin. The Earl of Essex dies the following year, and Leicester is credited with his death so that he can marry Lettice. Parliament again requests that Elizabeth marry, and she promises to do so if and when the safety of the state requires it. The French king and queen decide to remove Prince Alenzon, undersized and very ugly but lively and responsive, from France and begin negotiations for him to marry Elizabeth.

Chapter 18 Analysis

The author describes typical entertainment of the era provided for Queen Elizabeth and much of the grandeur and luxurious furnishings of the large houses. The play in the woods could be a precursor to Shakespeare's later works. Negotiations begin to marry Prince Alenzon of France, the "Frog Prince," to Queen Elizabeth.

Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

Elizabeth is now forty years of age, nervous and irritable. The doctors believe that the healing of the ulcer on her leg will increase the frequency and duration of her monthly periods. Leicester and Elizabeth no longer carry on like young lovers, and he marries Lettice Devereaux. Elizabeth has an abscessed tooth, which she finally agrees to have pulled after the Bishop of London has a tooth pulled.

Queen Elizabeth continues marriage negotiations with Prince Alenzon, with control of Europe at stake. When she learns of Leicester's marriage to her cousin, she is wounded, betrayed and angry. She orders Leicester arrested and put in the Tower out of her sight. Leicester feigns grave illness, and Elizabeth relents, her fury being spent.

Prince Alenzon arrives in London. He is puny, much pitted from smallpox, with a very large nose, but he is also ardent, civilized and a very good talker and lover. He and Elizabeth are delighted with each other, and she nicknames him her "Frog Prince." The thought of Elizabeth marrying a Catholic offends John Stubbs, a zealous Puritan, who publishes a pamphlet against it, alluding that any lovemaking between Elizabeth and Alenzon is a sham. Elizabeth orders that Stubbs' right hand be cut off and the stump seared with a hot iron to stop the bleeding.

Chapter 19 Analysis

The author illustrates medical thinking common to this era. There is no mention of Leicester's divorcing the mother of his son, even though the legality of that earlier marriage is questionable. Readers are introduced to the Catholic "Frog Prince" of France and left to wonder why his parents want him out of their country. The reader may also puzzle as to why anyone would believe Queen Elizabeth, who has so far not married anybody, would marry a short, ugly, Catholic Frenchman whom she calls the "Frog Prince."

Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Leicester sends Elizabeth fifteen buttons engraved with diamonds and rubies arranged in true love knots to distract her from marrying the "Frog Prince." Others point out that this will create an alliance with a Frenchman and a Papist. Any children Elizabeth might have by this man might resemble him. When the Spanish Army lands in Ireland, Elizabeth becomes upset at yet another attempt to overthrow her government and restore Catholicism.

In September 1580, Francis Drake brings his pirate ship, the Golden Hind into Plymouth harbor, after a three-year voyage in which he sailed around the world. The ship's hold is crammed with silver and jewels with a value beyond estimation, looted from Spanish ships. The Spanish ambassador demands their return. Elizabeth is one of the investors in Drake's enterprise, and the loot will remain in England. Drake's glorious success is a national asset. The shares are paid out to the investors and to Drake himself. The remaining bullion is stowed away in the Tower. Drake offers the Spanish ambassador a few minor trinkets, which he refuses.

While preparations continue for Elizabeth's impending marriage, she boards the Golden Hind and dines on board with Drake at a banquet reminiscent of those of Henry VIII. Afterwards, she knights Drake with French delegates approving. Drake gives Elizabeth a large silver casket and a frog made of diamonds.

The French delegation arrives to conclude marriage negotiations. In the meantime, the Pope sends Jesuit missionaries to Ireland. Alenzon, the intended groom, enters into a treaty with the Flemish without telling Elizabeth. Not to be outdone, the French say that Drake's piracy has offended the Spanish, and Elizabeth needs the alliance with France. The English reply that they need no such alliance, and the marriage is one of affection only (not that Elizabeth intends to marry anyone). They would consider a political treaty, which the negotiators have no authority to make. Elizabeth summons the intended groom, who is leading a battle in Europe. As he prepares to go to England, Elizabeth strikes the paragraph from the marriage treaty that allows Alenzon the right to free exercise of his religion in England.

King James of Scotland, now fifteen, and raised by severe Scots Puritans, meets his Catholic cousin, Esme? Stuart, Count d'Aubigny, who rids James of the influence of his Regent, Morton, now charged with complicity in the murder of Lord Darnley, late husband of Mary, Queen of Scots. Morton confesses and says that the Queen of Scots wanted it. This news upsets Elizabeth because James is shown to be mean and vicious. Mary, Queen of Scots, is thrilled at Morton's death because she does not know that her son considers her abdication absolutely binding and himself King of Scotland.

The English will not consent to a marriage between Elizabeth and Alenzon without a firm guarantee from the French king of an Anglo-French alliance against Spain. The negotiations that lead up to marriages safeguard alliances. Elizabeth cannot tie her marriage to a war. It would deprive her of her peoples' love. She cannot marry her love until the problems are resolved.

The Catholics invade England. Young men are trained as missionary priests to England. The Papal Nuncio at Madrid writes the Pope on behalf of two English noblemen who want to know if assassinating Queen Elizabeth is a sin. The reply is that whoever sends her out of the world with the pious intention of doing God's service does not sin. The Catholic uprising expected in England again does not happen, and nobody can prove it will. Parliament declares it a felony to harbor Jesuits and seminary priests and sets fines. The government frames a question to ask arrested Catholic priests: in the event of an invasion sponsored by the Pope to dethrone the queen, would you fight on the queen's side? This becomes the "Bloody Question." To whom does a priest declare himself a traitor - the queen or the Pope?

Edward Campion is a missionary priest sent to England. He is arrested and brought to the Tower with a placard tied on him saying, "Campion the Seditious Jesuit." Leicester and the queen question him. Campion cannot attend non-Catholic church to save his life.

Chapter 20 Analysis

This is the first time the author mentions Sir Francis Drake and his ship, The Golden Hind. Queen Elizabeth commissions Drake to sail to America with two ships. He becomes much hated by the Spaniards since he captures the equivalent of millions from them. The Spaniards are busily exploring, conquering and ravaging the Americas and their natives for "God, Gold and Glory," an infamous motto. Drake captures a Spanish galleon yielding enough gold, silver and jewels to put England's economy in the black. Drake goes next to the coast of California and then heads west to England, becoming the first person to circumnavigate the globe. Queen Elizabeth, as an investor in Drake's enterprise, is not about to return any of the treasures to Spain.

Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Alenzon returns to England, and Elizabeth agrees to marry him. She has Alenzon bound to her, and she creates conflict between him and the King of France. Parliament demands terms which the French king refuses, infuriating his brother, Alenzon. Elizabeth writes Alenzon that she fears that if she marries him she will not live long. She does not want his love to prove fatal to him, and she will always be his friend. Alenzon is thunderstruck and curses women and English. The envoy arrives from French King Henry III to complete negotiations, and they agree to everything except the return of Calais. Leicester wants to send the Frog Prince back to the Netherlands with money. Elizabeth thinks that if he will forget her for money, he is not worth having.

The queen finds it difficult to rid herself of the Frog Prince. He would rather marry Elizabeth anyway. If he cannot have her, he would rather they both die. Finally, in return for substantial promises of money and a marriage in six weeks, Alenzon agrees to leave. The winter gales make it impossible for ships to sail to France from England, but the emissaries come the other way easily. One arrives with news that if the queen persists in her present course, the King of France will ally with the King of Spain. Members of the council visit Elizabeth to tell her that Alenzon must be gratified either by marriage or money. He is given 30,000 pounds and bills for 20,000 more and sent to the Netherlands, where he will be Duke of Brabant.

The success of the negotiations, which for the last three years were important to English foreign policy, are due to Elizabeth's ability to convince Alenzon of her passion. She generates in herself a cold brightness, a sort of emotion, which is interpreted by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer's Night's Dream:* "And the imperial votaress pass on, in maiden meditation, fancy."

Chapter 21 Analysis

This chapter shows another example of Queen Elizabeth's skillful use of a potential marriage to maintain peace and prosperity in England and avoid war. Leichester re-emerges as a trusted adviser who urges the queen to pay off Alenzon and be done with him.

Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

Mary, Queen of Scots, is living with her court at one of Lord Shrewsbury's country seats. She is ceaselessly engaged with political intrigues involving France and Spain and still has her French dowry with which to pay for them. One more time the Spanish ambassador assures Mary that an invasion will be paid for by the Spanish king, launched in the Pope's name and supported by thousands of Catholics all over England. Mary's son James I, King of Scotland, does not want to share the throne with his mother. The chief instigator returns to France and dies. The Spanish plan is for the army to invade England, create a diversion in Ireland and watch the general insurrection of Catholics begin. This is to start in September 1583.

One of Elizabeth's primary councilors dies in June. A comet appears over London, and many believe it heralds the death of a great person. Designs for the Spanish invasion again fall though because of the Spanish king's caution, and a conspirator in England reveals the details of the plan. The English express their fury against Mary and their love and devotion to Elizabeth. Elizabeth is forced to deal with the dangers being created by Mary and the Catholic powers.

The Spanish ambassador is sent back to Spain. Mary writes a long letter to Elizabeth full of anger, hatred and mean gossip attributed to Lady Shrewsbury. She demands a meeting with the queen. Mary's "guardianship" is transferred to Sir Ralph Sadler, who is not sympathetic to her demands.

William of Orange is assassinated in 1584, showing how easily this could happen to Elizabeth. The "Frog Prince" Alenzon dies of disease. Prosperity brings luxuries to the English that they have not had, including perfumes, colored stockings and shoes, eye-catching ruffs and jewelry. Queen Elizabeth loves rich and precious objects. Her chair of state is under a canopy studded with pearls and precious stones, including large shiny diamonds, sapphires and rubies. The river in front of Whitehall Palace is covered with swans. Thirty-four columns are in the palace garden, each bearing the likeness of a heraldic beast. There is a separate place for jousting. Elizabeth also loves to entertain and to be entertained.

Chapter 22 Analysis

Mary, Queen of Scots, continues her activities until Queen Elizabeth tires of them. Mary is placed under secure house arrest. The English are prospering, and Elizabeth is shown to be enjoying luxuries common to the era.

Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

The Privy Council draws up a "Bond of Association," agreeing to pursue to death anyone who murders Queen Elizabeth and the person in whose interests the act was committed. When Parliament meets, the primary issue is the queen's continued safety. Elizabeth requests that any person on whose behalf she might be murdered receive a trial. The second bill before the houses orders all Jesuits and seminary priests to leave England within forty days.

Elizabeth ascribes her safety to God's protection, even though some clergy leaders say she has no religious convictions. The Anglican Church is criticized for appointing incompetent clergy. The queen instructs the bishop to find honest, sober and wise men who can read the Bible and preach to the people. Elizabeth values intercessory prayer. It is rumored that she cures eczema by prayer and her touch. She believes that God is the greatest physician and prayers should always go to God.

Chapter 23 Analysis

The Privy Council and Parliament are very protective of Queen Elizabeth, who has ruled with dignity and intelligence for many years and kept the country out of major wars. Elizabeth is mellowing a bit with age and is tempering Parliament's zeal with her request that conspirators against her receive a trial.

Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Elizabeth is asked to become Queen of Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, guaranteeing war with Spain. Instead, she promises armed assistance for holding three ports open but otherwise refuses the offer. The States still desire a titular head, and make Leicester Governor-General of the United Provinces. Elizabeth's ailments become better immediately and she chastises Leicester by letter. Then she learns Lady Leicester and a train of ladies and gentlewomen, with rich coaches and many horses, plan to join him in the Netherlands. This is inappropriate. Lady Leicester is stopped from taking a larger entourage than the queen has. Elizabeth sends Leicester money for his troops, but his battles are badly planned and finances are badly administered.

Mary, Queen of Scots, has been openly aiding Elizabeth's enemies for seventeen years. Her supervision passes to Sir Amhas Paulet, a loyal, puritanical, efficient servant of the Privy Council who permits Mary no communication with the outside world. In 1586 Elizabeth and the council need insight into Spain's intentions towards England, so Mary is permitted communications that are read coming and going. Spain is building floating fortresses for the impending invasion of England. A terrified Queen Elizabeth begins having anxiety attacks.

Fourteen of Mary's co-conspirators are arrested, drawn and quartered. Elizabeth has been content to leave Mary alone until her participation in the domestic rebellion plans becomes obvious. She is brought to Fotheringhay Castle and tried by a commission. Mary remains dignified at the trial and justifies her actions. She refuses to give a straight answer to any question. She even refuses to attend the trial except as a person not subject to English jurisdiction. After two days, the commission meets in the court of the Star Chamber and pronounces Mary, Queen of Scots, guilty of conspiracy against Queen Elizabeth. Still, Elizabeth hesitates to sign Mary's death warrant. Among other problems, Mary has bequeathed the English Crown to Philip of Spain upon her death. Her son James, who is King of Scotland, becomes upset when he learns his mother has left the English Crown to someone else and wants him sent to Spain to be educated as a Catholic. James requests his mother's life be spared and that she be shut up in solitary confinement. Elizabeth finally signs the death warrant. The news of Mary's beheading causes Elizabeth to burst into weeping in her state rooms.

Chapter 24 Analysis

Leicester's shortcomings as a leader are becoming very obvious just as the intentions of Mary, Queen of Scots, are made clear and the Spanish invasion of England becomes imminent. Elizabeth still hesitates to sentence her cousin to death. She has seen much bloodshed during her life.

Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

The Spanish invasion becomes imminent in 1587. With the death of Mary, Queen of Scots, and her bequest leaving England to Spain, King Philip of Spain decides to give England to one of his daughters. A Spanish invasion to make England into a Spanish province is not pleasing to English people of any religious denomination. The Spanish plan to use their Armada to transport troops, horses and supplies up the English Channel to the Flemish coast, where barges will convoy General Parma and 17,000 troops to the Thames estuary in a military expedition.

In the meantime, Drake's lightning raid burns the shipping in the harbors of Cadiz and Corunna in Spain. Queen Elizabeth stops him from burning more, but he returns with the San Philip, one of the largest treasure ships ever to fall into English hands. Elizabeth continued to negotiate with the Netherlands to avoid more expenses in the campaign there. In mid-July of 1588, the Spanish Armada anchors at nightfall outside Plymouth. The English ships are behind them. The English ships are built lower and faster than the Spanish ships. Three engagements heavily damage the Spanish fleet. The English then send fire ships into the closely packed Spanish ships. As the ships flee up the eastern coast of England and on to Scotland and Ireland, storms, wrecks and savage inhabitants continue the pursuit. Of 30,000 Spaniards who left for England, less than 10,000 return to Spain.

The news is slow to reach Elizabeth, who dons a steel corselet and helmet with white plumes, mounts a white horse and rides through the lines of troops guarding the coast until she dismounts and walks up and down the ranks. Her presence fortifies the courage of the soldiers beyond belief.

When news arrives of the victory and the enemy's flight into the North Sea, Elizabeth cuts off her supply of money. The troops have dysentery, and Sir Francis Drake and Admiral Hawkins pay for their care with their own money. When Leicester dies later in the year, Elizabeth's loss and grief is so severe that her reaction is alarming. She shuts herself in her quarters and refuses all admittance. Finally council members break in the door and retrieve the queen. Elizabeth collects herself and seizes Leicester's estates, since he died owing substantial sums to the treasury. Her grief over his death is not shared by his wife, who has already remarried.

Chapter 25 Analysis

Elizabeth's action in donning armor and riding to encourage the troops is truly amazing for a woman in these times. The people continue to adore her and will not rise up against her. The friendship and love between Elizabeth and Leicester end with his death, and she is severely grieved. However, restoring the treasury is always her goal.

Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

Queen Elizabeth appears in state to her people to acknowledge the victory over Spain. She has ruled so long that her advisers are dying, and new ones appear. Elizabeth has a fondness for young, handsome men. Walter Raleigh appears on the scene, as does Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. Essex is twenty-one, and Elizabeth is fifty-four and still flirting romantically. William Cecil is replaced by his son, Robert Cecil, intelligent and a hunchback. Francis Bacon is an adviser. These young men, a generation younger than the queen, are interested in her position rather than in her. A cult develops in Europe after 1588, exalting Elizabeth to supernatural status with radiant splendor as Diana, or Cynthia, goddess of chastity and moonlight.

The Spanish threat returns. Elizabeth allies with Henri IV of France and sends 4,000 English troops to his assistance. The internal English harassment of Catholics continues until Elizabeth tells the Privy Council that if they want to convert Catholics to Protestants, let them do it by the example of their lives. She will persecute and torture them no more.

Chapter 26 Analysis

Obviously Elizabeth, now older, has grown tired of conflicts. She is into her second generation of advisers.

Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

In 1593, Queen Elizabeth is sixty years of age and has reigned for thirty-five years. Her personality has become more stable. Her health has improved. Her minor ailments are less frequent, and she no longer has hysterical collapses, although her nervous irritability is a standing condition shown by her high, shrill voice. Her intellect is intact. She loves clothes and jewels manifesting her sovereignty and wears beautiful wigs to conceal her thinning hair. Her people love her. Elizabeth never had much appetite and now eats less. She still maintains a strenuous schedule and is at work before daylight with her secretaries to carefully read and discuss all orders in council.

Still frugal, she has an undying passion for visual splendor. This is an era when both men and women's clothing achieves an air of visionary strangeness by combining exaggeration with delicate tints. Bodices are elongated with huge circular hoop skirts attached. Elizabeth's personal fastidiousness remains, as she spends money on fine linens, distilled water for the face and hand lotion. She is sensitive to disagreeable smells. Elizabeth has the first indoor water closet installed at Richmond. It works.

Henri IV of France declares himself a Catholic, but the Spaniards are still in France. They want the French crown for Philip of Spain's daughter. The English support the French king, and Elizabeth authorizes an expedition to attack Spanish bases. The Cadiz expedition is a brilliant success, led by Essex. An expedition to the Azores fails, but the English alliance continues with Henry IV of France. Henry's ambassador to England writes a vivid, arresting view of Elizabeth at the age of sixty-four.

Elizabeth wears a dark red wig decorated with jewels. Though her face appears old and her neck is wrinkled, her bosom is delicate and white, and her figure is beautifully proportioned. She wears a white taffeta gown lined with scarlet, ornamented with pearls and rubies. She is gracious and talkative, complaining of the heat of the fire. She continually twists and untwists the long handing ends of her red-lined sleeves. At a private audience, he finds her standing by a window in an Italian gown of black and gold, under which is a dress of white damask over a lawn chemise. These garments fasten in front, and she holds their edges in her hand. He can see her belly to the naval. Her intellect is otherwise functioning, and she converses with him for two hours.

On Leicester's death, Essex (at thirty-one) is given the appointment of Master of the House. He commands the English contingent sent to help Henry IV. He is a Privy Councilor at age twenty-seven, even though he lacks sense rather than ability. It appears that Essex has unlimited power over the queen, who loves him. Francis Bacon disagrees with Essex's opinion of himself. Essex believes Elizabeth has a passionate affection for him such that he can sometimes persuade her to do something she does not want to do. Bacon is Essex's protygy and urges him not to dominate the queen. Bacon withdraws from his closeness with Essex.

Bacon is not alone in his assessment of Elizabeth's abilities. Henry IV of France sends a new ambassador to whom Elizabeth explains in minute detail the European situation with respect to the House of Austria. The ambassador is so surprised that he appears to be in a trance, causing Elizabeth to think she has lost her train of thought. She resumes talking and takes the ambassador through the intricacies of a lengthy side issue. The ambassador is convinced that Elizabeth merits the great reputation she has throughout Europe. It is obvious that Essex is not "managing" her in any respect.

Henry VI makes peace with Spain in 1598. Now Elizabeth must decide if England should do the same or continue to fight Spain in Spanish waters. Essex wants the latter. Elderly Lord Burleigh makes his last public appearance, insisting on peace. He reads from the 55th Psalm: "Blood-thirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days."

A rebellion starts in Ireland. The Earl of Tyrone relies on Spanish aid and begins a war of resistance in the northern provinces. Essex wants to send his man to negotiate. Elizabeth sends Essex's uncle, Sir William Knollys, as her deputy. Essex becomes angry and turns his back on the queen. She flies at him, smacks him on his head and tells him to go be beheaded. Essex yells back in outrage and is almost beheaded on the spot by the Earl Marshal. Elizabeth takes no reprisals and subsequently receives him in silence.

Five weeks later, the queen learns that Burleigh (formerly William Cecil) is dying. She prays for him daily and frequently visits. She even feeds him when he cannot lift his spoon. After he dies, the council tries not to mention his name because it causes the queen to cry.

Chapter 27 Analysis

The author provides a portrait of Queen Elizabeth at age sixty, still glamorous in many ways and very intelligent. She is still quite a remarkable lady, even having the first working water closet installed in her chambers.

Elizabeth remains loyal to her friends. When she learns that William Cecil, former Lord Burleigh, is dying, she visits him and feeds him when he becomes unable to feed himself. The author once again neglects to provide the reader with a connection between Burleigh and his former identity.

Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

The Irish question is urgent. Tyrone defeats the English army, and news of his victorious rebellions spreads. The queen wants to send the soldier Mountjoy to Ireland. Essex talks her into sending himself instead, since he is younger and has more energy and initiative. All of Essex's financial and army requests are met, but he senses that his enemies in the council will undermine him while he is gone. Although Essex is popular with the people, he bears an injured and hostile manner to queen and council.

Essex disembarks at Dublin on April 15 and completely disregards his instructions to proceed north at full strength and attack Tyrone. He waits for a better time and puts out minor insurrections instead. The queen is bewildered. Essex does not keep the queen informed of what he is doing. Within three months, his army of 16,000 men has been reduced to 4,000, and he has not marched against Tyrone. The queen becomes indignant and writes Essex that he has wasted time, money and men to learn what she and the council told him originally. Essex does not apologize but requests 2,000 more men for his attack on Tyrone. Elizabeth replies that since neither the spring, the summer, autumn or winter were suitable times to march against Tyrone, then the time will never come. When Essex and his dwindled forces finally attack Tyrone, effective action is impossible.

The two men meet. Tyrone agrees to a six-week truce, terminable on two weeks' notice, and issues to Essex a set of conditions that amount to home rule for Ireland. By this time, Essex has lost 12,000 men and spent 300,000 pounds. Elizabeth is appalled and denounces his incompetence. This letter does not reach him. Elizabeth also cancels his permission to return at any time and orders him to stay where he is and carry out his duties. Essex ignores the queen's commands and plays on her believed fondness for him. He returns to London with 200 men and six officers.

Essex arrives at the queen's chambers in her castle at Nonesuch covered with mud. He falls on his knees, seizes her hands and covers them with kisses. Elizabeth does not know Essex is in England until he arrives. She instructs him to explain his actions to the lords of the council. They decide Essex has not committed treason, but they have to decide what punishment fits his utter failure to follow instructions. Essex fakes illness to gain the queen's favor but remains under house arrest at his castle. Elizabeth bears his absence from her presence with significant indifference. He is eventually charged with disobedience to the queen's commands and misuse of his commission in his treatment of the rebel Tyrone. Essex is suspended from office and ordered to remain at home until the queen's pleasure is known.

Essex is eventually released but forbidden to come to court. He is heavily in debt, dependent on a monopoly-tax on sweet wines for his income. This is due to expire, and the queen does not renew it. Essex now holds open house for his sympathizers and

announces in public that "the Queen's conditions are as crooked as her carcase." The insulting words are relayed to Elizabeth. Essex never understands his shortcomings or repents of anything. His conduct reassures the queen that she was right in not trusting him.

Mountjoy is appointed Lord Deputy and sent to Ireland. The smooth, dapper nobleman is a tireless, brilliant organizer and administrator and a first rate soldier in the field. Tyrone submits to Mountjoy a few days before Elizabeth's death.

Essex is summoned before the Privy Council, but he declares himself too ill to go. An armed mob goes to fetch him. Essex and 200 men storm out of the castle. Essex escapes and sneaks back to his own residence. Lord Nottingham and Sir Henry Sidney go there and shout to Essex and a co-conspirator, now on the roof, to capitulate. Essex demands an audience with the queen. Nottingham and Sidney send for ordinance and kegs of gunpowder. They give the ladies one hour to get out before they blow up the house. Essex and his friend come out and are escorted to the Tower.

Chapter 28 Analysis

Essex's actions in Ireland are more those of a playboy than a soldier. He avoids combat and disobeys orders, relying on his perceived favoritism with Queen Elizabeth. In retrospect, this entire story is very humorous, but it would not have been at the time. Elizabeth puts down yet another internal rebellion and maintains peace within her country.

Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

Essex and six associates are charged with high treason, and he and others are sentenced to be beheaded. Elizabeth reprieves one of the men as a follower of Essex and not a leader. The queen is playing the virginal when Essex is executed. She receives the news and resumes playing.

Elizabeth at sixty is not the same person she was at twenty-five. She is weary and worn down, having to face situations not known before. The Scots and Irish rebellion collapses primarily because the ordinary Englishman will not rebel against the queen. Mountjoy requests more money because the Spaniards are about to launch another invasion from the Irish base. In her last years, Elizabeth has had to sell Crown lands and her jewels to support the troops. Finally, she asks Parliament for a large subsidy. Parliament requests in exchange for a new tax on articles of general use.

Elizabeth is physically old. At the opening of Parliament, her robes are too heavy to wear, and she stumbles on the steps of the Throne. She tells the House of Commons that the taxes on salt, brandy and starch must be ended and the growing of woad (a vegetable) permitted.

That afternoon, at Whitehall, Elizabeth makes one of the most celebrated speeches of her life. She closes with, "It is my desire to live nor reign no longer than my life and reign shall be for your good." The mutual love of the queen and her people is inexhaustible but is mixed with treasons, interdependencies and other problems. She can drive off these situations no longer. Her friends and advisers are dead. Elizabeth is obviously tired. She demands the use of a cane and becomes forgetful. The Coronation ring she has worn for forty-three years has grown into her finger and must be filed off. This act depresses her greatly.

In the winter of 1603, the queen catches a bad cold. She is now sixty-nine years old. By the end of February, it is obvious her physical condition is fast declining. Then her favorite cousin dies. Her symptoms now include fever, restlessness, sleeplessness, perpetual thirst and phlegm in the throat. She is weak and unable to move about. She remains silent in meditation for hours, not eating or drinking. A throat abscess bursts, and she feels better. Arrangements are made for James' accession. The council wants to know Elizabeth's choice for her successor. She agrees to James of Scotland.

Elizabeth asks to meet with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Many others are also present. The elderly Archbishop continues to pray for at least an hour and a half until Elizabeth sinks into unconsciousness. Everyone leaves the bedchamber except the queen's female attendants. During the next few days when Elizabeth lies dying, a strange silence descends on the city of London. Not a bell rings. Not a bugle sounds.

She dies on March 24, the day of the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. Elizabeth's warfare is over.

Some time later, Camden writes a lasting description:

She was a Queen who hath so long and with so great wisdom governed her kingdoms, as (to use the words of her Successor who in sincerity confessed as much) the like hath not been read or heard of, either in out time or since the days of the Roman Emperor Augustus.

Chapter 29 Analysis

The affection Essex believes the queen has for him is not there. She is playing the virginal, a predecessor to the harpsichord, when she learns of his execution, and she continues playing. The virginal is similar to a spinet piano, with one metal string per key that is plucked rather than hit. It is difficult to play, and yet the elderly queen is obviously enjoying her musical talents.

Elizabeth goes to Parliament and gives her farewell speech. Elizabeth is well aware of her own physical frailties. Few people of the era live to be sixty-nine years old. It is sad to note that she may have died of a condition curable by modern day antibiotics, which, of course, had not then been discovered. She chooses a Protestant successor. Elizabeth herself summons the Archbishop of Canterbury to pray at her bedside. He stays for at least an hour and a half, until Elizabeth becomes unconscious. London is silent until her death is announced. The author again does not identify Camden in the text. He is listed in her bibliography as the historian and writer William Camden, author of the *Annals of Elizabeth*.

Characters

Anne of Cleves

Anne of Cleves (1515-1557) was the fourth wife of King Henry VIII. Henry married her for reasons of international diplomacy but soon found this to be politically ineffective. The marriage was annulled in 1540, after only six months.

Roger Ascham

Roger Ascham (1515-1568) was Elizabeth's private tutor in Greek and Latin from 1548-1550. During Elizabeth's reign, Ascham composed the queen's official letters to foreign political leaders and tutored her in Greek.

Anthony Babington

Anthony Babington (1561-1586) was the leader of the attempted Babington Plot to murder Elizabeth I and place Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne. The plot was uncovered in 1586, when Sir Francis Walsingham intercepted letters between Babington and Mary Queen of Scots. Babington, along with six others, was executed for high treason. The discovery of letters between Mary and Babington implicated her in the conspiracy and led to her own execution.

Bloody Mary

See Queen Mary I

Anne Boleyn

Anne Boleyn (1507-1536) was the second wife of Henry VIII and the mother of Queen Elizabeth I. Anne Boleyn was already pregnant with Elizabeth and secretly married to Henry VIII before his first marriage was officially annulled. When Elizabeth was only two years old, Henry VIII accused Anne Boleyn of adultery and had her tried and beheaded. Elizabeth did not learn of her mother's fate until many years later.

James Bothwell

James Bothwell (1535-1578) was the third husband of Mary Queen of Scots. Bothwell was suspected of plotting the murder of Mary's second husband, Lord Henry Darnley, in 1567, by having his house blown up and strangling him to death. Mary married Bothwell soon after this suspicious murder and both were implicated. This scandal lead to a

Scottish revolt against Mary, as a result of which she was forced to abdicate the throne. Bothwell was eventually imprisoned and died five years later.

Catherine of Aragon

Catherine of Aragon (1485-1536) was the first wife of Henry VIII and the mother of Queen Mary I of England. Henry VIII wished to annul this marriage to Catherine so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. However, the pope refused to issue the annulment, as a result of which Henry VIII broke with the Catholic Church and procured the annulment through English clergy in 1533. This action led to the English Reformation. Catherine of Aragon lived out the rest of her life in material comfort but away from the public eye.

Baron Burghley William Cecil

William Cecil, Baron Burghley (1520-1598), was Elizabeth's chief advisor in matters of state throughout most of her reign. He remained her most trusted advisor and a skillful politician who successfully coordinated the queen's public image, foreign diplomacy, and domestic political struggles with Parliament.

Lord Henry Stewart Darnley

Lord Henry Stewart Darnley (1545-1567) was the second husband of Mary Queen of Scots. Darnley was murdered when his house was blown up and he was strangled to death. Mary and Bothwell, her husband-to-be, were implicated in the murder. A Scottish rebellion against the reign of Mary resulted from this suspicion, and Mary was forced to abdicate the throne. Darnley's son with Mary, James, eventually became King James VI of Scotland and later King James I of England.

Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex

Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex (1567-1601), was a favorite male companion to Queen Elizabeth in her later years, although he was some thirty-four years younger than she. Devereux was the stepson of Robert Dudley, Elizabeth's closest male companion throughout most of her reign. Devereux was often impudent with the queen and not afraid to talk back to her. Once during an argument, Devereux turned his back to the queen and she slapped him in the face. In 1599, he was sent to put down a rebellion in Ireland but utterly failed in this military assignment. The queen punished him by removing his post and putting him under house arrest. In 1601, he attempted a rebellion against Queen Elizabeth by riding into London with some 200 to 300 supporters. However, he did not receive the popular support he expected, and the rebellion was quickly put down. Devereux was executed for treason.

John Dudley, First Earl of Warwick, First Duke of Northumberland

John Dudley, first Earl of Warwick and first Duke of Northumberland (1502-1553), effectively ruled England from 1549 to 1553, during the reign of the child King Edward VI. In 1553, as Edward was dying, Dudley arranged the marriage between his son, Guildford Dudley, and Lady Jane Grey in a plan that placed Lady Jane Grey on the throne for nine days after Edward died. Supporters of Mary I deposed Lady Grey, and Dudley was executed.

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester

Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester (1532-1588), was Queen Elizabeth's favorite male companion throughout most of her reign. Dudley maintained hopes that the queen would want to marry him, although she made it clear that she would never do so. Early in their relationship, Dudley was already married, but scandal broke out when in 1560 his wife was found dead at the bottom of a flight of stairs with her neck broken. In 1578, Dudley secretly married another woman, although Elizabeth remained friendly with him even after she learned of this marriage. Throughout her reign, the queen's advisors were worried that she might marry Dudley even though he was deemed an unsuitable match for royalty.

King Edward VI

King Edward VI (1537-1553) of England was the son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour (Henry's third wife), and the half-brother of Elizabeth. Upon the death of Henry VIII, the nine-year old Edward ascended the throne. During his short reign, the country was ruled by a regency, who easily manipulated him. Edward died of tuberculosis.

Queen Elizabeth I

Queen Elizabeth I of England (1533-1603) was the daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife Anne Boleyn. When Elizabeth was only two years old, her mother was beheaded on the order of her father, although Elizabeth did not learn this until many years later. Elizabeth was kept in prison during the reign of her half-sister Mary I because Mary feared Elizabeth would plot to depose her. Upon Mary's death, however, she named Elizabeth heir to the throne. Throughout Elizabeth's reign, she was constantly faced with the threat of plots to murder her and place Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne. Elizabeth's refusal to marry and produce an heir to the throne was a point of contention between her and her Parliament, as well as her citizens, throughout her reign. Elizabeth was an extremely popular queen and was masterful at creating a public image for herself, which placated the people's concern about being ruled by a female monarch. The success of her reign was also aided by her closest

political advisor, William Cecil, who helped to coordinate her domestic and foreign policy. Upon her death, King James VI of Scotland, the son of Mary Queen of Scots, was named as the heir to the English throne, making him King James I of England. Elizabeth was the last in the line of the house of Tudor, which had ruled England since 1485.

Lady Jane Grey

Lady Jane Grey (1537-1554) was forced against her will at the age of 15 to participate in a royal conspiracy. She was made to marry Lord Guildford Dudley and then placed on the throne as Queen of England after the death of Edward VI in 1553. Edward's advisors, the father of Lady Jane and the father of Lord Dudley, had convinced Edward on his deathbed to name her his successor. However, popular opinion considered Mary (Elizabeth's sister) the rightful heir to the throne, and rose up against Lady Jane after only nine days on the throne. Queen Mary I ordered the beheading of Lady Jane Grey, her husband, and her father for high treason.

King Henry VIII

King Henry VIII (1491-1547) was the king of England from 1509 to 1547, and the father of Edward VI, Elizabeth I, and Mary I. Henry VIII was married six times. His wives were Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard, and Catharine Parr. Henry VIII's break with the Catholic Church started the English Reformation. Henry had wanted his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled so that he could marry Anne Boleyn, but the pope refused to grant him the annulment. Henry thus arranged to have the marriage annulled by his own English clergy and to name himself head of the Anglican church. When Henry VIII died, he named his son Edward and his daughters Mary and Elizabeth as the line of succession to the throne.

Catherine Howard

Catherine Howard was the fifth wife of King Henry VIII. They were married in 1540, but the king soon learned of Catherine's pre- and post-marital affairs. In 1542, Catherine was convicted of treason for marrying the king although "unchaste," and was beheaded.

King James I

King James I (1566-1625) of England was the successor to Queen Elizabeth I. James was the son of Mary Queen of Scots and Mary's second husband, Lord Darnley. When James was only one year old, his mother was forced to abdicate the throne, and he was named King James VI of Scotland. James never saw his mother again. In 1582, James was kidnapped by a Protestant faction, but escaped his captors. Upon her death in 1603, James was named her heir to the English throne. James was the first of the Stuart dynasty to rule England.

King James VI of Scotland

See King James I

Mary Queen of Scots

Mary Queen of Scots (1542-1587), also known as Mary Stuart, was Queen of Scotland from 1542-1567. Mary Queen of Scots posed a threat to Queen Elizabeth I of England throughout much of her reign. As Mary was Catholic and Elizabeth was Protestant, many considered Mary the rightful queen of England. During Elizabeth's reign, many plots were uncovered which involved conspiracies to kill Elizabeth and place Mary on the English throne. Some of these plots involved the cooperation of France and Spain, both Catholic nations. Mary's son James, by her second husband, the earl of Darnley, later became King James I of England. In 1567, Darnley was killed. Mary married Bothwell soon afterward, and both she and Bothwell were implicated in the murder. As a result, an uprising led to her forced abdication from the Scottish throne. Mary's one-year old son James was then named King James VI of Scotland. Mary fled to England, but Elizabeth, recognizing her as a threat, kept Mary imprisoned for the next eighteen years. During this time, Mary participated in various conspiracies against Elizabeth. After the discovery of the Babington Plot to murder Elizabeth and place Mary on the English throne, Mary was sentenced to execution.

Queen Mary I

Queen Mary I of England (1516-1558), also known as Mary Tudor, or Bloody Mary, was the daughter of King Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, and the half-sister of Elizabeth I and Edward VI. Mary I was named heir to the throne at the age of thirty-seven, upon the death of Henry VIII in 1553. Mary I was Catholic, while Elizabeth was Protestant. Mary's five-year reign was characterized by her harsh efforts to restore England to the Catholic Church. She earned the name Bloody Mary because of her policy of burning Protestants at the stake, often in large groups. During her reign, she ordered the burning of some 300 Protestants. Although she and Elizabeth had amicable relations during their childhood, Elizabeth came to represent a threat to the reign of Mary I. After a conspiracy against Mary was discovered, Elizabeth was forced to live in imprisonment and under various forms of house arrest, although she was never implicated in any plot. Upon her death in 1558, Elizabeth was named heir to the throne.

Catherine Parr

Catherine Parr (1512-1548) was the sixth and last wife of Henry VIII. She married Henry in 1543 and took all three of his children from his former wives under her wing. After the death of Henry VIII, Catherine Parr married Lord Thomas Seymour of Sudeley. She died after giving birth to a daughter by this marriage.

Robert Ridolfi

Robert Ridolfi (1531-1612), an Italian, was a key conspirator in the Ridolfi Plot of 1571, by which he hoped to effect the murder of Queen Elizabeth I, the invasion of England by Spain, and the ascendance of Mary Queen of Scots to the English throne. Because Ridolfi was abroad during the discovery of the plot, he avoided capture or punishment and safely returned to Florence, where he became a senator in 1600.

Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset

Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset (1503-1552), was the brother of Jane Seymour, Henry's VIII's third wife, and of Thomas Seymour. He served as Protector of England for two-and-ahalf years during the reign of the child King Edward VI. Due to opposition to his policies by wealthy landowners, Somerset was accused of treason and executed in 1552.

Jane Seymour

Jane Seymour (1509-1537) was the third wife of Henry VIII and mother of King Edward VI. Ten days after the execution of Henry's second wife, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour and Henry were secretly married. She has the distinction of being the only wife of Henry VIII to bear him a living son. However, she died twelve days after the birth of Edward. After the death of Henry VIII, Jane's two brothers, Edward Seymour and Thomas Seymour, became regents to the rule of the child king Edward VI.

Thomas Seymour

Thomas Seymour (1508-1549) was the brother of Jane Seymour (Henry VIII's third wife), and Edward Seymour. Thomas Seymour married Catherine Parr, the widow of Henry VIII, in 1547. Thomas Seymour wished to gain greater political power. After the death of Catherine Parr, he hoped to marry Elizabeth. He was arrested for conspiracy, and extensive questioning revealed that he had been sexually harassing the teenaged Elizabeth while she lived in his home under the care of his wife. Thomas Seymour was beheaded for treason, at the order of his own brother, Edward Seymour, protector of England during the reign of the child King Edward VI.

James Stuart

See King James I

Mary Stuart

See Mary Queen of Scots

Francis Throckmorton

Francis Throckmorton (1554-1584) was at the head of the Throckmorton Plot to depose Queen Elizabeth I and place Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne. In 1583, Elizabeth's secretary, Francis Walsingham, uncovered the plot, which included plans for an invasion of England by France. Throckmorton confessed under torture and was executed.

Edward Tudor

See King Edward VI

Elizabeth Tudor

See Queen Elizabeth I

Henry Tudor

See King Henry VIII

Mary Tudor

See Queen Mary I

Sir Francis Walsingham

Sir Francis Walsingham (1532-1590) was secretary of state to Queen Elizabeth I from 1573 until his death. From 1583, he was instrumental in uncovering plots against Elizabeth's life by Catholics hoping to place Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne. Walsingham uncovered both the Throckmorton Plot and the Babington Plot, which led to the execution of Mary Queen of Scots.

Themes

Female Monarchy

A major factor in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I was that Elizabeth was one of the first female monarchs to rule England. Both her government and her citizens were initially skeptical about being ruled by a woman in an era when women were considered inferior to men, particularly in the realm of politics. Historians generally agree that the success of Queen Elizabeth I's reign was due largely to her skillful rendering of her own public image so as to win the confidence of her nation, despite the fact that she was a woman.

Elizabeth created an image for herself that included both masculine and feminine elements, to effectively play upon the emotions of her nation. On the one hand, Elizabeth frequently referred to herself as a prince or a king, thus instilling in the minds of the people an image of the queen as a political force as powerful as any man could be. She added to this image by reference to her father, King Henry VIII, who had been considered a strong masculine ruler. On the other hand, Elizabeth played up her feminine image so as to win the hearts of her citizens. She described herself as the wife of the English nation and often described her relationship to her government and citizens using the language of love. Through her effective self-publicity, Queen Elizabeth I earned the love and devotion of the nation, despite their concerns about being ruled by a woman.

Royal Lineage

Throughout Elizabeth's life and reign, questions of royal lineage continued to plague the nation. When Henry VIII died he named his only son, Edward VI, as heir to the throne, with his two daughters, Mary I and Elizabeth I, next in line. Since Edward was only nine years old when he ascended the throne, the nation was ruled during his five-year reign by a regency headed by a protector, designated by Henry VIII. Thus, Edward was easily manipulated, and those in charge of the nation schemed to place members of their own families on the throne. The teenaged Elizabeth was kept away from her half-brother, although they had always been close, because the regency feared her influence on Edward.

Meanwhile, Thomas Seymour attempted to seduce the young Elizabeth in hopes of marrying her and one day gaining the throne. Upon the death of Edward, his regents schemed to place their relative, Jane Seymour, on the throne in place of Mary I. However, popular opinion considered Mary the legitimate heir to the throne, and quickly defeated this scheme. As Mary I died without sons, she named her half-sister Elizabeth as heir to the throne.

The reign of Elizabeth I posed further questions of royal lineage, partly because she never married or bore children. Throughout Elizabeth's reign, she was under constant

pressure by her Parliament to marry and produce an heir, so as to avoid political chaos upon her death. Also during her reign, many Catholics in England, Scotland, France, and Spain considered Mary Queen of Scots as the rightful queen of England. Many Catholics considered Elizabeth an illegitimate child because they did not recognize Henry VIII's annulment from his first wife as valid. Therefore, these Catholics did not consider Elizabeth to be a legitimate heir to the throne.

Elizabeth frequently came into conflict with Parliament over her refusal to marry and often cleverly allowed herself to be courted by foreign princes to appease them, but always backed out at the last minute. Upon her death, Elizabeth named King James VI of Scotland to become King James I of England, thus solving the problem of royal lineage caused by her lack of children. This decision meant that Elizabeth was the last ruler of the Tudor dynasty. James I became the first of the Stuart dynasty to rule England.

Treason, Conspiracy, and Execution

The reign of Elizabeth I was plagued by plots and conspiracies against her person and her rule, mostly on the part of Catholic supporters of Mary Queen of Scots. All of these efforts to depose Elizabeth I from the throne were discovered and thwarted before any decisive action had taken place, including the Ridolfi Plot of 1571, the Throckmorton Plot of 1583, and the Babington Plot of 1586. After Mary Queen of Scots was forced to abdicate the throne in Scotland and fled to England, Elizabeth kept her imprisoned for the next eighteen years in order to contain the threat she posed. However, Mary Queen of Scots was sufficiently implicated in the Babington Plot that Elizabeth had no choice but to order her execution. Many others were tortured, tried, and beheaded for treason and conspiracy in these plots against Elizabeth's life and reign.

Love, Relationships, and Marriage

Although she never married, Elizabeth I, engaged in various forms of courtship and romance throughout her reign. Her lifelong favorite male romantic companion was Robert Dudley. As soon as she was made queen, Elizabeth named Dudley Master of Horse, a position of some authority in the royal court. Dudley, however, was married already at this point. When his wife was found dead, controversy surrounded Dudley, as many believed he had killed his wife in order to marry Elizabeth. Elizabeth, however, indicated that she had no interest in marrying Dudley.

Many believed Dudley was still hoping to one day marry Elizabeth, although he secretly remarried without the knowledge of the queen. When Elizabeth learned of this secret marriage some time later, she did not display a strong reaction and continued her close association with Dudley. Nonetheless, her Parliament and advisors were deeply concerned that she would either marry Dudley, whom they considered unfit for a royal marriage, or that she would not marry at all, therefore depriving the throne of an heir upon her death. Elizabeth skillfully used courtship by various royalty, both English and

foreign, for political diplomacy. She sometimes allowed a court ship with a foreign prince to go on for several years, before coming up with a reasonable excuse not to go through with the marriage.

In her later years Elizabeth took on Robert Devereux, the stepson of Dudley, as her favorite male companion. Devereux was still a young man at this time, while Elizabeth was some thirty-four years his senior. Devereux was not afraid to stand up to the queen, and often incurred her wrath, although she seemed perpetually willing to forgive him and continue their association. But poor performance of his military duties in a conflict with Ireland led the queen to remove him from his post and put him under house arrest. When he rose up in an attempted rebellion against the queen, he was executed for treason. No one knows the exact nature of Elizabeth's relations with Dudley and Devereux, and her personal romantic life remains a source of much speculation.

Style

Genres: History and Biography

Jenkins's *Elizabeth the Great* can be categorized in the genres, or categories, of both history and biography. As biography, it focuses on the life of Queen Elizabeth I of England. Jenkins focuses particularly on the significance of Queen Elizabeth as a great woman in history, explaining her unusual status as a female monarch at a time in history when women were not expected to hold political power. Jenkins also offers some psychological analysis of the queen, explaining some of her political and personal decisions as consequences of traumatic events in her childhood. As a history of England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, *Elizabeth the Great* provides historical accounts of important events affecting the reign of Elizabeth. Jenkins also focuses on the element of cultural history in the life of Queen Elizabeth I, spending considerable space describing the lifestyles of the nobility and privileged classes in Elizabethan England.

Sources

An important element of any book of history is the sources from which the author obtained her or his information. In her three years of researching for *Elizabeth the Great*, Jenkins used only what are called "secondary sources"—that is, she herself did not delve into archives or original letters or other historical documents to gather historical information about Queen Elizabeth. Rather, Jenkins drew from already-published books of historical information. Jenkins states in the preface to *Elizabeth the Great*: "There is nothing in the book which has not already been published in some form," although she adds that some of the information is, "I believe, very little known."

Jenkins goes on to state that she has included various details of interest to the general reader which may not be considered significant information from the perspective of the academic scholarly historian. For instance, Jenkins goes into some discussion within the Preface of the commonly held notion that Queen Elizabeth was bald. Jenkins draws her own conclusions about these matters, based on both written material and observations of various paintings of the queen. Jenkins thus uses available secondary sources to weave an original narrative of the life of Queen Elizabeth I.

Narrative Perspective

Modern historians are well aware that any historical or biographical account can never be completely "objective," as the author inevitably represents her or his material from a particular perspective. Therefore, it is not accurate to say that even the best biography is "objective." Instead, the reader may determine both the method by which the author obtained the information included in the book and the particular perspective of the

author. The author's perspective is expressed through her narrative voice—that is, the tone and manner in which she relates the factual information in her narrative.

Jenkins makes clear in her Preface to *Elizabeth the Great* that her narrative perspective in writing the book was aimed at portraying the life and personality of Queen Elizabeth in a manner which would be of interest to the general reader. As Jenkins states in the opening sentence of her Preface, "The aim of this book was to collect interesting personal information about Queen Elizabeth I." Within her Preface, and throughout the book, Jenkins indicates that she has written this historical biography of Queen Elizabeth I for the general reader, bringing to light various points of interest, while glossing over less interesting information which may be deemed important from a scholarly point of view.

Historical Context

Tudor England and the English Reformation

In the historical context of the Protestant Reformation throughout Europe, and the English Reformation at home, Elizabeth's life and reign were characterized by continual conflict between Catholics and Protestants.

King Henry VIII Breaks with the Catholic Church

For personal and political, rather than religious, reasons, King Henry VIII launched the English Reformation when he instigated England's break with the Catholic Church. From 1527 to 1533, Henry VIII tried unsuccessfully to obtain from the Pope an annulment of his first marriage, to Catherine of Aragon. Henry VIII wished to dissolve the marriage in order to marry Anne Boleyn. In 1533, Henry VIII obtained an annulment from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer. That year, Pope Clement VII excommunicated Henry VIII from the Catholic Church. In 1534, Henry VIII named himself, rather than the Pope in Rome, head of the Church of England, by the passage of the Act of Supremacy. This break was by no means religiously motivated on the part of Henry VIII, who had always been opposed to the Protestant Reformation launched by Luther in Germany. Nonetheless, Henry VIII inadvertently brought the Protestant Reformation to England, thereby creating a rift between Catholics and Protestants in England. Between 1536 and 1540, the monasteries throughout England were legally dissolved, a policy which inspired acts of rebellion on the part of adherents to the Catholic faith.

The Protestant King Edward VI

Because Henry VIII's three children were from three different mothers, they each had different religious affiliations and orientations. Edward VI was a devout Protestant, although his youthful age during his reign meant that he had little effect on the policies of the nation. Nevertheless, during the reign of Edward VI, from 1547 to 1553, those in charge of the English government enacted stricter enforcement of Protestantism throughout the land. These policies sparked further uprisings by Catholics against anti-Catholic religious policy.

Bloody Mary and the Persecution of Protestants

When Mary I ascended the throne she was determined to make England once again a Catholic nation. Mary earned the name Bloody Mary because she oversaw the burning of some 300 Protestants during her reign. Because her half-sister Elizabeth was Protestant, Mary I feared plots against her by Protestants to place Elizabeth on the throne. A Protestant insurrection against Mary I in 1554, led by Thomas Wyat, was put

down and the instigators executed. Although it seems Elizabeth engaged in no such conspiracies, Mary kept her imprisoned for the rest of her reign. Despite these religious differences, however, Mary I named Elizabeth her heir to the throne.

Queen Elizabeth and Religious Conflict

Upon ascending the throne in 1558, Elizabeth immediately took action to restore England to Protestantism. In 1559, the Act of Supremacy and Act of Uniformity once again named the monarch as head of the Church of England, and imposed adherence to government religious policy upon all citizens. Elizabeth, though Protestant, was not a deeply religious person, and had an aversion to religious extremism. She understood the political need to enforce Protestantism throughout the nation, in order to maintain any rebellious impulses on the part of Catholics. Fines were imposed on those who did not attend Protestant church services on Sundays; however, Elizabeth was not concerned with the true inner beliefs of her citizens, as long as they maintained an outward appearance of complying with the Church of England. At the other extreme, Elizabeth was equally opposed to extremist Protestants, and considered the Puritans a threat to her sovereignty over religious matters within the church.

Throughout her reign, Elizabeth struggled to contain both Catholic and Protestant opposition to the Church of England. In 1569, a rebellion of Catholics in the north of England was put down. In 1570, Elizabeth was excommunicated by the Pope Pius V, who declared it an almost religious duty of English Catholics to oppose their queen. In 1572, the murder of many French Protestants (known as Huguenots) was carried out in the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, which began in Paris and spread throughout France.

Elizabeth responded to the perceived threat by imposing greater repression and punishment of Catholics in England. When Elizabeth's religious policy was opposed by Archbishop of Canterbury Edmund Grindal in 1576, the queen dismissed him from his post and named Whitgift the new Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1580, Pope Gregory XIII proclaimed that it would not be a sin for Catholics to rebel against the Protestant Queen Elizabeth in the name of Catholicism. Elizabeth responded by imposing a crackdown on Jesuit clergymen whom she saw as an increased threat to her authority. The constant threat posed by Mary Queen of Scots to Elizabeth's reign was due mainly to these ongoing religious conflicts. Catholics in England and Scotland, as well as in the Catholic countries of Spain and France, were continually plotting to depose Elizabeth and place a Catholic queen on the English throne. This threat was neutralized with the execution of Mary Queen of Scots for treason in 1586.

The problem of reconciling Catholics and Protestants continued to be a major political issue throughout the reign of Elizabeth's successor, King James I of England.

Critical Overview

Jenkins is known for her popular biographies of English monarchs and authors, as well as for her many novels. *Elizabeth the Great* is considered Jenkins's greatest work of nonfiction. The biography was both popular and critically acclaimed. Within three years of initial publication in 1958, the book had gone through seven printings. Critics praised *Elizabeth the Great* as an even-handed biography which appeals to the general reader. The work is considered historically accurate, without being bogged down by the dry, fact-laden histories often produced by academic scholars. She is also recognized for her restraint in not overly psychoanalyzing the subject of her biography in *Elizabeth the Great*. Jenkins maintains an even-handed representation of the queen's personality, as well as of the various figures in her court. Jenkins's ability to capture the flavor and texture of court life in Elizabethan England is attributed to her fine attention to detail.

Critics agree that Jenkins successfully maintains an entertaining, cohesive, well-paced narrative flow while touching on seventy years of English history. Charles Calder, in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, described what he called "the solidity of the author's technique" in *Elizabeth the Great*:

[Jenkins] has a capacity for opening chapters in a brisk and arresting manner, for accommodating the elaborated incident or set piece, and for interweaving passages of analysis or summary. The incorporating of these ingredients within a firm and clear narrative assures that there is no risk of monotony or tedium.

Calder aptly sums up the reasons for the high regard in which critics hold Jenkins:

She has made a substantial contribution to English biography in this [the twentieth] century. She is a popular biographer in the sense that her books have a wide appeal; she displays the virtues—but not, happily, the vices—of scholarly writing.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Brent has a Ph.D. in American Culture, specializing in film studies, from the University of Michigan. She is a freelance writer and teaches courses in the history of American cinema. In the following essay, Brent discusses the attitudes and policies of Queen Elizabeth I in regard to religion.

King Henry VIII inadvertently brought the Protestant Reformation to England in 1533, when Anne Boleyn was still pregnant with the future Queen Elizabeth I. For personal reasons, Henry VIII broke with the Catholic Church and named himself head of the Church of England. Elizabeth was thus raised Protestant and reigned as a Protestant queen during a period of great conflict in England between Catholics and Protestants, each of whom represented approximately half of the four million citizens of England at the time. In *Elizabeth the Great*, Jenkins pays special attention to the attitudes and policies of Elizabeth with regard to religion. Jenkins weaves direct quotes from Elizabeth and quotes from those who knew her with her own psychological and historical analysis of the queen's religious attitudes and policies.

Jenkins makes clear early in her biography that Elizabeth was never a deeply or ardently religious person, although she was undoubtedly a believing Christian. Jenkins asserts, "Elizabeth held the unquestioning belief in the Christian faith which was universal in Europe, but her mind was incapable of religious fanaticism." Jenkins points out that Elizabeth considered both Catholicism and Protestantism to be mere variations on the same Christian faith. Jenkins comments, "The famous saying of [Elizabeth's] later years, 'There is only one Christ Jesus and one faith: the rest is a dispute about trifles,' is an expression, not of experience, but of temperament."

Jenkins makes clear, however, that Elizabeth, though never passionately devout, did often turn to her faith in times of personal crisis. For instance, during the period in which her half-sister Queen Mary I kept her locked in the Tower of London as a potential conspirator against the throne, Elizabeth composed a note to herself expressing the solace she found in the reading of Scriptures. Jenkins observes that Elizabeth's "sense of abandonment and despair" during this period of imprisonment, "was reflected in what she wrote on the flyleaf of St. Paul's Epistles." Jenkins quotes:

August. I walk many times into the pleasant fields of the holy scriptures where I pluck up the goodlisome herbs of sentences . . . that having tasted their sweetness, I may the less perceive the bitterness of this miserable life.

Jenkins observes that, early in the reign of Mary I, Elizabeth struggled with her sister's insistence that she observe the Catholic faith. Elizabeth was at first inclined to plead her conscience, begging that she not be required to observe a faith in which she did not believe. When Elizabeth's brother, King Edward VI died, Elizabeth did not attend his funeral service because it was held at a mass in a Catholic Church. Jenkins notes that, at this point, Elizabeth "declined" to attend "any mass whatsoever." However, Queen Mary, angered by this, refused to see Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth was finally granted a meeting with Mary, Jenkins states, she "wept and asked if it were her fault that she could not believe." Mary responded that, if she attended mass, belief would come. Elizabeth, though probably not convinced by this assertion, recognized that she must begin attending Catholic mass to please her sister, on whose royal favor her life now depended. Jenkins observes that Mary was effectively placated by Elizabeth's outward show of observance of Catholicism. As Jenkins states, Mary was "pathetically pleased" by Elizabeth's compliance in going to mass and rewarded her with a jeweled brooch.

In 1555, Queen Mary I began the mass burning of Protestants which earned her the epithet Bloody Mary. Jenkins relates that, at this point, behaving as a Catholic was a means of survival for Elizabeth. Jenkins suggests that Elizabeth must have been warned ahead of time that this violent treatment of Protestants was in the workings; some five months before the burnings began, Jenkins notes, Elizabeth "took communion according to the Roman Catholic rites." Jenkins adds, this "capitulation" on the part of Elizabeth "was of extreme urgency, because . . . once the queen's morbid ferocity was aroused, recantation did not mean a reprieve from the fire." In other words, a Protestant could not save herself from Mary's punishments simply by claiming to be converted to Catholicism at the last moment. Mary wished to rout out the deeply held inner beliefs of her subjects and was not content with mere outward displays of compliance to Catholicism.

When Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558, upon the death of Mary I, she immediately took action to restore England to Protestantism under the Church of England. By the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity, she revived the policy, initiated by her father King Henry VIII, that the monarch was the sovereign head (on earth) of the Church of England and that her subjects were expected to observe Protestant mass on Sunday. Unlike Mary, Elizabeth was not concerned with the inner beliefs—or even with the secret religious observances of Catholicism within the privacy of one's home—of her subjects.

Elizabeth did, however, believe that outward compliance with the Church of England on the part of her subjects was necessary in order for her to maintain her position of power and legitimacy on the English throne. The repression of Catholicism was particularly significant to Elizabeth's reign because many Catholics did not recognize Henry VIII's annulment of his first marriage and so considered Elizabeth, the child of Henry's second marriage, to be an illegitimate child and therefore not a rightful heir to the English throne.

As Jenkins makes clear, Elizabeth's religious policy early in her reign was emphatically one of tolerance. Jenkins quotes Elizabeth as having stated, "'Let it not be said that *our* reformation tendeth to cruelty.'" Jenkins asserts that Elizabeth's religious policy was in "its spirit of tolerance and moderation in key with the queen's own attitude." Jenkins adds that Elizabeth said "she wished to open no window into men's consciences," and states that Elizabeth

declared that she intended no interference with anyone of the Christian faith "as long as they shall in their outward conversation show themselves quiet and not manifestly repugnant and obstinate to the laws of the realm which are established for frequenting of divine service in the ordinary churches of the realm."

Jenkins explains the level of tolerance of private Catholic observance during most of Elizabeth's reign: "If by a moderate monthly fine they could contract out of going to the parish church, and celebrate mass in secret at home, a number of [Catholics] were prepared to do that." Jenkins explains that, legally, harsher penalties could be imposed upon Catholics, but were in general only brought to bear in regard to potential rebellion or political conspiracy against the queen. Jenkins concludes that, until 1570, "English Catholics as a whole" were willing to tolerate Elizabeth's religious policy without enacting rebellion against her authority.

However, later communications from the pope in Rome to English Catholics demanded a very different attitude toward the queen. In 1570, the pope excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I. The pope declared that English Catholics were thus freed from any "'duty, fidelity and obedience'" to the English crown. The pope added that English citizens "'shall not once dare to obey [Queen Elizabeth] or any of her laws, directions or commands.'" Jenkins points out that, as of this declaration by the pope, "Henceforward, English Catholics were disobedient to the pope if they were loyal to the queen, and traitors to the queen if they obeyed the pope." Jenkins observes that these statements from the pope "abruptly shattered the compromise which had made the majority of Catholics find Elizabeth's system tolerable."

Elizabeth's response to this change of atmosphere was to crack down on Catholics almost as severely as Mary I had cracked down on Protestants. Jenkins makes clear that the queen was not squeamish about imposing extreme measures of torture against Catholic priests and Jesuits who were seen to be enemies of the state. Jenkins observes, "the government persecution" which followed "with all the horrors of sixteenth-century state punishments inflicted on Catholics who were suspected as traitors, had a parallel effect to the burning of Protestants under Mary Tudor: it inspired their fellow religionists and glorified the faith that produced such martyrs."

In 1580, the pope publicly declared that it would not be a sin to assassinate the Protestant queen Elizabeth, and would in fact be doing God's service. However, the pope altered his demands of English Catholics, stating that they could in good conscience continue to obey their Protestant queen as long as she held the throne. However, were an invasion of England by a Catholic nation, such as Spain or France, to occur, English Catholics were then required to rise up against the queen in support of such invasion. This at least provided English Catholics with the ease of not being required by the pope to openly rebel against the authority of the crown.

While violence raged throughout Europe as Catholics and Protestants came into conflict with one another and with their governments, Elizabeth maintained the personal attitude that such divisiveness within the Christian world was unfounded. Later in her reign, however, increased fears of Catholic uprising led the queen to institute horrific anti-

Catholic policies on a par with religious repression in many parts of Europe. In the final decade of Elizabeth's reign, the queen's fears of Catholic rebellion became more extreme. Her original policy of toleration in regard to Catholics was largely overshadowed by the severe torture and gruesome execution of countless Catholic priests.

Source: Liz Brent, Critical Essay on *Elizabeth the Great*, in *Nonfiction Classics for Students*, The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #2

Warren is a freelance writer with a master of fine arts degree in writing from Vermont College at Norwich University. In this essay, Warren explores the complex task of documenting the life of Elizabeth I.

Jenkins's portrait of Elizabeth I, queen of England from 1548 to 1603 is, at once, vivid and impressive. *Elizabeth the Great* reads like an eye witness account, time traveling through her life. Jenkins explains in her preface that the aim of the book "was to collect interesting personal information about Queen Elizabeth I." Almost as an apology, she says she "tried to focus attention all the time upon the queen," and, therefore, "the shape of the book is very irregular." Continuing, she says, "Sometimes events of great importance are only briefly mentioned or omitted while minor ones are dwelt on in detail." However, the historic events can hardly be separated from a literary portrait of the Queen, and the reader is impressed by the volume of history as much as by the intrigue and descriptions of Elizabeth. A. L. Rowse, a learned Elizabethan historian, wrote in the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* that Jenkins's biography was "quite the most perceptive" he had ever read. He calls it "a portrait that is unforgettable and very touching."

Jenkins's literary production of Elizabeth's life is no small task. It is a daunting endeavor to accurately record an incredibly active life of one of the most important, and colorful, women in world history without some irregularities. The many facets of her life; her associations and dealing with those close and dear to her, and with her enemies; the historic, social, and religious implications involved; and her own psyche, create a web of intricate lace for displaying her many qualities. She is not a bland and simple person, nor is her story a bland or simple story.

Not surprisingly then, *Elizabeth the Great* requires diligence, focus, and a certain amount of patience to read and absorb. From its opening page there are many names, personalities, and intrigues that add to the stage setting of a courtly monarch. At a time when kingdoms, provinces, and townships were frequently awarded with new titles, and names were constantly changed through marriage, there were more names than people. Much of the predicament is due to the number of players involved and their interchangeable names. In Jenkins's effort to introduce the characters to the reader and keep upto- date on the changes, she may refer to them by either of their names. The reader must pay attention to the changes and to the author's use of names and titles which quite often confuse the issue of who is who. An unclear understanding of the genealogy and blood connections of the major players will make for a confusing read. For instance, the origin of Mary Queen of Scots is not clear, though she has an important and prominent role in the book. A helpful addition to the book, with its existing bibliography and index, would have been a family tree and a timeline, to give the reader a clearer understanding of the relationships of the various participants.

The action between the key figures also requires close attention. There are suitors, conspirators, friends, and enemies who continually have an impact on one another. The

real-life intrigues are as curious as they are marvelous to read—in an English Renaissance, docudrama sort of way. It would seem from Jenkins's writing that much of the order of politics and government in the British Isles and Western Europe of the sixteenth century relied upon mating, matching, sexual and/or physical attractions, and other forms of courtship. Each country, or throne, tried to lay claim to another, first through marriage, then treachery, and lastly, invasion. Elizabeth once exclaimed—while in the presence of the Spanish ambassador, Mendoza, after he had proposed a marriage between Elizabeth and the King of Spain as an alternative to a Spanish invasion— "Would to God that each had his own and all were content."

The Scottish queen, Mary Queen of Scots, sought the English throne, claiming to be its only legitimate heir. The French royalty courted Elizabeth toward their stake in the English claim. The Spanish were in pursuit. Even the Netherlands, Italy, and Sweden had their eyes on Elizabeth's realm. It is no wonder that the book falls short of a perfect novel. For, though the story is no less compelling than a historic novel, there is just too much information crossing both time and space, and it cannot be easily told in a strictly linear fashion.

Jenkins has still given us a superb, accurate picture of the "Virgin Queen." Her splendid portrait is taken from firsthand accounts, offering the reader a clearly illustrious personality in Elizabeth I. Although some of the scenes are footnoted as to their origin, many are not. But Jenkins's bibliography is extensive, and the reader is most assured that she has done her homework. The reader is brought personally to each scene as if it came straight from the eyes and ears of the author. What increases this illusion is Jenkins's familiarity with the language of Elizabethan English. Jenkins is a British writer, born in 1905, and educated at Cambridge just after the turn of the twentieth century. Jenkins was raised on Elizabethan English, and she can be quite poetic at times. Her choice of descriptions and other writings about Elizabeth are well chosen.

The many descriptions of Elizabeth throughout her life describe a woman both frail and strong, beautiful and plain, compassionate yet cruel, patient yet irrational, chaste though frivolous, and with a keen eye for men. She loved to dance and ride horses. But this was not a simple woman. She was highly intelligent and complex. She spoke all the romance languages, as well as Welsh and Latin. She had a solid grasp of mathematics, economy, and history, and a well-studied knowledge of running a monarchy from her father, and those before him. Although she was quite capable of thinking for herself, she relied on her many councilors and advisors throughout the early days of her reign. In later years, after a number of mistakes and plots against her, she took to her own council as the more trusted view.

Elizabeth's maturing appearance and demeanor remain current throughout the book. When she was two years old, King Henry VIII, her father, accused Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, of adultery with five men and condemned her to death either by burning or beheading. She was beheaded. Jenkins describes Elizabeth at two, as "a lively little creature with reddish golden hair, a very white skin, and eyes of golden-brown with brows and lashes so fair to be almost invisible. Though headstrong she was remarkably teachable." Within the same year, after the king had married Jane Seymour, it was

decided that Elizabeth was no longer to be addressed as princess. To this she replied—while still ignorant that her father had killed her mother— "How haps it Governor, yesterday my lady Princess, and today but my Lady Elizabeth?"

When Elizabeth was eight years old, another important event occurred that Jenkins believes may have had a significant bearing on the rest of Elizabeth's life. Catherine Howard, Henry VIII's fifth wife—not twenty years old, and only eighteen months into the marriage—was accused of adultery, and beheaded. She had shown great kindness towards Elizabeth, and Elizabeth was fond of her. Shortly after this, Elizabeth said, "I will never marry." And she never did. She is reported to have had many amorous escapades, suitors, and a few serious considerations for marriage, usually in the name of diplomacy and national security, but she never did share her throne or her life with one single man. For Elizabeth, to marry was to lose her head.

A portrait of Elizabeth at thirteen still hangs in Windsor Castle, and Jenkins describes it thus: "The smooth red-gold hair is worn straight down her back, she holds a book with hands whose fingers are so long and delicate they look inhuman, her expression is watchful and disillusioned." The general view, writes Jenkins, is that Elizabeth was a "very witty and gentyll young lady." At twenty-five, she is described as "indifferent, tall, slender and straight." Jenkins describes an illustration of Elizabeth at thirty-seven with "the small head whose limp hair is dragged back under a jeweled net," that her skin was pure white.

A wonderfully full description of Elizabeth at the age of sixty-four gives a captivating glimpse of the queen. It had been recorded by the French ambassador, de Maisse, and is here told through Jenkins's words:

He saw her first in a large chamber where a great fire was burning. She wore a dark red wig decorated with jewels and though her face looked old and her neck was wrinkled, her bosom was delicate and white and her figure still beautiful in its proportions. She wore a white taffeta gown lined with scarlet, ornamented with pearls and rubies. She was most gracious and very talkative. She complained of the heat of the fire and had it damped down, and she was perpetually twisting and untwisting the long hanging ends of her red-lined sleeves. De Maisse gazed intently at that face.

Jenkins continues by saying that the "queen's conversation when she got upon men and affairs held him spellbound." There are numerous references to all aspects of Elizabeth's person, her coloring, her demeanor, and the rest of her. She was constantly scrutinized by all—and judged by her enemies. She was both held in awe and feared. Jenkins does well to show the reader a well-rounded view of this queen. She does not shy from the hangings, tortures, mutilations, and other punishments that Elizabeth dealt to those who came against her—whether intentionally or mistakenly. At the same time, the queen is shown to be compassionate and generous, caring immensely for her subjects and her England. Elizabeth's is truly a portrait that is unforgettable and very touching.

Elizabeth's actions as monarch and protector are frequently brought into the fray due to the continual struggle between the Catholics and Protestants. This is the one piece of important history that Jenkins appears not to have minimized. Most of the punishments the queen imposed had a direct relation to this. The various Catholic-ruled countries were constantly pursuing the English throne, France and Spain in particular. Even Scotland and half the population of England were attempting to overthrow Elizabeth. There were those among her own government who wished to see a unified Catholic England and tried their best to create it. Elizabeth did not have a vendetta against the Catholics. She had once exclaimed that it was not her intention to look into the souls of men, and allowed English Catholics to practice their religion in the safety of their own homes. Nonetheless, in 1570, Pope Pius V issued his *Bull of Excommunication* against Elizabeth. It "freed [Catholics] from their oath and all manner of duty, fidelity and obedience" to Elizabeth. Catholics were ordered under fear of damnation and excommunication to never obey any of Elizabeth's laws or commands. This created quite a stir, and lost more than a few lives to religious persecution and attempted Catholic domination of "the heretics," the non-Catholics. But Elizabeth persevered. England remained, at least in government, Protestant. Elizabeth used all of her faculties in her effort to protect the realm. Her physical beauty and genteel demeanor, her spirit and intellect, her shrewd political savvy, and her dedication at all costs the protection and maintenance of her throne and the sovereignty of England and its people.

Upon reading *Elizabeth the Great* most readers will surely conclude that Jenkins was successful in her aim. She describes a complete and real person in Elizabeth I. She does not force issues, and does not proselytize. She simply and honestly records much of what is actually known and written about this queen, about this woman, Elizabeth.

Source: Raymond Warren, Critical Essay on *Elizabeth the Great*, in *Nonfiction Classics for Students*, The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #3

Prebilic writes analytical essays, prepares technical publications, and publishes children's books. In this essay, Prebilic contemplates Jenkins's book through the concept of free will, the power of choosing within limitations.

Elizabeth Jenkins reveals the spirit and psyche of Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth I, in *Elizabeth the Great*. From Elizabeth's birth (September 7, 1533) to her death (March 24, 1603), Jenkins reveals this extraordinary woman's daily life; her living conditions, conversations, and meals; her illnesses and distresses; her travels and suitors; and her triumphs and catastrophes. Insight into her exercise habits, her emotional states, even how she referred to her little dog, convey Elizabeth's life as a human being as well as a queen. These minute details position this book a classic amongst the plentiful biographies on library shelves. Jenkins unearths how Queen Elizabeth's spirit emerged to acquire the throne, capture the adoration of a nation, and leave behind the remarkable Elizabethan Era.

Jenkins opens the historical book with the events that may have shaped young Elizabeth's mind-set and eventually formed her into a successful, yet temperamental, queen. The earliest signifi- cant event occurred before Elizabeth turned three years old. Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII, beheaded her mother, Anne Boleyn, for committing adultery. This verdict of high treason came after Ann failed to give him a son. She gave birth to Elizabeth, and then suffered two miscarriages. When again pregnant Anne discovered Henry VIII committing adultery with Jane Seymour, her lady-in-waiting, Anne's rage induced premature labor. She delivered a dead boy. Henry VIII declared Elizabeth illegitimate. Anne's promiscuity and failure to birth a son led to her execution.

Jenkins reveals that written records do not show when Elizabeth understood her mother's execution but believes that it deeply affected her attitudes. Maybe Elizabeth began to understand how men held the power in marriages. Jenkins states that Elizabeth, "in the fatally vulnerable years . . . had learned to connect the idea of sexual intercourse with terror and death."

By the age of eight, Elizabeth told her childhood friend, Robert Dudley, that she would never marry. This could scarcely have been coincidental; it followed the beheading of her stepmother, Catherine Howard, for adultery. Elizabeth again lost love to the ax at the hands of her father. Henry VIII seldom visited Elizabeth and removed her title of princess. She moved between palaces due to a lack of sanitation common in the sixteenth century, and her cherished caretakers changed all too often. Perhaps these experiences confirmed to Elizabeth that even the closest relationships could be tentative.

In any event, Elizabeth shared this instability with her stepbrother Edward, creating a bond that would last throughout Edward's life. Yet, Elizabeth felt a great attachment to her father, admiring "him with her whole heart," as Jenkins comments. Could it be that

Elizabeth understood at an early age that men can be confidants, but letting them too close can be deadly?

Despite Elizabeth's tragic childhood, fashion and appearance came naturally. Jenkins describes toddler Elizabeth as a "lively little creature with reddish-golden hair, a very white skin, and eyes of golden-brown with brows and lashes so fair as to be almost invisible." Her remarkable taste for fashion carried through her years. She spent precious time buying make-up and applying it precisely to give herself the look she desired. She became known as a stylish queen who loved jewels, elaborate outfits, decorative Persian and Indian carpets, and beautiful portraits. As Jenkins states, "the queen's frugal habits and hard work were thrown into contrast by her undying passion for visual splendor."

Jenkins successfully reveals the queen's depth of character. For example, she summarizes the political empire and how Elizabeth began to stabilize her country—an extraordinary feat, particularly for a woman, since this had never been accomplished before. In the sixteenth century, women gained power and prestige through marrying and giving birth to a male child to be the throne's heir, not managing a country. Elizabeth's sovereignty shows the struggle she confronted in balancing her free will with the people and the legislative groups. Her psychological and emotional opposition to marriage met with constant personal and political con- flict, a tug-of-war that lasted throughout Queen Elizabeth's life.

Due to Queen Elizabeth's refusal to marry and bear an heir, religious leaders and monarchs believed they had a chance at the crown and intensi- fied efforts to eliminate her, resulting in routine threats against the queen's life. Jenkins describes the queen beneath the crown; her capacity to remain logical, the rituals she adopted to protect herself, the ability to keep an open mind, and her courage to execute a cousin or a suitor for treason. She illustrates Elizabeth's vulnerability, describing her as weeping deeply when a friend died, as well as her capacity to explode in rage, her playfulness to laugh with children, and her joy in the arts.

The story of Queen Elizabeth's lovers captures the attention of women and men alike. Analogous to a world fascinated with the twentieth-century fairy tale of Prince Charles and Lady Diana, a sixteenthcentury London kept an eye on Queen Elizabeth's romantic interludes. From her coronation, wild speculation kept people gossiping and hoping that she'd choose a husband and produce an heir. The Privy Counsel, a body of officials chosen by the British monarch to advise the queen, agonized about it. She entertained the suitors presented to her by the council. She seriously considered marriage proposals. She walked that fine line of courtship and rejection without aggravating her men to the point of hatred. Moreover, she continued to exercise her free will. She responded to the council's concerns diplomatically, informing them that, according to Jenkins, "If God directed her not to marry, no doubt He would provide for the succession in other ways."

During her lifetime, Queen Elizabeth loved many men including her favorite childhood friend Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, as well as Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord

Chancellor, and Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. As Elizabeth Abbott states in *A History of Celibacy*, as a "wealthy and secure" queen, Elizabeth could have the awe of any man. "Marriage could only compromise her independence, diminish her power, and tax her . . . patience."

Elizabeth Tudor's virginity became such a striking feature of her reign that, as she neared fifty, she agreed to Walter Raleigh's suggestion that "a new American colony be named in her honor—Virginia." Although Elizabeth regularly considered marriage, she remained single and a virgin. Rosalind Miles in "*The Women's History of the World*," states that when women firmly established that "sex was not on their agenda" they "gained an almost mystical power . . . played with confidence and success by Elizabeth I." Despite times that discouraged celibacy and disrespected women, she managed to gain power, prestige, and respect.

As nuns affirm to be Christ's brides, Elizabeth seemed to be England's bride. Throughout the book, Jenkins shows Elizabeth's deep compassion towards her people, her profound ability to follow her instincts, and her strength not succumb to pressure. It was within this structure that Elizabeth operated effectively, and won the people's lasting admiration.

Three principles drove Queen Elizabeth's successful reign: supporting the Reformation —a religious movement to establish Protestant churches and to modify Roman Catholic doctrine; avoiding war; and re-establishing the national credit. Consequently, England became an unparalleled power with a strong navy; commerce, industry, and the arts burgeoned. The recipient of a notable education, Elizabeth excelled in creative, expository, and persuasive writing. She became fluent in numerous languages as a child. Her heritage included an enormous collection of poems, correspondence, prayers, and speeches.

Yet, the magnitude of her stature could not detract from her life as a human. Queen Elizabeth argued with her suitors, sometimes over difficult issues that took months to resolve. Her emotional worries caused illnesses like headaches, and gave way to mental collapse. She suffered toothaches. Grief overcame her repeatedly. When her beloved companion the Lord of Leicester died, she locked herself in her quarters for days and came out when a nobleman took the liberty of breaking the door. Queen Elizabeth experienced regret for some political decisions, particularly the execution of her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots. Although Mary caused Elizabeth distress for many years and planned her murder, and although Elizabeth ordered the execution, Jenkins depicts how Mary's execution caused Elizabeth to "burst into a passion of weeping such as she had never given way to in her life."

Queen Elizabeth rose above the limitations of her time to carve a place in history. Perhaps the rules of censorship illustrate this. Before her reign, rulers, governments, and the Church suddenly realized that the printed word could cause rebellion and dissent. Announcements against dissenting and rebellious books began in England under Henry VIII in 1529. In 1538, the Privy Council and other royal nominees licensed books for printing. The Star Chamber, a governmental court with authority to censor

publications, regulated the English book trade. Censorship also controlled the theatre, plays, and performers.

As a writer, however, Elizabeth supported creative growth and enjoyed the printed word. Writers introduced poetry like the sonnet, Spenserian stanza, and dramatic blank verse. Shakespeare's rousing dramas appeared on stage. A diversity of marvelous prose made its debut. Despite the fact that the civic authorities of London feared and discouraged creative growth, Queen Elizabeth enjoyed plays at court. With all its rules of censorship, the Elizabethan Era became known for its creative activity. The queen had diplomatically claimed her free will to enjoy the burgeoning creativity of the time.

Elizabeth governed England for forty-five years. "Towards the end of her life," Abbott says in *A History of Celibacy*, "the virgin who had loved and been loved . . . flirted, teased, courted, quarreled . . . bade farewell to her greatest love . . . the English people." According to Susan Bassnett in *Elizabeth I: A Feminist Perspective*, by the time of her death at the age of seventy, Elizabeth was heralded as a "rival to the Virgin Mary, as a second Queen of Earth and Heaven, as a woman more than mortal women." Perhaps it's symbolic that experts had to file off the Coronation ring she had worn for fortythree years.

The legacy of Queen Elizabeth lives on. Numerous biographies portray the Queen; some focus on the political achievements, others on her relationships with men, and still others offer insights into her life, each slant as unique as the queen herself. However, *Elizabeth the Great* receives rave reviews. As Richard Church explains in the Bookman, this "uncommonly beautiful" biography gets presented in "its colorful, savage, fastidious, filthy, exquisite, and wholly paradoxical distinction."

Jenkins's sophistication in revealing sovereign relationships, religious mind-sets, and political complexities make it hard to settle into the pace of the details. The structure feels loosely woven as she discloses facts randomly to illustrate her points. However, Jenkins does a superb job in presenting the history. Once its pace gets underway, the book captivates readers. Jenkins "varies the pace of her narrative for the sake of maintaining interest," says Charles Calder in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Calder continues, Jenkins preserves "a sense of proportion in depicting relationships."

In the final analysis, Jenkins's historical biography honors the beauty of the impressive Queen Elizabeth I. As a recognized classic and one of the first books to bring an all-encompassing view of this unique individual, it continues to bring the Elizabethan Era back to life.

Source: Michelle Prebilic, Critical Essay on *Elizabeth the Great*, in *Nonfiction Classics for Students*, The Gale Group, 2002.

Topics for Further Study

During Elizabeth's lifetime, members of the royal family in both England and Scotland exerted a significant influence on the course of her life and reign. Choose one of the following figures to learn more about: King Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, King Edward VI of England, Queen Mary I of England, Mary Queen of Scots, or King James VI of Scotland (who later became King James I of England). Provide information about the life and political career of this figure. What major political struggles did this figure encounter? What personal struggles did he or she encounter? What are the highlights of this figure's life and political career?

The Elizabethan Era is considered one of the highpoints in the history of English literature. Learn more about one of the following major writers of the Elizabethan Era: William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, Sir Philip Sidney, Richard Hooker, or Ben Jonson. Provide a biography of this writer. What are the major works of this writer? Describe key elements of this writer's style. What major themes and concerns did this writer explore and express in his writings?

A significant factor in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I was that she was a woman ruling a nation in a time when women were not considered suitable for political power. Learn more about the status of women (other than the queen) during the Elizabethan Era. In what ways were the lives of working women different from the lives of aristocratic women? What restrictions were placed on the lives of women and what was expected of women? One way to approach this assignment would be to write a fictional biography of a poor, peasant, or working-class woman during the Elizabethan Era.

The history of England during the Elizabethan Era was affected by the political and social history of other nations in Europe, particularly Scotland, Ireland, France, Spain, and the Netherlands. Learn more about the history of one of these nations during the Elizabethan Era. What form of government did this nation have in the sixteenth century? What major political and social conflicts arose in this nation during that period? What was the relationship of this nation to England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I?

The status of the royal family in England has changed dramatically between the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in the sixteenth century and the reign of Queen Elizabeth II during the second half of the twentieth century. Learn more about the royal family and their public role in Great Britain during the reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

Compare and Contrast

1500s: The population of England is approximately 50 percent Protestant and 50 percent Catholic.

1950s: In the post-World War II era there is a large-scale influx of immigrants from many nations to England, bringing a variety of religious faiths, especially Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh, into the predominantly Christian culture of the United Kingdom.

Today: The population of the United Kingdom is approximately 53 percent Protestant, 10 percent Catholic, 3 percent Muslim, .5 percent Jewish, .5 percent Hindu, and .5 percent Sikh. Approximately 32.5 percent of the population either has no religious affiliation or is one of many other affililations.

1500s: Under the Tudor dynasty, the English monarchy is at the height of its power. The monarchy is served by a parliament consisting of a House of Lords and a House of Commons. The House of Lords holds greater power than the House of Commons. There is no prime minister. Although there are several female monarchs, women are not allowed as members of Parliament.

1950s: The United Kingdom is a parliamentary democracy. The monarchy now functions as a national figurehead, rather than a source of political power or decision-making. Parliament is headed by a prime minister, and the House of Commons, comprised of elected officials, now holds greater political power than the House of Lords, which is made up of appointed and hereditary officials. As of 1918, women can vote and be elected to political office. Queen Elizabeth II is crowned in 1952.

Today: Elizabeth II remains a national figurehead as queen of England and of the Commonwealth of Nations. Various legislation is passed during the 1990s to reduce the power of the House of Lords; effective in 1999, hereditary peers in the House of Lords are no longer allowed to vote in Parliament. Margaret Thatcher, who served as the first female prime minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990, has paved the way for women to become elected to the highest governmental post in the United Kingdom.

1500s and 1600s: The union of nations which later formed the United Kingdom are in a state of flux regarding their political relationship to one another. Under the rule of King Henry VIII, Wales is incorporated into England in 1536. In 1586, Scotland, under King James VI, concludes a league with England, promising cooperation and peace between the two nations. In 1603, King James VI of Scotland is also named King James I of England and Ireland. However, England and Scotland, although under one monarch, remain separate nations with separate parliaments and governmental structures. As of 1541, Ireland officially recognizes the English crown as its sovereign.

1950s: Scotland joins England and Wales to form Great Britain in 1707 and, in 1801, the United Kingdom is formed when Ireland joins. In 1920, Ireland is divided into

Northern Ireland, which is under British rule, and the Republic of Ireland, a sovereign state. In the 1950s, the nations of Great Britain maintain a stable union while Northern Ireland continues to be a region of conflict over issues of national sovereignty.

Today: Various alterations in government structure during the 1990s tend toward granting greater political independence for each country within the United Kingdom. Referendums in 1997 provide for an independent national assembly for Wales and a separate parliament for Scotland, which are formed in 1999. In 1998, a peace agreement is signed between the prime minister of the United Kingdom and leaders of the Irish Republican Army providing for self-rule of Northern Ireland; however, conflict in Northern Ireland continues.

What Do I Read Next?

Elizabeth and Leicester (1961), by Elizabeth Jenkins, is a historical account of the romantic relationship between Queen Elizabeth I of England and the Earl of Leicester.

The Faerie Queen (1590, 1596), by Edmund Spenser, is a mythological rendering of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, written in verse by one of the greatest poets of the Elizabethan age.

Queen Elizabeth I (1934), by J. E. Neale, is considered the standard biography of Queen Elizabeth I of England.

In *Elizabeth I: The Shrewdness of Virtue* (1988), Jasper Ridley offers a biography of Queen Elizabeth I focusing on the significance of religion in Elizabeth's political policies.

In *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (1977), Roy Strong offers discussion of the public image of Queen Elizabeth I, based on portraits of the queen as well as her ostentatious public appearances during her reign.

Daily Life in Elizabethan England (1995), by Jeffrey L. Singman, provides an historical overview of social life and customs in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

The Public and Private Worlds of Elizabeth I (1998), by Susan Watkins, with photographs by Mark Fiennes, provides photographic images of the homes, castles, and other locations in which Queen Elizabeth I lived and worked.

The Wives of Henry VIII (1992), by Antonia Fraser, provides biographical and historical information on the six wives of King Henry VIII, including Anne Boleyn, the mother of Queen Elizabeth I.

The Children of Henry VIII (1996), by Alison Weir, provides biographical information on Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I, the three children of King Henry VIII.

Further Study

Bruce, Marie Louise, *Anne Boleyn*, Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1972.

Bruce provides a biographical account of the life of Anne Boleyn, the mother of Queen Elizabeth I and second wife of King Henry VIII.

Dickens, A. G., *The English Reformation*, Schocken Books, 1964.

Dickens provides an historical account of the English Protestant Reformation which results from the reign of Henry VIII (the father of Queen Elizabeth I).

Fraser, Antonia, *Mary Queen of Scots*, Delacorte, 1969.

Fraser provides a biography of Mary Queen of Scots, the Catholic Queen of Scotland who posed a threat to Queen Elizabeth I throughout her reign. Mary Queen of Scots was implicated in many plots against the life and crown of Elizabeth, and as a result she was eventually executed.

Greenblatt, Stephen, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, University of Chicago, 1980.

Greenblatt offers an analysis of the public image of major figures from Renaissance England, including a discussion of Queen Elizabeth I.

Loades, D. M., *The Reign of Mary Tudor: Politics, Government, and Religions in England, 1553-1558*, Ernest Benn, 1979.

Loades provides a comprehensive history of the reign of Queen Mary I of England, also known as Bloody Mary, Elizabeth I's half sister.

Scarisbrick, J. J., *Henry VIII*, University of California Press, 1968.

Scarisbrick's *Henry VIII* remains the standard biography of Henry VIII.

Strong, Roy, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, Thames and Hudson, 1987.

Strong examines the iconography of the public image of Queen Elizabeth I, based on portraits and other images of the queen.

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An examination of representations of Queen Elizabeth I in English literature.

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Morton, Andrew, "Such Hope in My Heart," in *Diana: Her True Story—In Her Own Words*, Simon & Schuster, 1997, pp. 119-31.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Nonfiction Classics for Students (NCfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NCfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on

□classic□ novels frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NCfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NCfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NCfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NCfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NCfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Nonfiction Classics for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

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