

The Queen's Fool Study Guide

The Queen's Fool by Philippa Gregory

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Contents

The Queen's Fool Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Summer 1548 and Winter 1552-1553.....	4
Spring and Summer 1553.....	6
Autumn and Winter 1553.....	8
Winter 1554.....	10
Spring and Summer 1554.....	11
Autumn 1554 - Spring 1555.....	13
Spring - Summer 1555.....	14
Autumn 1555 - Spring 1556.....	17
Summer - Autumn 1556.....	19
Winter 1556 - Summer 1557.....	21
Winter 1557 - Summer 1558.....	23
Autumn - Winter 1558.....	25
Characters.....	27
Objects/Places.....	32
Themes.....	35
Style.....	37
Quotes.....	39
Topics for Discussion.....	41



Plot Summary

The Queen's Fool is the story of a young girl, Hannah Green, and her adolescent experiences during the time of Queen Mary's reign. Hannah's family was forced to relocate to England to avoid religious persecution in their homeland (Spain). Hannah's intelligence and education spanned beyond that of the average English woman. She also possessed the gift of holy visions. It was her gift that brought her to the attention of the royal court of England.

Hannah was betrothed to a young man by the name of Daniel Carpenter. Throughout the novel Hannah's love for Daniel blossomed. She also grew to be a woman of fierce independence, which threatened to tear apart their relationship. As the daughter of a widowed father, Hannah was never taught to be submissive nor modest, traits that were essential to the concept of femininity in England at that time. Her life at the court encouraged her to remain outspoken, although outside of the palace the trait was perceived offensively. Hannah found it difficult to resolve the disparities between her upbringing, her life at court, and her future with Daniel.

During her time in royal service, Hannah was regarded as a holy fool and dubbed "Mistress Boy." Hannah served first the Dudley family, then Queen Mary and finally Princess Elizabeth directly. She was present as King Edward passed away and Lady Jane was made Queen. Hannah accompanied Mary as she fought for her chance to inherit the throne and supported her throughout her reign. Despite her love for Queen Mary, Hannah was intrigued by Princess Elizabeth. Elizabeth's methods were unscrupulous, however Hannah admired her many charms. Hannah learned to navigate the perils and politics of court life, while practicing self preservation. Hannah nearly lost her own life at the hands of the Inquisition and again at the Battle of Calais. When Hannah finally exited royal service, she and Daniel embarked on a life together with their son, Danny.



Summer 1548 and Winter 1552-1553

Summer 1548 and Winter 1552-1553 Summary

Queen's Fool is essentially a coming-of-age story about a girl by the name of Hannah. In the Summer of 1548, Hannah's father, a Spanish printer and book seller by trade, sent Hannah to the English court to deliver a set of books. Hannah went to the castle garden in search of their owner, Tom Seymour, and found him sexually engaged with Princess Elizabeth. It was Hannah's first introduction to the princess—and not a favorable one.

During the Winter of 1552-1553, Hannah and her father moved to England. Their family was Jewish and as a consequence of political persecution they were forced to relocate under assumed names and a new religion. During the Inquisition Hannah's mother was burned at the stake for her beliefs. Although they all publicly converted in an attempt to survive, her mother was convicted of being a Marrano, a false Christian, and was killed. Immediately following the mother's arrest, Hannah and her father fled Spain. They wandered through many cities and nations carrying just a few precious manuscripts. To keep Hannah safe, her father insisted she dress like a boy and play the role of his apprentice. He arranged a good marriage for her. The young man was of the Jewish faith and studying to be a physician. Until Hannah's marriage, he expected she would work beside him in their print shop on Fleet Street.

One day Hannah welcomed a small group of men into her father's shop. There were just two men present, in search of scholarly books, but Hannah saw what appeared to be a third man as well. Her vision garnered the attention of the visitors. The two men, Robert Dudley and John Dee, were associated with the house of Lord John Dudley, one of the most influential men of the English court. Robert convinced Hannah's father that she would be well cared for in his service and brought her back to the castle. Once there she entered into service for the court and was dressed in the livery of the Dudley family. She was presumed to be a holy child with the gift of vision to be used as entertainment, but the Dudley's wanted to manipulate her gift for their own political advantage. Like the rest of the court, the Dudleys were preparing for the heir, Lady Mary, who would succeed King Edward. While in their service Hannah predicted the date of the king's death, as well as an unlikely successor, Lady Jane Grey. Hannah's visions of her own future were much less certain. She met with her fiance, Daniel Carpenter, but found they had little in common and neither were eager to marry. Hannah had much more in common with Mr. Dee, Lord Robert's tutor, a scholarly man who challenged boundaries and was religiously tolerant.

Summer 1548 and Winter 1552-1553 Analysis

The first sections of Queen's Fool introduce us to the main character, Hannah. She is nine years old at the time and possesses the gift of foresight. The first vision shared in



the book occurs when she is delivering books for her father. She brought the books to their owner, a Mr. Tom Seymour. In addition to catching him in an intimate and forbidden exchange with Princess Elizabeth, she views a scaffold over his shoulder. While perfectly healthy at the time, he was hanged within a year of her vision. The charge was treason and he died on a scaffold. Sharing this vision so early in the novel leaves the reader with the impression that Hannah's visions are powerful and that she is far from ordinary. Hannah can not direct her visions, nor can she prevent them. As immigrants Hannah and her Father, Oliver, try their best to not draw attention to themselves. Their native last name, Verde, was shed for its English equivalent, Green, when they relocated.

The England that they entered was ruled by King Edward. He was a fifteen-year-old boy and very sickly. Edward's physicians tried numerous treatments to improve his health but were not successful. They assured him that he would survive, but Edward was less confident for his future. His court was filled with fair weather-friends and supporters who were serving him yet preparing for his successor. Hannah entered into this court of duplicity. While working at her father's print shop, Hannah had a vision of the angel Uriel and was brought into royal service. At fourteen years old, she was named as a Holy Fool. Her master, Lord Robert Dudley, affectionately referred to her as Mistress boy, an allusion to her femininity and preference for wearing breeches. Unlike the rest of the court, Hannah responded honestly when questioned by King Edward. When he inquired about the future she told him that she saw the gates of Heaven opening for him. He was entertained by her vision and found her honesty refreshing, so she was invited to stay at the castle. Hannah found a friend in another court fool, Will Sommers. Will was thirty-three years old and had been in royal service for over twenty years. He was the wittiest and funniest man in the court and provided non-stop amusement.



Spring and Summer 1553

Spring and Summer 1553 Summary

Hannah went home in April of 1553 to visit her father. She was paid for her position in the royal court and bestowed upon him her earnings. They also spoke of their lives. At the court three marriages were scheduled: Lady Katherine Dudley to Lord Henry Hastings, and the two Grey sisters to Lord Guilford Dudley and Lord Henry Herbert respectively. In the town, people were disappearing. They were being questioned for heresy against the church and not returning. They discussed running away again but decided that they were not under suspicion and remained safe. Back at the royal court, Hannah spent mornings in study with John Dee and afternoons with Will Sommers. Robert Dudley's father, the Duke of Northumberland, sent Hannah away to the home of Lady Mary. He sent her as a servant and spy. Hannah was afraid to go and confided her reservations in her father as well as Daniel. Daniel was surprisingly supportive in his response and the two shared a gentle kiss.

Hannah visited with Lady Mary at her home in Hundson. She noticed that along the way the villages seemed to be in disrepair. Since Edward's reign the Catholic monasteries and shrines had all been closed and the area was impoverished. The country people adored Mary and hoped for her ascension to the throne. They believed she would restore the Catholic religion and prosperity would return. Mary received Hannah warmly and was especially pleased to learn that Hannah was fluent in multiple languages. Hannah became one of Mary's closest confidants and stayed by her side. Mary was anxious for news of her siblings, whom she had cared for in their youth. She was saddened to hear that Edward was still ill. She wished him good health, but should his health fail, she was aware of her role in the future of England. Mary was prepared to inherit the throne and rule a Catholic England just like her father had intended. Instead of a smooth transition, Lady Jane Grey was installed as queen and Mary was named a traitor. She was forced to fight for the crown. She fled first to Kenninghall and then Framlingham Castle, which was well fortified. She collected followers along the way, and they continued to arrive on a daily basis, pledging their allegiance to the true queen of England. By the middle of July, Northumberland and Jane had lost all support and the people rejoiced as Mary took the throne. Her half sister, Lady Elizabeth, who had feigned sickness when Mary was under siege, now came out to join Mary in her triumphant return.

Spring and Summer 1553 Analysis

As an adolescent girl, without the direction of a mother nor the oversight of a father, Hannah was molded by the court. She did not have sufficient experience in the day-to-day living of a female in England and lacked the sensibility one might expect. She was enamored by the beauty and excitement of court life. This can be seen on page fifty-three when Hannah says the following about Lord Dudley: "I had watched him as I might



have watched a seagull riding the wind blowing up the Thames: as a thing so beautiful that it illuminated my day. I watched him, not as a woman desiring a man; but a girl worshiping an icon, something far beyond reach but perfection in every way." She is merely a child in a grown-up world.

At the wedding feast in honor of Lady Jane, Hannah speaks openly from her vision. She has neither the control nor the self preservation instinct to keep quiet or to lie. When asked if Jane will make a lucky bride, Hannah responds in the negative. She shows her immaturity again in her exchange with Lord Dudley on page sixty-one. As a man with much experience in both life and love, he recognizes Hannah for the child that she is. She divulges her crush on him and he is kind to her. She is embarrassed and fears his response, but he does not make fun of her. He does, however, commit her to an honor-bound lifetime of service, which she may feel differently about in the years to come.

Lady Mary is introduced to the reader in the Summer of 1553. About one of their first interactions Hannah says that "she looked like a woman you could trust, a mistress you could love." She was described as having dark and honest eyes set in a square, determined face. During Edward's reign Mary was exiled and nearly forgotten. She received few visitors but was constantly accompanied by her closest servant, Jane Dormer. Lord Dudley sent Hannah to keep Mary company as well, and Mary welcomed her presence. In the time that followed, Hannah grew to understand Mary. She was motivated by her religion and birthright. Mary saw herself as one of three legitimate heirs to the throne. She did not wish harm to befall her half brother and sister, but she expected that when Edward's time comes to an end, she would be next. Likewise, she expected her half sister, Elizabeth, to be loyal and patient and to inherit when Mary's time had concluded. Mary wanted to rule the country under the Catholic religion, which she believed had provided peace and prosperity for her people in the past. She believed that she could rule the country under God's guidance and have no obligations to anyone besides God. The people of England would be like her children, and she would work tirelessly for their benefit. Hannah had a vision of Mary as queen and confirmed her inheritance. Hannah was afraid of her visions, her lack of control over them, and her future at court in a foreign land. Mary was gentle with her, almost motherly, and offered her safety. Despite Hannah's vision, Mary's inheritance did not go smoothly. They were forced to fight for the crown, an activity that made Mary reflect on her legacy. Her father, King Henry, was said to have been truly in love with Mary's mother, but forsook her for another, Anne Boleyn, with whom he sired Elizabeth. Then he left Anne Boleyn for another, named Jane, with whom he produced Prince Edward. His propensity for falling in and out of love left a long line of progeny behind him, but each was disinherited when another was born. Mary, as the oldest, recalled her youth as being painful, and although the court would have turned them into enemies, she loved Elizabeth and Edward and wanted them to be happy.



Autumn and Winter 1553

Autumn and Winter 1553 Summary

Lord Dudley had been involved in the plot to install Lady Jane on the throne and as such was sent to prison in the Tower. Hannah was no longer bound to him by service and contemplated returning home. Hannah was in no rush to marry Daniel, and Mary was happy to pay her wages, so Hannah remained at Mary's court indefinitely. Hannah cared deeply for Mary and was happy to remain. Lady Elizabeth was also present at court, although her relationship with Mary was not as sincere. Elizabeth had her own plans for inheriting the throne and would go to almost any lengths to inherit early. In addition, they differed in religion. Their Father, Henry, had ruled a Catholic kingdom, but his son, Edward had converted England to Protestantism. Mary had reverted the kingdom back to Catholicism, but Elizabeth believed in the Protestant religion and was non-compliant. The citizens of England were a mix of both religions but promised to convert to either in order to preserve their own lives. Mary's advisers recommended that she kill all of those who plotted against her. Eventually Mary agrees, but only a few are killed and the rest kept as prisoners.

Hannah visited the Tower to see Lord Dudley. He was greatly diminished due to his confinement, yet Hannah was still drawn to him. Per her father's wishes, she asked to be released from his service. Associating with him could jeopardize her family's safety. Elizabeth's presence at court continued to rankle Queen Mary, and although Elizabeth teetered on the line of obedience, Hannah was aware that associating too closely with Elizabeth could also mean danger. The country was still pleased with Queen Mary but encouraged her to take a husband. Many offers were made but Mary was inclined to marry Philip of Spain, whom was also Catholic and the ruler of a vast empire. Mary feared marriage but also feared the instability of ruling alone. As Elizabeth's behavior grew more reckless, and Mary became more disenchanted with her, Mary's desire for an alternate heir also weighed heavily on her heart. At Christmas time Elizabeth and her admirers retired to the country and Mary's court seemed to dwindle in comparison. A rebel army advanced to London. They hoped to marry Elizabeth to Edward Courtenay and install them as king and queen. Although her advisers told her to flee, Mary was determined to remain in England and hold onto her crown.

Autumn and Winter 1553 Analysis

Following Lord Dudley's arrest, Hannah was unsure of her place at court. She enjoyed being in the queen's company but wanted to be clear that she could go home if the queen preferred her to do so. Hannah made it clear to the Queen that she could not control her gift of sight and could not promise to aid her in that regard. Mary found Hannah to be sincere and hired her solely for her companionship. Queen Mary's other relationships at court were not so simple. Mary believed that the English throne was a gift from God and did not seek his wrath by opposing his will. In all of her advisers'



suggestions she sought support from the Catholic Church, and if no evidence could be found of that support she did not proceed. Similarly, when they all advised her to sentence Lady Jane to death, she determined that the punishment was unjust. She viewed Lady Jane as an unwilling pawn in Duke Northumberland's treacherous game and not as a true enemy.

Elizabeth suffered from a health condition that her doctors referred to as dropsy. Generally, she seemed healthy when it suited her and ill when necessary. When ill, her extremities would swell to the point of being disfiguring, and she would take to her bed for long stretches of time. Her bouts of dropsy seemed to be induced by emotional distress, a coincidence for which Mary had no patience. Mary stretched out her arms in welcoming on many occasions and tried to encourage Elizabeth to behave like a proper royal lady; however, Elizabeth could not be molded. She lacked virtue and was a natural schemer. In these pages the reader learns that Queen Mary is tiring of Elizabeth's reckless and harmful behaviors. She goes so far as to call Elizabeth a whore. Queen Mary does not want the throne of England to be inherited by a woman of Elizabeth's caliber. Mary's need for an alternate heir to the throne is the ultimate reason for her decision to marry. Fortunately, Prince Philip of Spain holds the qualities required for her mate. Mary finds his portrait enticing, but when Hannah glimpses it she has a vision. She senses that should the queen marry Philip she will suffer from a broken heart. Hannah continued to have spontaneous and intermittent visions. Her visions could also be induced through a method called scrying. During a scrying session, she sat in a dark room, lit only by gentle candlelight, and gazed into a mirror while John Dee prayed and recorded her observations. Scrying and fortune telling were against the law and doing so made Hannah uncomfortable.



Winter 1554

Winter 1554 Summary

Most of the English army could not be raised in a timely manner, and of those that were available, many were unsure of their allegiances. Mary tried a different tactic. She personally went out into London and asked the people to rise up and defend her. She reassured them that her intended marriage would not result in the annexing of England by Spain. Instead, she hoped to provide an heir for the citizens of England. Much appeased, the citizens fought back the rebels and kept Queen Mary safe. Following the second uprising against her, Mary was forced to punish the traitors more severely. The rebel soldiers were sacrificed on scaffolds throughout the city. Lady Jane still awaited punishment in the Tower and now Elizabeth's guilt needed to be assessed as well. Mary sent Hannah to visit Elizabeth. She hoped Hannah's gift of sight might lend some valuable guidance with regards to punishing Elizabeth. Hannah was sent as companion, but the others who accompanied her had different orders. Doctors were on hand to assess Elizabeth's condition and provide aid if necessary. The Queen's councilors were intent on arresting Elizabeth and bringing her back to London. It took ten days to transfer the reluctant Princess from her home at Ashridge to London. Elizabeth procrastinated as long as possible, fearing that a return to London would result in her death.

Winter 1554 Analysis

When Mary asks Hannah to go check on Elizabeth, Hannah assumes that Elizabeth is innocent of wrongdoing and suggests as much to the queen. Where compassion previously existed in her heart, the queen is now incapable of being so generous. She reminds Hannah of Elizabeth's history for illness, including when Lady Jane was placed on the throne and Mary desired Elizabeth's support. At that time Elizabeth was too ill to even respond by hand-written letter. Daniel is also plagued by a conflict of emotions. He is disappointed in Hannah's inability to submit to his commands. Despite her somewhat masculine appearance and demeanor, he is clearly interested in her sufficiently to maintain their engagement. There seems to be a push and pull motion between the two, with one person always pushing the boundaries and the other always compensating, except that either person is capable of being the one to push away. Following one of their many arguments, Hannah offers him a dessert called syllabub. His character responds that he has "no taste for things that are sweet and sour at the same time." This is an example of allusion, and he could just as easily be talking about Hannah as the dessert that she is offering him.



Spring and Summer 1554

Spring and Summer 1554 Summary

Elizabeth resided once more at Queen Mary's castle, but she was unattended and disgraced. Hannah went between Mary and Elizabeth, waiting on both, and loving each for different reasons. Mary spent many hours agonizing over whether or not to send Elizabeth to her death for treason against the crown. Although her advisers encouraged it, and Mary had many reasons to be distrustful of Elizabeth, she still found her execution difficult to proclaim. Queen Mary made sure that Elizabeth was kept in check. Elizabeth felt Mary's displeasure daily via her utter loneliness.

In March Hannah received a letter from her father stating that he was ill and begging her to visit. Upon her arrival Hannah discovered that he was not ill but that he was packing the printing shop and moving to France. He expected religious persecution to follow the Queen's marriage and he hoped to avoid it. Daniel and his family were packing to move as well, and Daniel demanded that Hannah join them. Hannah was accustomed to the freedom of court and did not appreciate being ordered to do anything. Rather than agree to the plan Hannah outright refused and broke their engagement. Despite their argument, two days later when Daniel arrived to pickup her father and their belongings, Hannah reluctantly agreed to accompany them. As they left the city Hannah glanced up at the tower, where she knew Lord Dudley was still awaiting news of his fate. As she watched, the royal barge approached but was not displaying the Queen's flag. Hannah surmised that Elizabeth was being brought to the Tower, under arrest and possibly to await her death, and Hannah was compelled to return and keep her company in her darkest time. Again Daniel was disappointed. When they departed Daniel and his family, along with Hannah's father, agreed to go only as far as Calais, an English outpost in France, and wait there for her to join them. Their parting kiss was a mixture of frustration and desire.

Hannah left Elizabeth's side infrequently. One one such occasion she visited with Queen Mary. The queen instructed Hannah to tell Elizabeth that if she would confess then Mary would spare her life. Mary was unable to forgive Elizabeth's repeated deceits, but Mary did not wish Elizabeth to die as a traitor either. The months wore on and Elizabeth's anxiety mounted. In May a group of men came to the Tower to remove Elizabeth. She was not to be hung but would not go free either. She was being moved to Sir Henry Bedingfield's estate under house arrest. The gate house where she was to be confined had been hastily repaired and remained drafty, but it was an improvement over the Tower. Hannah accompanied Elizabeth to Woodstock. While there, Hannah received a letter from Daniel. He sought compromise and remained interested in their marriage. Although Hannah was glad to learn of his continued interest, she was still not inclined to marriage and chose not to reply. Among the other correspondence was a request from Queen Mary that Hannah return to her court where they expected Prince Philip's arrival. Queen Mary was wed to the prince of Spain before the altar of Winchester Cathedral. Love radiated at court and Hannah's mind often wandered to



Daniel and the last letter he wrote to her. Hannah searched her heart and then wrote a response, including her fears and desire to be a part of a team as opposed to a servant. She was still open to their eventual marriage, provided that they could agree on the terms. Shortly thereafter Hannah learned that the queen had missed her menstrual cycle and was pregnant.

Spring and Summer 1554 Analysis

Elizabeth's quiet return to the castle says much about her standing with the queen and the people of England. Mary does not announce Elizabeth's movements because she does not wish to draw sympathy for Elizabeth from the people. Elizabeth's summer relocation was ironic because when King Henry chose Elizabeth's mother over Queen Katherine (Mary's mother), Katherine was moved to the country. She was placed in places that were increasingly remote up until the time of her death. Mary could have been reenacting the situation purposefully, or she may have been just trying to avoid a scene at court. Either way, the similarity of Elizabeth's current state and that of Queen Katherine was not lost on Elizabeth. She feared being forgotten and lonely and might have preferred to remain in the Tower. Furthermore, she was angry that the queen wished for Hannah to return to court. Hannah was fond of both women, but she took her orders from Queen Mary. For this Elizabeth called her disloyal and spurned her friendship. In a fit of anger, Elizabeth let her feelings be known to Hannah with regards to Mary. Elizabeth was vile and showed no restraint, but she did so because she was desperate and adequately judged Hannah's love for her. Hannah was quick to defend the queen, but remained true in her love of Elizabeth as well. While Elizabeth grew in resentment towards Mary, Mary began to regard Elizabeth as less of a problem. She had great expectations for her impending marriage and the future of the kingdom. She hoped for a son and heir to the throne who would displace Elizabeth. Her desire was supported by a vision of Hannah's. Mary believed so strongly in their future that she overlooked Elizabeth's involvement in it. It was as if she believed that by excluding Elizabeth from the wedding she could eliminate her from court and the entire royal family.



Autumn 1554 - Spring 1555

Autumn 1554 - Spring 1555 Summary

In September, when she had not menstruated for two full months, Queen Mary was confident of her pregnancy and informed Philip. The court was alive with love and happiness for the first time in many years. It was a court unlike any that Hannah had previously been exposed to. In October the court received word that Elizabeth was ill again. Mary felt compassion and sent Hannah along with a team of doctors to check on Elizabeth. The Queen reiterated her promise to release Elizabeth if she would only confess to her involvement in the plan to overthrow Mary's reign. Hannah found that Elizabeth was indeed ill again. Hannah encouraged her to confess, but Elizabeth refused. In doing so she condemned herself to a long, cold winter at Woodstock. On the queen's orders, Hannah remained with Elizabeth, who became increasingly ill and depressed. News of the queen's court trickled in. Her body was growing with the child and Parliament had restored Catholic rule to England.

In Spring of the new year, Elizabeth was invited to return to court. Mary was displaying her compassion and no longer demanded Elizabeth's confession. The party returned to England amid rumors of burning heretics. Hannah was afraid of the burnings and Elizabeth was enraged at their occurrence. Hannah went immediately to the castle to meet with the Queen, who was flanked by both her husband and Cardinal Pole, a highly influential man of the church. Queen Mary spoke with Elizabeth and pressed her to confess, but she maintained her innocence. Both knew that if Mary gave birth to a son, Elizabeth would not inherit the throne, but if Mary delivered a girl, Elizabeth would still be a contender to the throne.

Autumn 1554 - Spring 1555 Analysis

The willfulness of both Queen Mary and her half sister, Princess Elizabeth, can be observed in these sections. Neither is willing to concede defeat although the continuous strife between them brings just as much pain as the original insult. As always, Mary's main goal is to reform all people, including Elizabeth, and guide them in the ways of what she calls the "true religion." In her eyes, Elizabeth is a sinner who requires intervention and instruction to save her soul. Elizabeth's priority is to remain alive long enough to inherit the throne. She will agree to nearly anything that brings her closer to her goal but declines anything that might be publicly used against her, such as confessing to treason. The queen's eventual compromise with regards to Elizabeth was a direct result of her impending delivery. She was inclined to focus on the son she expected rather than on Elizabeth's lost soul. It should not be interpreted as a weakness on behalf of the queen nor as forgiveness. As Hannah accompanied Elizabeth back to the castle she saw a vision of people burning and warned Elizabeth of the danger that awaited. Elizabeth's determination to take the throne doubled when she learned of the atrocities about to occur in England.



Spring - Summer 1555

Spring - Summer 1555 Summary

In the Spring of 1555, the Queens quarters at Hampton Court were prepared for her confinement. In May the Queen entered her confinement and released Elizabeth from prison. The weeks turned into a month and the midwives began to speak of how late the baby was in arriving. Queen Mary's anxiety was fueled by their talk and she grew pale and discontented. Lack of sunshine and fresh air weighed heavily and the glow of pregnancy dulled. Hannah remained by Mary, but Mary was increasingly sullen and removed herself from conversation.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth flaunted her new-found freedom. She flirted with the King, who was vulnerable without Mary's presence and attention. Philip enjoyed Elizabeth's company. He ceased talk of sending her away in marriage and contemplated keeping her at court. In the queen's absence, Elizabeth was heightened from traitorous half sister to respected member of the royal family. Hannah observed the intimacy developing between the two and warned Elizabeth against being foolish. Hannah reminded her that Mary could imprison her again, just as easily as she had granted her freedom. During the queen's confinement Elizabeth became confident in her place. She informed Hannah that whatever the queen intended, Elizabeth was now protected by King Philip, and she no longer feared punishment from Mary.

Hannah took to riding her horse early in the mornings to escape the darkness of Queen Mary's confinement chamber. While riding one day Hannah encountered the scholar Mr. Dee. He was entering Elizabeth's chambers through a secret passage. Once caught, he brought Hannah in with him to avoid a scene. Mr. Dee brought Elizabeth manuscripts and astrology charts. Mr. Dee determined from the charts that there would be two pregnancies. He asked Hannah to use her gift, but when Hannah tried she spoke in a foreign language and couldn't remember anything afterward. Elizabeth received other visitors as well, always via the secret path, including Sir William Pickering who had been involved in the failed attempt to overthrow Mary and install Elizabeth as queen.

In June, when the baby was a month overdue, tempers flared. Philip was angry and lashed out at both the English and Spanish courts alike, both of which made fun of the couple. He feared the death of his wife and drew closer to Elizabeth, who, if made queen, could protect him from the wrath of the English people. The decision to befriend her was both political and emotional. Elizabeth's sexuality could not be denied and Philip was enamored by her. The court was duplicitous. All its members swore allegiance to the queen and did not outwardly befriend Elizabeth, but they all treated her with respect and courtesy, recognizing that they may be at her mercy should the queen not bear a child soon. Inside the palace an informant lurked. Mr. Dee's visit was discovered and he was arrested for casting the Queen's horoscope. Neither Elizabeth or Hannah were mentioned, but Mr. Dee's arrest frightened Hannah. Hannah rushed to her



father's shop intent on destroying any remaining texts that might incriminate them, but she discovered that her love for books prevented her from such an act.

In the middle of June Queen Mary strode out of her confinement chambers. She could no longer tolerate being restricted. She was despairing of the child she expected that never came. The queen no longer felt the child's movements and believed that it had perished. Rumors of Philip's fascination with Elizabeth found their way to Queen Mary. She held her head high but was brokenhearted over the loss of her husband's love, the end of her fruitless pregnancy, and her sister's disloyalty. By July the queen still had not publicly announced her situation and the country was in poor shape. In the tradition of the Inquisition, Philip and Mary approved the burning of heretics. People disappeared from their homes and were killed daily. Mary viewed her failed pregnancy as further proof of God's displeasure, and she swore to cleanse the country and regain the Lord's favor. Hannah attempted to speak to the Queen about the brutality of such acts, but she was admonished and saw that in this matter the queen would not be swayed. In July the confinement chambers were dismantled amid polite silence. The court resumed normal activity and Philip announced his intention to return to his distant territories. In response to his absence Mary wept uncontrollably and felt abandoned.

Spring - Summer 1555 Analysis

Queen Mary's pain is made clear in these pages. At first the reader finds Queen Mary optimistic pending the birth of her child. Hannah describes a sense of joy and peace that she had not previously seen in the queen. According to custom, six weeks before the baby's due date, the expectant queen was to retire to her confinement chamber, attended only by her closest ladies in waiting. Blankets and thick rugs were used to muffle sounds and the Queen was directed to rest and wait for the commencement of labor. She would remain there until six weeks after her delivery, when she and the baby would attend church and return to palace life. It is from this joyous place that Mary plunges into the depths of despair. One can assume that losing a child is difficult, as is losing one's spouse. For Mary, both occur simultaneously. It is a tribute to her inner strength that she did not fall to pieces. Mary's love for her country and faith in her God were so strong that she managed to remain composed. When the whole country was buzzing with malicious gossip and her heart was breaking she maintained her sense of dignity. Her losses would have been difficult to overcome regardless, but the challenge was greatly increased by Elizabeth's part in it. By this point in the story, the reader has come to understand the relationship between Mary and Elizabeth. Mary wants to love Elizabeth but can not tolerate Elizabeth's behaviors and, in Mary's eyes, her lack of religious conviction. Despite her distaste for Elizabeth, Mary is bound to her by blood and repeatedly tries to help her. Elizabeth's seduction of Mary's husband while Mary awaits for the birth of her child is the ultimate betrayal. One can assume that if Mary had thought Elizabeth was capable of such a malicious gesture she would not have freed her from the Tower.

The reader also learns a bit about Hannah's deepest feelings in this section. Hannah tells John Dee that she wishes there could be a resolution that involved the benefit of



both sisters at neither one's expense. Hannah wishes she could remain at court but also be at her father's side. Clearly she is a mixture of desires and complicated loyalties. Hannah admires the feminine power of Elizabeth, but Hannah wished Elizabeth wouldn't wield that power against Mary. When Hannah decides to return to Daniel, she hoped to be a little like Elizabeth but a lot like Mary. Elizabeth's parting words included the following "never to trust him and never love him more than he loves you." In matters of love Hannah and Mary followed their hearts, but Elizabeth followed any path that led her to the throne.



Autumn 1555 - Spring 1556

Autumn 1555 - Spring 1556 Summary

In the Autumn of 1555, the royal court relocated to Greenwich. Greenwich held many happy memories for the queen, but they were displaced by her current rage. When her rage subsided, the queen sank into a depression. She conducted business as was required but otherwise engaged with no one, spoke infrequently, and was never seen to smile. Elizabeth retreated from court to her own home at Hatfield. Mary was glad to be rid of her. Any last vestigial of love for her had been lost when Elizabeth courted her husband. Philip sent letters to Mary, but to her disappointment they were filled with matters of policy and void of love. Christmas at the royal court was celebrated but lacked true joy.

The burning of heretics continued and new laws were passed that widened the criteria for arrest. Hannah was arrested for heresy and removed from court. She shared a prison cell with two women who had already experienced torture, and Hannah feared for her life. After an interminable night she was brought before Bishop Bonner who was known as the mastermind of the Inquisition. As they began to question her Hannah realized that the clerk was Mr. Dee. Mr. Dee intervened on her behalf, saying that the accusations were merely court gossip. She was released and found innocent of the charges against her. Although she was free to return to the court, Hannah realized that she was no longer safe in England. She wrote a letter to Daniel asking him to come fetch her and returned discretely to court to wait for him. She was ill with fear and took to her bed where no one could accuse her of wrongdoing. Hannah shared a room with two of the queen's other servants who brought her news from the court.

Princess Elizabeth is arrested for treason. Her closest maid and long standing confidant, Kat Ashley, was found in possession of pamphlets inciting rebellion and the overthrow of Mary's reign. Hannah spent three whole days in bed fearing for her future before deciding that she could not wait any longer for Daniel's arrival. Hannah went to the queen and asked for leave. She claimed to have received a letter from her father and that he was not well. Hannah went to claim her wages and immediately left the palace. At her father's shop she discovered two men, whom she feared were thieves, or, worse, investigators for the Inquisition. Fortunately the two men turned out to be Daniel and her father. Hannah and Daniel were initially awkward in each others presence but quickly found their mutual passion. They boarded a ship bound for Calais and the life Daniel had created for them there. Daniel's convictions had been tempered somewhat by his worldly travels and he was willing to compromise on their lifestyle. Hannah was thankful and met his ardor equally as they made love throughout the night. Their arrival was greeted by his mother, Mrs. Carpenter, and his sisters, Mary, Sarah, and Anne. They returned to the modest home which would need to accommodate them all, and Hannah struggled to fit in.



Autumn 1555 - Spring 1556 Analysis

By this point in the novel, Queen Mary is forty years old. She is past her prime in life and despairing at her many losses. The citizens begin to accuse her of reaching menopause, not pregnancy, and their insults are aimed at her personally. Queen Mary interprets their unruliness as further evidence that her people are lawless, both in government and religion. Following the advice of the church, she extends the criteria for conviction of heresy. She allows the inquisitors to search everywhere for faithless individuals. The search for heretics hits closer to home and Hannah falls under the umbrella. Hannah's fear at being arrested makes her wish for a safe home. Hannah began to wish for a life with Daniel. Previously she had been unprepared to make that step, and Daniel owes the campaign against heresy for her transformation. Hannah is so thankful for Daniel's protection and happy to be with him that on page 347 she plays at being subservient, a joke they both enjoy. Although her relationship with Daniel blossoms quickly, Hannah is hard pressed to find common ground with his mother and sisters. They are petty and sometimes outright mean. For the benefit of Daniel, Hannah swallows her pride and does not complain. Her self control in this aspect shows growth of character. Hannah's character has always been very outspoken and her ability to not engage them reveals her depth of love for Daniel and her effort to make their relationship work.



Summer - Autumn 1556

Summer - Autumn 1556 Summary

Hannah acquainted herself with her new home of Calais. She visited the market and harbor often. She and Daniel lived under the same roof but were still unmarried and courted modestly. During her first week she visited a proper dressmaker and exchanged her breeches and livery for more appropriate gowns. Mrs. Carpenter began to instruct her on domestic life. Hannah had never learned how to cook or clean and required instruction on even the most rudimentary tasks. She gave sincere effort, but the women seemed to enjoy critiquing her and she tired of it. Hannah was thankful to Daniel for rescuing her and did not want to complain about his family. She hid her reservations and doubled her efforts. Daniel and Hannah were wed in late June in a Christian ceremony as required by law. Back in their home behind closed windows and drawn shades, they held a private ceremony of their shared Jewish tradition. The couple struggled to find privacy in the small home on London Street. The close quarters were a cause of great frustration for all members of the family. Mrs. Carpenter had certain expectations for the new couple, including grandchildren. When Hannah did not conceive a child during their first two months of marriage Mrs. Carpenter confronted her. Mrs. Carpenter would have preferred that Daniel marry another girl, one who was willing and able to give him children. She disclosed that Daniel had bedded such a woman while waiting for Hannah to come to him from court. They had a child together; Daniel had never told Hannah of his indiscretion nor its result. That afternoon Hannah met Daniel at his place of employment and informed him that she knew his secret. They quarreled and Hannah decided to leave Daniel and his home. She found new quarters for herself and her father near the city walls, and they relocated the printing shop. Out of fear of punishment everyone attended church regularly, and while there Hannah saw Daniel, his family, and his mistress and son. At church one day Hannah had another vision. She was afraid, fainted, and woke up in Daniel's arms.

Summer - Autumn 1556 Analysis

Just when it appeared Hannah had finally found a safe haven, her idyllic home life was bitterly reduced. Hannah did not care for her mother-in-law or Daniel's sisters, but she truly wanted her marriage to be successful. For the first time she wanted something greater than her own freedom and was willing to concede in certain ways. It took great effort for her to remain in the home with Mrs. Carpenter and accept her reluctant instruction. Hannah still longed for her own mother and she did not want to learn from another but did so out of respect for Daniel. When Hannah learned that Daniel did not return her respect she cut off her feelings for him. She saw no reason to continue putting in effort where he had been disloyal. Hannah believed that while he had been forced to wait for her, she had remained virtuous and honest during that time, admitting that she was not ready for marriage, without betraying him. Daniel had waited for her hand in marriage but had not been celibate during their time apart. Hannah had seem

Queen Mary's heart break and was not interested in further pain. After his secret was exposed Daniel pleaded with Hannah to make their marriage work, but she declined his overtures. Even after Hannah moved out of Daniel's home and publicly denied him, she retained feelings for him. At church she observed his mistress and their child. Seeing them prompted another of her visions.



Winter 1556 - Summer 1557

Winter 1556 - Summer 1557 Summary

Hannah eased her way back into the life of a printer. She enjoyed helping her father, and when he became ill she took over all of his tasks as well as her own. She monitored news of England and hoped things in London would improve. After two weeks of illness, when her father did not recover, Hannah summoned Dr. Carpenter. He assessed Oliver's condition and found him to be nearing death, with only a few days or weeks left to live. Daniel sent a night nurse named Marie to help Hannah care for her father, who grew weaker by the day. Daniel reminded Hannah that although she chose to live apart from him, he still considered her and Oliver to be his family and that he would care for them both indefinitely. During the days Hannah read to her father from the Torah, and he found peace in the prayers for the dead. Marie arrived every night to sit by Oliver should he need anything. One evening Hannah sent Marie away to fetch Daniel. Daniel also brought his mother who was aware of the traditional rites of passage. She was instrumental in seeing that the Jewish customs were followed, and Hannah was relieved for the help. Daniel worried about Hannah being on her own so he paid Marie to stay with her for a while.

The Spring passed slowly. The weather was poor and, despite Marie's company, Hannah was lonely. In early summer King Philip came to the area recruiting soldiers to fight for him. Boats crowded the harbor and people flocked the streets. Hannah and Marie feared the soldiers. They took to bolting their door at night and wearing breeches out in public to draw less attention to their status as single women. Hannah learned that the Queen was pregnant again and that Lord Dudley had finally been released from prison. She wanted to return to England to see them both but knew it was still too dangerous to do so.

Winter 1556 - Summer 1557 Analysis

Although these chapters include areas of pain, they introduce a resolution as well. Hannah learns to be on her own without the protection of any man, relation or otherwise. She is successful and independent just as she always strove to be. In reading the prayers of the dead to her dying father, Hannah is reunited with her religion at a crucial time. She makes connections and sees the comfort it offers her father. Also at that time she makes peace with her mother-in-law. Although they had difficulty living under the same roof, when Oliver needs the support Mrs. Carpenter gives it freely. Mrs. Carpenter greets Oliver as "old friend" and is respectful of Hannah. Mrs. Carpenter makes her introduction by saying "I do not intrude..." and when Hannah explains what she has done Mrs. Carpenter responds "that's right... You've done it right, and I can do the rest. You can watch, and learn, so you know how it is done. So that you can do it for me, or for another, when my time comes." By praising Hannah's efforts, Mrs. Carpenter makes a conscious effort to not trespass in Hannah's home and is sure not to insult her.

She shows further kindness by encouraging Hannah to watch and learn so Hannah may in turn provide the death rites for her, an activity that would previously not have been welcomed. Although the two may never fully agree, they are attempting to create a truce. At the end of the section Daniel still tries to appease Hannah. When she expresses an interest in returning to London, he offers to take her back for a visit. Hannah is touched by his sincere offer. At times like these she has to force herself to keep her distance and not resume their romance.



Winter 1557 - Summer 1558

Winter 1557 - Summer 1558 Summary

England and Spain were victorious in their wartime pursuits. The French led a counter attack on the city of Calais in the winter of 1557-1558. Historically the city had proved impenetrable. It was surrounded by eight defensive forts and a harbor devised to flood in order to halt an approaching army. The French sacked some of the forts then entered the city by means of an inland invasion where they were not anticipated. Lord Dudley and his men prepare to ride out of Calais and stop the intruders, but their aim was wrong, and while they rode out of the city it was attacked from behind. Hannah and Marie left the shop and went their separate ways in search of a safer venue. Hannah headed for Daniel's home. Along the way she met Daniel's mistress on the street. She had been beaten and asked Hannah to take the child. Hannah experienced a sense of déjà vu as her vision came true. Still she tried to refuse the child anyway. During Hannah's rebuttal the woman was lanced through and killed by the invading French. In the commotion Hannah was unsure of what to do. She made her way to the harbor and boarded Lord Dudley's boat with the child in tow. Eventually Lord Dudley and his men boarded as well, and they escaped from the city of Calais.

Once on English soil Lord Dudley sent Hannah and the little boy to stay with his wife, Amy, while he returned to court. Amy begrudgingly accepted the presence of Hannah and Danny. Despite Hannah's lack of maternal instinct, Danny was content with her. He seemed to be a bright and compassionate child but was unable to speak. The Sussex countryside bored Hannah and she wished to return to court. Lord Dudley remained at court for many months without returning to see either Amy nor Hannah. He was enjoying Princess Elizabeth's company and had no desire to leave her. Hannah thought of Daniel and wondered what had become of him. Until a truce was declared, communication with the city of Calais was not possible. She longed to know if he was alive and waiting for her or if she had been widowed. When Lord Dudley visited his home in February he brought news of affairs abroad. The queen had entered her confinement chamber and hoped to deliver a child in March. Daniel Carpenter's name was among those on a list of political prisoners being held by the French. Dudley arranged to have him included with his soldiers when they were ransomed and released.

In April the queen's baby was overdue and the countrymen began talking maliciously about her as well as their fallen hopes for England. Lord Dudley summoned Hannah back to court, and she brought Danny along as well. Hannah found Queen Mary brokenhearted and friendless again. Meanwhile, at Hatfield Elizabeth was busy entertaining and creating her own, merry, mock court. Mary sent Hannah to inspect Elizabeth's state and report back. Upon her arrival, Hannah found Elizabeth in the arms of a handsome man who turned out to be Lord Dudley. Elizabeth appeared to be attracted to him, but the rumors in England claimed that it was King Philip who hoped to marry Elizabeth. This idea spread and reached Queen Mary who believed it to be true.



Mary feared her marriage would unravel. When the queen sought privacy Hannah slipped out of court. She was bound for the city with the name of a particular doctor in hand. On Mr. Dee's suggestion she had Danny circumcised according to the Jewish custom.

Winter 1557 - Summer 1558 Analysis

The French invasion of the city of Calais resulted in total destruction. Its inhabitants, including the Carpenters, had thought it to be indestructible. Hannah was among the few who never felt completely safe. Her feelings of ill ease were due less to the city's fortifications and more to her troubled past. On the night of the French attack Hannah's first instinct was to run to Daniel. This yearning signifies her love for him and her faith in his ability to provide for her. Because the city was being rapidly demolished and she was caring for his child, Hannah retraced her steps and went not deeper into the city where Daniel lived but out of the city to the boat docks. Her decision proved to be beneficial, and she and Danny were expeditiously removed from the awful battlefield. In the months that followed Hannah learned how to be a mother. Danny placed his trust in her, and she recognized it as a sacred bond. Hannah dreamed of being reunited with Daniel so they could live as a family. Unfortunately, she realized that she had loved Daniel all along but had been unable to admit it. Her decision to have Danny circumcised in the Jewish tradition was a tribute to Daniel and to their Jewish faith. It was an investment in their future of their family.



Autumn - Winter 1558

Autumn - Winter 1558 Summary

In September the court, including Hannah and Danny, moved to Hampton. The queen continued to be sickly and the change of venue did not improve her status. They then moved on to St. James Palace with the same result. The queen's breathing was poor and she complained of being ill. She was heartbroken and her loneliness and sorrow complicated her health. She had a fainting spell one evening and was sent to bed by her physicians. She recognized her decline and asked Hannah to write a letter from her to Philip in his native language, Spanish. Just like her mother before her, the queen knew that she would die without the comfort of her husband, but she wrote to tell him of her steadfast love. Hannah knew that this was her way of saying goodbye to him. Lord Robert and the queen's council pressured her to name an heir. Mary was determined that England should remain under Catholic rule. She agreed to name Elizabeth as heir if she would promise to endorse the Catholic religion. If she intended that the country would be Protestant, Mary would prefer to name her cousin, Mary Stuart, as heir. Hannah took the message to Elizabeth's Hatfield residence. Elizabeth promised to do as Mary requested.

Hannah and Danny boarded a ship with Lord Dudley's men. They sailed for Calais to retrieve the soldiers being held captive, as well as Daniel. Hannah and Daniel were reunited. Daniel mistook Danny for a child of Hannah's, but he was overjoyed to learn that the child was his son who had survived the siege and that Hannah had had him circumcised. They discussed their future and looked forward to a time when Elizabeth ruled over a tolerant England where all people could practice their religious customs without fear of retribution.

Autumn - Winter 1558 Analysis

Although Queen Mary was declining quickly, Hannah's future looked bright. Hannah viewed an end to religious persecution in England, and despite her love for Mary, Hannah believed Elizabeth was capable of creating peace in the country. The author includes an example of foreshadowing when Danny speaks his first word. His word choice, "good," is a reflection of the direction of Danny's future. Generally it is a statement about the future of the country as a whole and all its inhabitants as well. When Hannah approaches the Queen to ask for help in the ransoming of her husband, Mary shows compassion. It would have been easier for the queen to refuse and to use the money to pay for the guards to escort her own husband home. However, knowing that her own husband was unlikely to return to her and wishing Hannah happiness despite her own pain, the queen agrees to help. The queen forestalls her own death long enough to receive Elizabeth's reply. Elizabeth, cunning as always, responds in the affirmative that she will uphold the true faith should she inherit the throne of England. The reader should note that Elizabeth does not say that she will uphold the Catholic

faith, although Mary is bound to interpret it that way. Religious tolerance would be a compromise between the two sisters' points of view, and Hannah hoped to benefit from that perspective.



Characters

Hannah

Hannah is the main character in Philippa Gregory's novel, *The Queen's Fool*. At the beginning of the novel Hannah was just a young girl. Her mother had died as a result of the Spanish Inquisition. Hannah and her father had fled Spain and eventually relocated in England. They changed their last name from Verde to Green and kept their identity a secret. The loss of Hannah's mother altered her upbringing. Instead of learning domestic duties Hannah worked beside her father in his print shop. She became well educated and thoughtful. She also became fiercely independent. Hannah ran errands for her father's business. To do so she was dressed in the clothes of a boy. She was safer in that disguise, but it gave her a taste of freedom. Her lack of domestic ability combined with her largely unlimited lifestyle made her reluctant to marry. This was a serious complication because she was betrothed to marry a lad named Daniel Carpenter. Daniel and Hannah were both of the Jewish faith. They had similar features and dark eyes. Because of the political atmosphere at the time, they were forced to practice their faith in secret and renounce it in public. Daniel and Hannah had a mutual attraction but had difficulty finding common ground. For most of their betrothal Hannah lived abroad at the court of Queen Mary. She studied the relationships of those around her and learned of both the happiness and heartbreak that love could bring. Hannah was capable of seeing the future. Her visions were fleeting and came at unexpected times, but her visions were always accurate. When they eventually married, Hannah and Daniel were able to compromise on a lifestyle that suited them both.

Mary

Mary was the daughter of King Henry VIII and his wife, Queen Katherine. When King Henry remarried, his daughter, Mary, was called a bastard and Katherine was exiled. Mary never saw her mother again and longed for her love. Mary lived most of her life in obscurity. As a child her role was akin to nursery maid to her half brother, Edward, and half sister, Elizabeth, who came from her father's subsequent marriages. When she was no longer needed in the nursery Mary was sent away from the court. She resided in her home at Hundson. Mary's half brother, Edward, ruled England after her father's death. Mary's inheritance was briefly questioned before she came to the throne in 1553. Like her father, Mary was a devout Roman Catholic. Her half-brother, Edward, and half-sister, Elizabeth, both practiced the Protestant religion. Each time the monarchy changed, a new religion was imposed. The people converted back and forth without complaint, but they worried that any mistake in practicing the mandated religion would result in their imprisonment or death. In 1554 Queen Mary married Prince Philip of Spain. Philip was also a Catholic and would someday inherit a vast empire. It was a strategic match but Mary fell in love as well. Unfortunately, Prince Philip was not so enamored. Philip was seduced by Princess Elizabeth and betrayed Mary. Mary and Elizabeth were not close to begin with but her lack of boundaries and respect were a



final insult to Mary. Mary became pregnant twice, and lost both babies. In her forties Mary's health declined and she reluctantly named Elizabeth as her heir.

Elizabeth

Princess Elizabeth was the daughter of King Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne of Cleves. Elizabeth was a beautiful woman. She lacked modesty however. Elizabeth was aware of her charms and enjoyed the art of seduction. She was always tempting men and manipulating them to support her, yet remaining far enough away so that no tangible proof of her inappropriate behavior could be furnished. Elizabeth's primary goal in life was to inherit the throne of England. She was indifferent to those whom she hurt along the way. When Elizabeth tried to overthrow Queen Mary's reign prematurely, Elizabeth was arrested on charges of treason and sent to the Tower. Against the recommendation of her councilors, Mary never sentenced Elizabeth to death. Eventually Elizabeth was released, first under house arrest, and later she was free to return to court. At the close of the book the reader expects Princess Elizabeth to inherit the throne upon Queen Mary's death.

Daniel Carpenter

Daniel Carpenter is the young man to whom Hannah is betrothed. Daniel was a student of medicine. He supported his mother and three sisters at their home in London. The Carpenter family believed in the Jewish religion. When London became unsafe for them, Daniel relocated his family to the city of Calais. Daniel wanted to take Hannah and her father with them as well. Hannah preferred to remain at court, but her father went and Daniel cared for him as a son-in-law should. Daniel was a man of tradition in matters of family and faith, but he was a man of contemporary science as well. Daniel eventually completed his medical studies and became a licensed physician. After many years at court Hannah finally returned to Daniel.

Carpenter Family

Daniel's family included his mother, Mrs. Carpenter, and his three sisters, Mary, Sarah, and Anne. Outwardly they followed the religion mandated by England, but within the privacy of their home they practiced the Jewish faith. The Carpenter family were welcoming to Oliver Green, but less so to his daughter, Hannah. Hannah was betrothed to Daniel Carpenter and his family did not approve of the match. In their view, Hannah was not worthy of Daniel. She was young and not ready for marriage when the marriage was arranged. In the years that followed, Hannah lived abroad at the court of Queen Mary and did not receive the instruction necessary to prepare her for married life. Hannah's independence and lack of domestic ability caused the Carpenter family to scorn her.



Daniel's Mistress

While Hannah remained at court and their long distance betrothal dragged on, Daniel took a mistress. She was not of the Jewish faith, and Daniel never planned to marry her, but he slept with and impregnated her. She was personable and pretty and he enjoyed her company. When Hannah agreed to relocate to Calais and marry him, Daniel stopped seeing his mistress, but he continued to see their son a minimum of two days per week. Daniel did not tell Hannah of his indiscretion, and his dishonesty enraged Hannah.

Oliver Green

Oliver Green was the father of Hannah. He was a printer by trade and his business was lucrative. Oliver's wife died in Spain during the Inquisition. Her loss prompted Oliver to change their last name (from Verde to Green) and relocate to England. Oliver was a patient and compassionate father to Hannah.

Lord Dudley

Lord Dudley was the son of the Duke of Northumberland. Their family was influential at the royal court of England. They were wealthy nobles. Lord Dudley impressed Hannah with his worldliness and finery. She was star struck and obeyed him almost without reservation. Lord Dudley was a well-educated man who was friendly with scholars. Hannah's gift of vision intrigued him. Lord Dudley hired Hannah in service to the court and manipulated her gift for his own benefit. Lord Dudley was imprisoned for treason and eventually loved by Princess Elizabeth.

Mr. Dee

Mr. Dee was a scholar. He wished to know the the answers of creation and the workings of the universe, both of which were considered heretical topics. Mr. Dee ordered manuscripts for study from Oliver Green. When the laws became too strict he left the country and studied in Italy. Later Hannah was surprised to learn he was employed by Bishop Bonner and placed in charge of questioning people charged with heresy. Mr. Dee intervened when Hannah was arrested, and she was quickly released without harm.

Bishop Bonner

Bishop Bonner was a bishop associated with the Catholic Church. He ran the proceedings for purging heresy in England. He was feared by most of the citizens of England. People whom the bishop found guilty were tortured and died awful deaths.



Cardinal Pole

Cardinal Pole was a cardinal in the Catholic church. Cardinal Pole was a supporter of Queen Mary and her desire to convert the English people to Catholicism. He could often be found dining beside her.

Danny

Danny was the son of Daniel and his mistress. When his mother was slain, Hannah adopted Danny, and she and Daniel raised him as their own.

Marie

Marie was paid by Daniel to sit with Oliver at night during his illness. Following Oliver's death, Marie remained in the house and was a companion to Hannah.

Kat Ashley

Kat Ashley was Princess Elizabeth's closest maid. She was found to have treasonous material and was arrested.

Prince Philip

Philip was the Prince of Spain. Like Mary he was Catholic and was expected to inherit a vast empire. Mary married Philip and conceived two children with him, but Mary never gave birth. Modern historians believe they were not actual pregnancies.

Mary Stuart

Mary Stuart was Queen Mary's French cousin. Mary Stuart was Catholic, like Mary, so the queen threatened to name her as heir rather than Princess Elizabeth.

Will Somers

Will Somers was a fool at the courts of King Edward and Queen Mary. His only responsibility was to make people laugh. Will befriended Hannah and taught her how to navigate life at court.

Jane Dormer

Jane Dormer was Queen Mary's closest lady-in-waiting. She was a staunch supporter of Mary and always tried to shield Mary from life's disappointments.



Objects/Places

England

England is the primary location for the novel.

Spain

Spain and England are allies in the novel. Queen Mary marries Prince Philip from Spain. Spain is also Hannah's homeland (from where she moved to England).

France

Spain and England join forces and wage war against France.

London

The English Royal Palace is located in the city of London.

The Tower

Political prisoners await punishment in the notorious tower.

Hundson

During King Edward's reign when Mary is still ostracized Mary resides at her home in Hundson.

Queen Mary's Confinement Chamber

According to English custom, six weeks before the baby's due date, the expectant queen was to retire to her confinement chamber, attended only by her closest ladies in waiting. Blankets and thick rugs were used to muffle sounds and the Queen was directed to rest and wait for the commencement of labor. She would remain there until six weeks after her delivery, when she and the baby would attend church and return to palace life.



Kenninghall and then Framlingham Castles

When Lady Jane was installed falsely on the throne of England Mary expected Jane's supporters to vanquish her. To prevent their success, Mary and her entourage rode first to Kenninghall and then to Framlingham Castle, from whence they gathered support and rode out again to fight for her inheritance.

Woodstock

While under house arrest Elizabeth lived in the gate house on Sir Henry Bedingfield's property.

Hatfield and Ashridge

Princess Elizabeth resides in her homes at Hatfield and Ashridge. Generally, happier times were had at Hatfield than Ashridge. Alternatively she is sometimes found in the Tower, present at court, or at Woodstock.

City of Calais

The City of Calais is the last remaining English stronghold in France for most of the novel. Daniel resettles his family as well as Hannah's father to Calais for safety and asks Hannah to join them. Eventually Hannah does move to Calais; the city is sacked, and Hannah becomes the foster mother of Danny who is orphaned in the battle.

Greenwich

The royal court spent the Christmas season at Greenwich.

Mirror

A mirror was often used to induce Hannah's visions. When combined with candlelight and prayer the method was called scrying.

Scaffold

The scaffold was a crucial item in the book. In the first few pages Hannah has a vision of a scaffold, and as the book unfolds the burning of heretics becomes a chronic problem.

Books

As a master of print, books are the livelihood of Hannah's father, Oliver. Hannah comes to love them as well and is highly educated.



Themes

Loyalty

Both loyalty and disloyalty abound in this novel. Starting with the main character, we see that Hannah is loyal to many people. She is loyal to her father and does his bidding and works beside him without complaint. She is not pleased about the idea of an arranged marriage but understands it is the proper thing to do, not just for her immediate family, but also for the Jewish culture to which she belongs. When considering the royal family, Hannah is loyal again. Although Queen Mary and Princess Elizabeth are at odds, Hannah loves them both. She visits with each in turn and although she is exposed to harsh descriptions of each from the other, she does not betray either woman. When many English citizens wish Queen Mary ill will, Hannah supports Mary and testifies to her virtuous nature. Even when Mary begins burning heretics and Hannah fears for her life, Hannah still speaks highly of the queen and respects Mary's religious convictions. Just as Hannah defended Mary's reputation, so does Hannah with Elizabeth. Hannah always suggests mercy in the Queen's dealings with Elizabeth. When Elizabeth is consumed by anger and makes unfavorable comments about the Queen, Hannah rebuffs her, yet stays by Elizabeth's side. She does this because she knows Elizabeth's anger comes from a deeper place and that Elizabeth needs her companionship. Hannah chooses her words carefully so that her honesty can never be questioned. Her conscience is clear, and she remains loyal to both Mary and Elizabeth. In contrast, Elizabeth is disloyal and selfish by nature. Elizabeth displays the worst form of opposition with regards to King Philip. She is disloyal when she attempts to steal her sister's throne as well as seduce her husband. Despite Elizabeth's dubious activities, Mary is so loyal to her father and his legacy that she always tries to maintain the throne first for herself and next for Elizabeth, whom she believes shall inherit the kingdom after her.

Love

Love of both the familial and romantic varieties can be found in this book. Hannah struggles with the loss of her mother and remembers her often. This loss of maternal love weighs heavily on Hannah's heart and has a great impact on her life. Hannah has an excellent relationship with her father, whom she credits with bringing her safely out of Spain and making a home for her in England. Likewise, Hannah's fiancé, Daniel, provides a home for his mother and sisters. Even after he is married to Hannah, Daniel continues to fiscally support all of the women in his life, a sign of his love for them. The royal family does not share in a positive familial bond. Instead of love they feel, at best, obligated to one another, and at their worst they interact as enemies would.

As Hannah grows she experiences love beyond the familial kind. First she is overwhelmed by her attraction to Lord Dudley. When Hannah first encounters him, Lord Dudley is riding on a magnificent horse and is dressed in fine clothes of a quality far



beyond her reach. Hannah experiences more awe than love; her feelings towards him could best be described as admiration or a "crush." Unfortunately, Hannah is blinded by her crush and is unable to see the value of her proposed marriage. The man to whom she is promised, Daniel, is a good man and loves her without reservation. He tries repeatedly to make her happy and learns the art of compromise in an effort to make their relationship healthy. Hannah grows to love him as she matures through life. Only when she has nearly lost him does Hannah realize that she has "loved him all along" (quote from page 414).

Religion

Religion is a significant theme in *The Queen's Fool*. Hannah's presence in London is a direct result of her religion. Hannah's family practice Judaism. In a time famous for the Roman Catholic Inquisition, Hannah's family was forced to publicly renounce their religion and convert to Christianity. They then fled from Spain to England when the burning of heretics gained fervor. Although Hannah and her father abide by the laws of the land and went to church regularly, they still feared punishment. They always worried that someone would learn about their past or see the truth inside their hearts. Behind closed doors they tried to follow their customs as much as possible. They kept a kosher meal when in the privacy of their own home, married beneath a chuppah and recited the prayers of the dead from the Torah. Their son, Danny, was circumcised according to Jewish custom. Hannah, Daniel, and their families were forced to keep their religion a secret. Punishment for heresy dominated the rule of Queen Mary who was a devout Catholic. Mary strategically chose her husband, Philip of Spain, because he shared in her religious beliefs. Mary's siblings that reigned before and after her, Edward and Elizabeth, respectively, were more religiously tolerant and practiced the Protestant religion.



Style

Point of View

Philippa Gregory's novel, *The Queen's Fool*, is written from the first person point of view. The main character, Hannah, imparts the story to the reader. As such, her own life and impressions are woven into the text. One can determine that it is written in the first person point of view because the narrator uses the words I and we to describe herself. This point of view creates a richness to the character. The reader is compelled to learn about Hannah's life, how she feels and what she thinks. An additional result of the use of first person point of view is bias. Because all the other characters are described by Hannah, each description is naturally tinted by her feelings towards them. Their interactions may be interpreted less as factual and more as her perception of what occurred. Hannah was not a greedy character. She does not have an ulterior motive that drives her actions, and so it is unlikely that her recollections are fraught with error, although the possibility is worth mentioning. For example, perhaps an alternate character would have described Mrs. Carpenter as being generous, where Hannah described her as cold and demanding. A single character using the first person point of view does not allow the story to be told from a different perspective, but it does lend to a connection between the main character and the reader.

Setting

The Queen's Fool is set in England circa 1550. At the time of the novel England was allied with Spain and at war with France. The novel includes the reigns of King Edward and Queen Mary. The politics and antics involved reveal a desperation within the English government and royal family. The court was duplicitous. It was a dark and dangerous time for England. The main location for the majority of the novel is the royal palace in London, which was richly decorated. There were always more than enough servants on hand, and nearly every meal appeared to be a banquet with the king or queen in the position of honor. The court also included individuals responsible for entertainment. Hannah and Will Somers were present solely for their gifts of entertainment. Other locations of interest include the Tower, Hundson, Kenninghall and then Framlingham Castles, Hampton, Ashridge, Hatfield, Greenwich, and Calais. The Tower was located in London and housed long-term political prisoners and individuals who had been arrested but not yet punished. Hundson was the home of Mary prior to her rise to queen. Kenninghall and Framlingham castles were not utilized often but were mentioned when Mary was attempting to claim her inheritance. Hampton and Greenwich were both areas that the court reserved for holidays. Ashridge and Hatfield were the estates of Princess Elizabeth. Elizabeth received many visitors at those locations and formed a merry network while she waited for her turn to be queen. At the novel's end, the expectation was that Princess Elizabeth would soon ascend to the throne.



Language and Meaning

The language of *The Queen's Fool* is straight forward and fairly simple. Although it was set in the 1550's, the author uses modern English spellings that allow for ease of reading as well as understanding. Analogy is occasionally used. An example can be seen in the metaphor for syllabub. Daniel refused to partake in the desert because he argued that it was both sweet and sour at once. His words were actually aimed at Hannah, who appeared both tempting and impossible at the same time. The most distinctive literary element in the novel is the author's creation of Hannah's visions. Through Hannah's visions the reader steps briefly into the future and then back again. Later in the text when the visions come to pass the reader has a sense of completion. The visions also aid the reader in understanding which direction the plot is moving in. When Mr. Dee works discusses the implications of Hannah's visions the reader better understands the sequence of events and any necessary connections between them. Hannah's discussions with Mr. Dee are important because she does not always understand what she sees and lacks the political savvy to properly interpret the activities around her. The depth of Hannah's character is enhanced by their incorporation as well.

Structure

In its paperback form, *The Queen's Fool* is exactly five hundred pages long. It is not divided into traditional chapters but instead is divided into segments of time. For example, the first and second sections are called "Summer 1548" and "Winter 1552-1553" respectively. "Summer of 1548" is a short flashback. It introduces the reader to the main character and imparts an example of her gift of vision. The novel begins in earnest with the section titled "Winter 1552-1553." For the year of 1552 King Edward ruled England, but in all of the remaining sections Mary is queen. The sections vary in length and there are twenty-six of them. In the last section Hannah informs Queen Mary that if she were to name Elizabeth as her heir, Elizabeth would be a "better queen than she was a woman." The reader is left to believe that Mary will head her friend's advice and Elizabeth will inherit the throne, but Mary's decision is not made clear. The reader is left wondering what would occur next. This may be a convenient place to begin a sequel novel. The author includes a brief Author's note and list of sources at the end of the text. Depending upon the edition obtained, a reading group guide may be included.



Quotes

"The girl, giggling and overexcited, was running in the sunlit garden, running away from her stepfather, but not so fast that he could not catch her." page 1

"At least I am just a fool, but you are a triple fool" page 31

"Now, dressed as a boy in a fool's livery I had committed the sin of vanity, I had been prideful of my schooling and the punishment could be extreme." page 50

"She looked like a woman you could trust, a mistress you could love." page 74

"Who better than I to understand a life of complicated loyalties?" page 80

"She had survived the execution of her lover, she avoided the danger of a dozen plots." page 108

"But now everything has changed and I am queen, and even though I am queen I find I still cannot make my own choices." page 136

"Once again the queen learned that holding the throne was harder than winning it." page 175

"I recognized at once the signs of packing for a long journey." page 210

"She let me go the next day though her resentment was as powerful as that of a child excluded from a treat." page 240

"She would be like a prisoner in her own chamber." page 278

"And when the man is the most powerful man in Christendom, the King of England and Prince of Spain, and the husband of your icy, arrogant, tyrannical ugly old sister, then it is the greatest joy that can be had!" page 284

"Her desire is in every symbol of the table, it is almost as if she could wish a child into being." page 290

"Even the ducks on the Thames had young; but England's cradle, with that hopeful poem at the bed-head, was still empty." page 303

"Just as her mother had done, Mary smiled at Philip with love and understanding, and smiled at Elizabeth with courtesy; and only I, and the few people who really loved her, would have known that her heart was breaking." page 312



"It seemed there was a tacit agreement between my father and Daniel's mother that she should coach me in the skills that a young woman should possess." page 357

"Whatever this decision costs me I take it entire, as a whole woman." page 382

"I had lost Daniel, and only now did I have the sense to find that I had loved him all along." page 414

"She would never defy her God." page 447

"She will become a better queen than she is a woman." page 495



Topics for Discussion

Describe the lineage of King Henry's three children.

List a minimum of three examples of Hannah's visions and explain how each is significant in the novel.

Describe the political atmosphere of England in the years of the novel (circa 1550's).

Compare and contrast Hannah with Mary.

Compare and contrast Hannah with Elizabeth.

Describe the evolution of Hannah and Daniel's relationship.

What is a marrano and why is this a significant term?

Hannah loved Daniel yet was drawn to another man, Lord Dudley. Why?

Describe English court life. In the novel it was described in detail during its height as well as its decline.

Describe Daniel's mistress and their relationship to the best of your ability.