

= Elizabeth I of England =

Elizabeth I (7 September 1533 ? 24 March 1603) was Queen of England and Ireland from 17 November 1558 until her death . Sometimes called The Virgin Queen , Gloriana or Good Queen Bess , the childless Elizabeth was the fifth and last monarch of the Tudor dynasty .

Elizabeth was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn , his second wife , who was executed two and a half years after Elizabeth 's birth . Anne 's marriage to Henry VIII was annulled , and Elizabeth was declared illegitimate . Her half @-@ brother , Edward VI , ruled until his death in 1553 , bequeathing the crown to Lady Jane Grey and ignoring the claims of his two half @-@ sisters , Elizabeth and the Roman Catholic Mary , in spite of statute law to the contrary . Edward 's will was set aside and Mary became queen , deposing Lady Jane Grey . During Mary 's reign , Elizabeth was imprisoned for nearly a year on suspicion of supporting Protestant rebels .

In 1558 , Elizabeth succeeded her half @-@ sister to the throne and set out to rule by good counsel . She depended heavily on a group of trusted advisers , led by William Cecil , Baron Burghley . One of her first actions as queen was the establishment of an English Protestant church , of which she became the Supreme Governor . This Elizabethan Religious Settlement was to evolve into the Church of England . It was expected that Elizabeth would marry and produce an heir to continue the Tudor line . She never did , despite numerous courtships . As she grew older , Elizabeth became famous for her virginity . A cult grew around her which was celebrated in the portraits , pageants , and literature of the day .

In government , Elizabeth was more moderate than her father and half @-@ siblings had been . One of her mottoes was " video et taceo " (" I see but say nothing ") . In religion , she was relatively tolerant and avoided systematic persecution . After the pope declared her illegitimate in 1570 and released her subjects from obedience to her , several conspiracies threatened her life , all of which were defeated with the help of her ministers ' secret service . Elizabeth was cautious in foreign affairs , manoeuvring between the major powers of France and Spain . She only half @-@ heartedly supported a number of ineffective , poorly resourced military campaigns in the Netherlands , France , and Ireland . By the mid @-@ 1580s , England could no longer avoid war with Spain . England 's defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 associated Elizabeth with one of the greatest military victories in English history .

Elizabeth 's reign is known as the Elizabethan era . The period is famous for the flourishing of English drama , led by playwrights such as William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe , and for the seafaring prowess of English adventurers such as Francis Drake . Some historians depict Elizabeth as a short @-@ tempered , sometimes indecisive ruler , who enjoyed more than her share of luck . Towards the end of her reign , a series of economic and military problems weakened her popularity . Elizabeth is acknowledged as a charismatic performer and a dogged survivor in an era when government was ramshackle and limited , and when monarchs in neighbouring countries faced internal problems that jeopardised their thrones . Such was the case with Elizabeth 's rival , Mary , Queen of Scots , whom she imprisoned in 1568 and had executed in 1587 . After the short reigns of Elizabeth 's half @-@ siblings , her 44 years on the throne provided welcome stability for the kingdom and helped forge a sense of national identity .

= = Early life = =

Elizabeth was born at Greenwich Palace and was named after both her grandmothers , Elizabeth of York and Elizabeth Howard . She was the second child of Henry VIII of England born in wedlock to survive infancy . Her mother was Henry 's second wife , Anne Boleyn . At birth , Elizabeth was the heiress presumptive to the throne of England . Her older half @-@ sister , Mary , had lost her position as a legitimate heir when Henry annulled his marriage to Mary 's mother , Catherine of Aragon , to marry Anne , with the intent to sire a male heir and ensure the Tudor succession . Elizabeth was baptised on 10 September ; Archbishop Thomas Cranmer , the Marquess of Exeter , the Duchess of Norfolk and the Dowager Marchioness of Dorset stood as her godparents .

When Elizabeth was two years and eight months old , her mother was executed on 19 May 1536 .

Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and deprived of her place in the royal succession . Eleven days after Anne Boleyn 's death , Henry married Jane Seymour , but she died shortly after the birth of their son , Prince Edward , in 1537 . From his birth , Edward was undisputed heir apparent to the throne . Elizabeth was placed in his household and carried the chrisom , or baptismal cloth , at his christening .

Elizabeth 's first governess or Lady Mistress , Margaret Bryan , wrote that she was " as toward a child and as gentle of conditions as ever I knew any in my life " . By the autumn of 1537 , Elizabeth was in the care of Blanche Herbert , Lady Troy , who remained her Lady Mistress until her retirement in late 1545 or early 1546 . Catherine Champenowne , better known by her later , married name of Catherine " Kat " Ashley , was appointed as Elizabeth 's governess in 1537 , and she remained Elizabeth 's friend until her death in 1565 , when Blanche Parry succeeded her as Chief Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber . Champenowne taught Elizabeth four languages : French , Flemish , Italian and Spanish . By the time William Grindal became her tutor in 1544 , Elizabeth could write English , Latin , and Italian . Under Grindal , a talented and skilful tutor , she also progressed in French and Greek . After Grindal died in 1548 , Elizabeth received her education under Roger Ascham , a sympathetic teacher who believed that learning should be engaging . By the time her formal education ended in 1550 , she was one of the best educated women of her generation . By the end of her life , Elizabeth was also believed to speak Welsh , Cornish , Scottish and Irish in addition to English . The Venetian ambassador stated in 1603 that she " possessed [these] languages so thoroughly that each appeared to be her native tongue " . Historian Mark Stoye suggests that she was probably taught Cornish by William Killigrew , Groom of the Privy Chamber and later Chamberlain of the Exchequer .

= = Thomas Seymour = =

Henry VIII died in 1547 and Elizabeth 's half @-@ brother , Edward VI , became king at age nine . Catherine Parr , Henry 's widow , soon married Thomas Seymour of Sudeley , Edward VI 's uncle and the brother of the Lord Protector , Edward Seymour , Duke of Somerset . The couple took Elizabeth into their household at Chelsea . There Elizabeth experienced an emotional crisis that some historians believe affected her for the rest of her life . Thomas Seymour , approaching age 40 but having charm and " a powerful sex appeal " , engaged in romps and horseplay with the 14 @-@ year @-@ old Elizabeth . These included entering her bedroom in his nightgown , tickling her and slapping her on the buttocks . Parr , rather than confront her husband over his inappropriate activities , joined in . Twice she accompanied him in tickling Elizabeth , and once held her while he cut her black gown " into a thousand pieces . " However , after Parr discovered the pair in an embrace , she ended this state of affairs . In May 1548 , Elizabeth was sent away .

However , Thomas Seymour continued scheming to control the royal family and tried to have himself appointed the governor of the King 's person . When Parr died after childbirth on 5 September 1548 , he renewed his attentions towards Elizabeth , intent on marrying her . The details of his former behaviour towards Elizabeth emerged , and for his brother and the king 's council , this was the last straw . In January 1549 , Seymour was arrested on suspicion of plotting to marry Elizabeth and overthrow the Lord Protector . Elizabeth , living at Hatfield House , would admit nothing . Her stubbornness exasperated her interrogator , Sir Robert Tyrwhitt , who reported , " I do see it in her face that she is guilty " . Seymour was beheaded on 20 March 1549 .

= = Mary I 's reign = =

Edward VI died on 6 July 1553 , aged 15 . His will swept aside the Succession to the Crown Act 1543 , excluded both Mary and Elizabeth from the succession , and instead declared as his heir Lady Jane Grey , granddaughter of Henry VIII 's sister Mary , Duchess of Suffolk . Lady Jane was proclaimed queen by the Privy Council , but her support quickly crumbled , and she was deposed after nine days . On 3 August 1553 , Mary rode triumphantly into London , with Elizabeth at her side .

The show of solidarity between the sisters did not last long . Mary , a devout Catholic , was determined to crush the Protestant faith in which Elizabeth had been educated , and she ordered that everyone attend Catholic Mass ; Elizabeth had to outwardly conform . Mary 's initial popularity ebbed away in 1554 when she announced plans to marry Prince Philip of Spain , the son of Emperor Charles V and an active Catholic . Discontent spread rapidly through the country , and many looked to Elizabeth as a focus for their opposition to Mary 's religious policies .

In January and February 1554 , Wyatt 's rebellion broke out ; it was soon suppressed . Elizabeth was brought to court , and interrogated regarding her role , and on 18 March , she was imprisoned in the Tower of London . Elizabeth fervently protested her innocence . Though it is unlikely that she had plotted with the rebels , some of them were known to have approached her . Mary 's closest confidant , Charles V 's ambassador Simon Renard , argued that her throne would never be safe while Elizabeth lived ; and the Chancellor , Stephen Gardiner , worked to have Elizabeth put on trial . Elizabeth 's supporters in the government , including Lord Paget , convinced Mary to spare her sister in the absence of hard evidence against her . Instead , on 22 May , Elizabeth was moved from the Tower to Woodstock , where she was to spend almost a year under house arrest in the charge of Sir Henry Bedingfield . Crowds cheered her all along the way .

On 17 April 1555 , Elizabeth was recalled to court to attend the final stages of Mary 's apparent pregnancy . If Mary and her child died , Elizabeth would become queen . If , on the other hand , Mary gave birth to a healthy child , Elizabeth 's chances of becoming queen would recede sharply . When it became clear that Mary was not pregnant , no one believed any longer that she could have a child . Elizabeth 's succession seemed assured .

King Philip , who ascended the Spanish throne in 1556 , acknowledged the new political reality and cultivated his sister @-@ in @-@ law . She was a better ally than the chief alternative , Mary , Queen of Scots , who had grown up in France and was betrothed to the Dauphin of France . When his wife fell ill in 1558 , King Philip sent the Count of Feria to consult with Elizabeth . This interview was conducted at Hatfield House , where she had returned to live in October 1555 . By October 1558 , Elizabeth was already making plans for her government . On 6 November , Mary recognised Elizabeth as her heir . On 17 November 1558 , Mary died and Elizabeth succeeded to the throne .

= = Accession = =

Elizabeth became queen at the age of 25 , and declared her intentions to her Council and other peers who had come to Hatfield to swear allegiance . The speech contains the first record of her adoption of the mediaeval political theology of the sovereign 's " two bodies " : the body natural and the body politic :

My lords , the law of nature moves me to sorrow for my sister ; the burden that is fallen upon me makes me amazed , and yet , considering I am God 's creature , ordained to obey His appointment , I will thereto yield , desiring from the bottom of my heart that I may have assistance of His grace to be the minister of His heavenly will in this office now committed to me . And as I am but one body naturally considered , though by His permission a body politic to govern , so shall I desire you all ... to be assistant to me , that I with my ruling and you with your service may make a good account to Almighty God and leave some comfort to our posterity on earth . I mean to direct all my actions by good advice and counsel .

As her triumphal progress wound through the city on the eve of the coronation ceremony , she was welcomed wholeheartedly by the citizens and greeted by orations and pageants , most with a strong Protestant flavour . Elizabeth 's open and gracious responses endeared her to the spectators , who were " wonderfully ravished " . The following day , 15 January 1559 , Elizabeth was crowned and anointed by Owen Oglethorpe , the Catholic bishop of Carlisle , in Westminster Abbey . She was then presented for the people 's acceptance , amidst a deafening noise of organs , fifes , trumpets , drums , and bells .

= = Church settlement = =

Elizabeth 's personal religious convictions have been much debated by scholars . She was a Protestant , but kept Catholic symbols (such as the crucifix) , and downplayed the role of sermons in defiance of a key Protestant belief .

In terms of public policy she favoured pragmatism in dealing with religious matters . The question of her legitimacy was a key concern : although she was technically illegitimate under both Protestant and Catholic law , her retroactively declared illegitimacy under the English church was not a serious bar compared to having never been legitimate as the Catholics claimed she was . For this reason alone , it was never in serious doubt that Elizabeth would embrace Protestantism .

Elizabeth and her advisers perceived the threat of a Catholic crusade against heretical England . Elizabeth therefore sought a Protestant solution that would not offend Catholics too greatly while addressing the desires of English Protestants ; she would not tolerate the more radical Puritans though , who were pushing for far @-@ reaching reforms . As a result , the parliament of 1559 started to legislate for a church based on the Protestant settlement of Edward VI , with the monarch as its head , but with many Catholic elements , such as priestly vestments .

The House of Commons backed the proposals strongly , but the bill of supremacy met opposition in the House of Lords , particularly from the bishops . Elizabeth was fortunate that many bishoprics were vacant at the time , including the Archbishopric of Canterbury . This enabled supporters amongst peers to outvote the bishops and conservative peers . Nevertheless , Elizabeth was forced to accept the title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England rather than the more contentious title of Supreme Head , which many thought unacceptable for a woman to bear . The new Act of Supremacy became law on 8 May 1559 . All public officials were to swear an oath of loyalty to the monarch as the supreme governor or risk disqualification from office ; the heresy laws were repealed , to avoid a repeat of the persecution of dissenters practised by Mary . At the same time , a new Act of Uniformity was passed , which made attendance at church and the use of an adapted version of the 1552 Book of Common Prayer compulsory , though the penalties for recusancy , or failure to attend and conform , were not extreme .

= = Marriage question = =

From the start of Elizabeth 's reign , it was expected that she would marry and the question arose to whom . She never did , although she received many offers for her hand ; the reasons for this are not clear . Historians have speculated that Thomas Seymour had put her off sexual relationships , or that she knew herself to be infertile . She considered several suitors until she was about fifty . Her last courtship was with Francis , Duke of Anjou , 22 years her junior . While risking possible loss of power like her sister , who played into the hands of King Philip II of Spain , marriage offered the chance of an heir . However , the choice of a husband might also provoke political instability or even insurrection .

= = = Robert Dudley = = =

In the spring of 1559 , it became evident that Elizabeth was in love with her childhood friend Robert Dudley . It was said that Amy Robsart , his wife , was suffering from a " malady in one of her breasts " and that the Queen would like to marry Dudley if his wife should die . By the autumn of 1559 , several foreign suitors were vying for Elizabeth 's hand ; their impatient envoys engaged in ever more scandalous talk and reported that a marriage with her favourite was not welcome in England : " There is not a man who does not cry out on him and her with indignation ... she will marry none but the favoured Robert " . Amy Dudley died in September 1560 , from a fall from a flight of stairs and , despite the coroner 's inquest finding of accident , many people suspected Dudley of having arranged her death so that he could marry the queen . Elizabeth seriously considered marrying Dudley for some time . However , William Cecil , Nicholas Throckmorton , and some conservative peers made their disapproval unmistakably clear . There were even rumours that the nobility would rise if the marriage took place .

Among other marriage candidates being considered for the queen , Robert Dudley continued to be

regarded as a possible candidate for nearly another decade . Elizabeth was extremely jealous of his affections , even when she no longer meant to marry him herself . In 1564 , Elizabeth raised Dudley to the peerage as Earl of Leicester . He finally remarried in 1578 , to which the queen reacted with repeated scenes of displeasure and lifelong hatred towards his wife , Lettice Knollys . Still , Dudley always " remained at the centre of [Elizabeth 's] emotional life " , as historian Susan Doran has described the situation . He died shortly after the defeat of the Armada . After Elizabeth 's own death , a note from him was found among her most personal belongings , marked " his last letter " in her handwriting .

= = = Foreign candidates = = =

Marriage negotiations constituted a key element in Elizabeth 's foreign policy . She turned down Philip II 's own hand early in 1559 but for several years entertained the proposal of King Eric XIV of Sweden . For several years she also seriously negotiated to marry Philip II 's cousin Archduke Charles of Austria . By 1569 , relations with the Habsburgs had deteriorated , and Elizabeth considered marriage to two French Valois princes in turn , first Henry , Duke of Anjou , and later , from 1572 to 1581 , his brother Francis , Duke of Anjou , formerly Duke of Alençon . This last proposal was tied to a planned alliance against Spanish control of the Southern Netherlands . Elizabeth seems to have taken the courtship seriously for a time , and wore a frog @-@ shaped earring that Anjou had sent her .

In 1563 , Elizabeth told an imperial envoy : " If I follow the inclination of my nature , it is this : beggar @-@ woman and single , far rather than queen and married " . Later in the year , following Elizabeth 's illness with smallpox , the succession question became a heated issue in Parliament . They urged the queen to marry or nominate an heir , to prevent a civil war upon her death . She refused to do either . In April she prorogued the Parliament , which did not reconvene until she needed its support to raise taxes in 1566 . Having promised to marry previously , she told an unruly House :

I will never break the word of a prince spoken in public place , for my honour 's sake . And therefore I say again , I will marry as soon as I can conveniently , if God take not him away with whom I mind to marry , or myself , or else some other great let happen .

By 1570 , senior figures in the government privately accepted that Elizabeth would never marry or name a successor . William Cecil was already seeking solutions to the succession problem . For her failure to marry , Elizabeth was often accused of irresponsibility . Her silence , however , strengthened her own political security : she knew that if she named an heir , her throne would be vulnerable to a coup ; she remembered that the way " a second person , as I have been " had been used as the focus of plots against her predecessor .

Elizabeth 's unmarried status inspired a cult of virginity . In poetry and portraiture , she was depicted as a virgin or a goddess or both , not as a normal woman . At first , only Elizabeth made a virtue of her virginity : in 1559 , she told the Commons , " And , in the end , this shall be for me sufficient , that a marble stone shall declare that a queen , having reigned such a time , lived and died a virgin " . Later on , poets and writers took up the theme and turned it into an iconography that exalted Elizabeth . Public tributes to the Virgin by 1578 acted as a coded assertion of opposition to the queen 's marriage negotiations with the Duke of Alençon .

Ultimately , Elizabeth would insist she was married to her kingdom and subjects , under divine protection . In 1599 , she spoke of " all my husbands , my good people " .

= = Mary , Queen of Scots = =

Elizabeth 's first policy toward Scotland was to oppose the French presence there . She feared that the French planned to invade England and put Mary , Queen of Scots , who was considered by many to be the heir to the English crown , on the throne . Elizabeth was persuaded to send a force into Scotland to aid the Protestant rebels , and though the campaign was inept , the resulting Treaty of Edinburgh of July 1560 removed the French threat in the north . When Mary returned to Scotland in 1561 to take up the reins of power , the country had an established Protestant church and was

run by a council of Protestant nobles supported by Elizabeth . Mary refused to ratify the treaty .

In 1563 Elizabeth proposed her own suitor , Robert Dudley , as a husband for Mary , without asking either of the two people concerned . Both proved unenthusiastic , and in 1565 Mary married Henry Stuart , Lord Darnley , who carried his own claim to the English throne . The marriage was the first of a series of errors of judgement by Mary that handed the victory to the Scottish Protestants and to Elizabeth . Darnley quickly became unpopular in Scotland and then infamous for presiding over the murder of Mary 's Italian secretary David Rizzio . In February 1567 , Darnley was murdered by conspirators almost certainly led by James Hepburn , Earl of Bothwell . Shortly afterwards , on 15 May 1567 , Mary married Bothwell , arousing suspicions that she had been party to the murder of her husband . Elizabeth wrote to her :

How could a worse choice be made for your honour than in such haste to marry such a subject , who besides other and notorious lacks , public fame has charged with the murder of your late husband , besides the touching of yourself also in some part , though we trust in that behalf falsely .

These events led rapidly to Mary 's defeat and imprisonment in Loch Leven Castle . The Scottish lords forced her to abdicate in favour of her son James , who had been born in June 1566 . James was taken to Stirling Castle to be raised as a Protestant . Mary escaped from Loch Leven in 1568 but after another defeat fled across the border into England , where she had once been assured of support from Elizabeth . Elizabeth 's first instinct was to restore her fellow monarch ; but she and her council instead chose to play safe . Rather than risk returning Mary to Scotland with an English army or sending her to France and the Catholic enemies of England , they detained her in England , where she was imprisoned for the next nineteen years .

= = = Mary and the Catholic cause = = =

Mary was soon the focus for rebellion . In 1569 there was a major Catholic rising in the North ; the goal was to free Mary , marry her to Thomas Howard , 4th Duke of Norfolk , and put her on the English throne . After the rebels ' defeat , over 750 of them were executed on Elizabeth 's orders . In the belief that the revolt had been successful , Pope Pius V issued a bull in 1570 , titled *Regnans in Excelsis* , which declared " Elizabeth , the pretended Queen of England and the servant of crime " to be excommunicate and a heretic , releasing all her subjects from any allegiance to her . Catholics who obeyed her orders were threatened with excommunication . The papal bull provoked legislative initiatives against Catholics by Parliament , which were however mitigated by Elizabeth 's intervention . In 1581 , to convert English subjects to Catholicism with " the intent " to withdraw them from their allegiance to Elizabeth was made a treasonable offence , carrying the death penalty . From the 1570s missionary priests from continental seminaries came to England secretly in the cause of the " reconversion of England " . Many suffered execution , engendering a cult of martyrdom .

Regnans in Excelsis gave English Catholics a strong incentive to look to Mary Stuart as the true sovereign of England . Mary may not have been told of every Catholic plot to put her on the English throne , but from the Ridolfi Plot of 1571 (which caused Mary 's suitor , the Duke of Norfolk , to lose his head) to the Babington Plot of 1586 , Elizabeth 's spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham and the royal council keenly assembled a case against her . At first , Elizabeth resisted calls for Mary 's death . By late 1586 she had been persuaded to sanction her trial and execution on the evidence of letters written during the Babington Plot . Elizabeth 's proclamation of the sentence announced that " the said Mary , pretending title to the same Crown , had compassed and imagined within the same realm divers things tending to the hurt , death and destruction of our royal person . " On 8 February 1587 , Mary was beheaded at Fotheringhay Castle , Northamptonshire . After Mary 's execution , Elizabeth claimed not to have ordered it and indeed most accounts have her telling Secretary Davidson , who brought her the warrant to sign , not to dispatch the warrant even though she had signed it . The sincerity of Elizabeth 's remorse and her motives for telling Davidson not to execute the warrant have been called into question both by her contemporaries and later historians .

= = Wars and overseas trade = =

Elizabeth 's foreign policy was largely defensive . The exception was the English occupation of Le Havre from October 1562 to June 1563 , which ended in failure when Elizabeth 's Huguenot allies joined with the Catholics to retake the port . Elizabeth 's intention had been to exchange Le Havre for Calais , lost to France in January 1558 . Only through the activities of her fleets did Elizabeth pursue an aggressive policy . This paid off in the war against Spain , 80 % of which was fought at sea . She knighted Francis Drake after his circumnavigation of the globe from 1577 to 1580 , and he won fame for his raids on Spanish ports and fleets . An element of piracy and self @-@ enrichment drove Elizabethan seafarers , over which the queen had little control .

= = = Netherlands expedition = = =

After the occupation and loss of Le Havre in 1562 ? 1563 , Elizabeth avoided military expeditions on the continent until 1585 , when she sent an English army to aid the Protestant Dutch rebels against Philip II . This followed the deaths in 1584 of the allies William the Silent , Prince of Orange , and Francis , Duke of Anjou , and the surrender of a series of Dutch towns to Alexander Farnese , Duke of Parma , Philip 's governor of the Spanish Netherlands . In December 1584 , an alliance between Philip II and the French Catholic League at Joinville undermined the ability of Anjou 's brother , Henry III of France , to counter Spanish domination of the Netherlands . It also extended Spanish influence along the channel coast of France , where the Catholic League was strong , and exposed England to invasion . The siege of Antwerp in the summer of 1585 by the Duke of Parma necessitated some reaction on the part of the English and the Dutch . The outcome was the Treaty of Nonsuch of August 1585 , in which Elizabeth promised military support to the Dutch . The treaty marked the beginning of the Anglo @-@ Spanish War , which lasted until the Treaty of London in 1604 .

The expedition was led by her former suitor , Robert Dudley , Earl of Leicester . Elizabeth from the start did not really back this course of action . Her strategy , to support the Dutch on the surface with an English army , while beginning secret peace talks with Spain within days of Leicester 's arrival in Holland , had necessarily to be at odds with Leicester 's , who wanted and was expected by the Dutch to fight an active campaign . Elizabeth on the other hand , wanted him " to avoid at all costs any decisive action with the enemy " . He enraged Elizabeth by accepting the post of Governor @-@ General from the Dutch States General . Elizabeth saw this as a Dutch ploy to force her to accept sovereignty over the Netherlands , which so far she had always declined . She wrote to Leicester :

We could never have imagined (had we not seen it fall out in experience) that a man raised up by ourself and extraordinarily favoured by us , above any other subject of this land , would have in so contemptible a sort broken our commandment in a cause that so greatly touches us in honour ... And therefore our express pleasure and commandment is that , all delays and excuses laid apart , you do presently upon the duty of your allegiance obey and fulfill whatsoever the bearer hereof shall direct you to do in our name . Whereof fail you not , as you will answer the contrary at your utmost peril .

Elizabeth 's " commandment " was that her emissary read out her letters of disapproval publicly before the Dutch Council of State , Leicester having to stand nearby . This public humiliation of her " Lieutenant @-@ General " combined with her continued talks for a separate peace with Spain , irreversibly undermined his standing among the Dutch . The military campaign was severely hampered by Elizabeth 's repeated refusals to send promised funds for her starving soldiers . Her unwillingness to commit herself to the cause , Leicester 's own shortcomings as a political and military leader and the faction @-@ ridden and chaotic situation of Dutch politics were reasons for the campaign 's failure . Leicester finally resigned his command in December 1587 .

= = = Spanish Armada = = =

Meanwhile , Sir Francis Drake had undertaken a major voyage against Spanish ports and ships to

the Caribbean in 1585 and 1586 , and in 1587 had made a successful raid on Cadiz , destroying the Spanish fleet of war ships intended for the Enterprise of England : Philip II had decided to take the war to England .

On 12 July 1588 , the Spanish Armada , a great fleet of ships , set sail for the channel , planning to ferry a Spanish invasion force under the Duke of Parma to the coast of southeast England from the Netherlands . A combination of miscalculation , misfortune , and an attack of English fire ships on 29 July off Gravelines which dispersed the Spanish ships to the northeast defeated the Armada . The Armada straggled home to Spain in shattered remnants , after disastrous losses on the coast of Ireland (after some ships had tried to struggle back to Spain via the North Sea , and then back south past the west coast of Ireland) . Unaware of the Armada 's fate , English militias mustered to defend the country under the Earl of Leicester 's command . He invited Elizabeth to inspect her troops at Tilbury in Essex on 8 August . Wearing a silver breastplate over a white velvet dress , she addressed them in one of her most famous speeches :

My loving people , we have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety , to take heed how we commit ourself to armed multitudes for fear of treachery ; but I assure you , I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people ... I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman , but I have the heart and stomach of a king , and of a King of England too , and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain , or any Prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm .

When no invasion came , the nation rejoiced . Elizabeth 's procession to a thanksgiving service at St Paul 's Cathedral rivalled that of her coronation as a spectacle . The defeat of the armada was a potent propaganda victory , both for Elizabeth and for Protestant England . The English took their delivery as a symbol of God 's favour and of the nation 's inviolability under a virgin queen . However , the victory was not a turning point in the war , which continued and often favoured Spain . The Spanish still controlled the southern provinces of the Netherlands , and the threat of invasion remained . Sir Walter Raleigh claimed after her death that Elizabeth 's caution had impeded the war against Spain :

If the late queen would have believed her men of war as she did her scribes , we had in her time beaten that great empire in pieces and made their kings of figs and oranges as in old times . But her Majesty did all by halves , and by petty invasions taught the Spaniard how to defend himself , and to see his own weakness .

Though some historians have criticised Elizabeth on similar grounds , Raleigh 's verdict has more often been judged unfair . Elizabeth had good reason not to place too much trust in her commanders , who once in action tended , as she put it herself , " to be transported with an haviour of vainglory " .

= = = Supporting Henry IV of France = = =

When the Protestant Henry IV inherited the French throne in 1589 , Elizabeth sent him military support . It was her first venture into France since the retreat from Le Havre in 1563 . Henry 's succession was strongly contested by the Catholic League and by Philip II , and Elizabeth feared a Spanish takeover of the channel ports . The subsequent English campaigns in France , however , were disorganised and ineffective . Lord Willoughby , largely ignoring Elizabeth 's orders , roamed northern France to little effect , with an army of 4 @, @ 000 men . He withdrew in disarray in December 1589 , having lost half his troops . In 1591 , the campaign of John Norreys , who led 3 @, @ 000 men to Brittany , was even more of a disaster . As for all such expeditions , Elizabeth was unwilling to invest in the supplies and reinforcements requested by the commanders . Norreys left for London to plead in person for more support . In his absence , a Catholic League army almost destroyed the remains of his army at Craon , north @-@ west France , in May 1591 . In July , Elizabeth sent out another force under Robert Devereux , Earl of Essex , to help Henry IV in besieging Rouen . The result was just as dismal . Essex accomplished nothing and returned home in January 1592 . Henry abandoned the siege in April . As usual , Elizabeth lacked control over her commanders once they were abroad . " Where he is , or what he doth , or what he is to do , " she

wrote of Essex , " we are ignorant " .

= = = Ireland = = =

Although Ireland was one of her two kingdoms , Elizabeth faced a hostile , and in places virtually autonomous , Irish population that adhered to Catholicism and was willing to defy her authority and plot with her enemies . Her policy there was to grant land to her courtiers and prevent the rebels from giving Spain a base from which to attack England . In the course of a series of uprisings , Crown forces pursued scorched @-@ earth tactics , burning the land and slaughtering man , woman and child . During a revolt in Munster led by Gerald FitzGerald , Earl of Desmond , in 1582 , an estimated 30 @,@ 000 Irish people starved to death . The poet and colonist Edmund Spenser wrote that the victims " were brought to such wretchedness as that any stony heart would have rued the same " . Elizabeth advised her commanders that the Irish , " that rude and barbarous nation " , be well treated ; but she showed no remorse when force and bloodshed were deemed necessary .

Between 1594 and 1603 , Elizabeth faced her most severe test in Ireland during the Nine Years ' War , a revolt that took place at the height of hostilities with Spain , who backed the rebel leader , Hugh O 'Neill , Earl of Tyrone . In spring 1599 , Elizabeth sent Robert Devereux , 2nd Earl of Essex , to put the revolt down . To her frustration , he made little progress and returned to England in defiance of her orders . He was replaced by Charles Blount , Lord Mountjoy , who took three years to defeat the rebels . O 'Neill finally surrendered in 1603 , a few days after Elizabeth 's death . Soon afterwards , a peace treaty was signed between England and Spain .

= = = Russia = = =

Elizabeth continued to maintain the diplomatic relations with the Tsardom of Russia originally established by her deceased brother . She often wrote to Ivan IV (" Ivan the Terrible ") , on amicable terms , though the Tsar was often annoyed by her focus on commerce rather than on the possibility of a military alliance . The Tsar even proposed to her once , and during his later reign , asked for a guarantee to be granted asylum in England should his rule be jeopardised . Upon Ivan 's death , he was succeeded by his simple @-@ minded son Feodor . Unlike his father , Feodor had no enthusiasm in maintaining exclusive trading rights with England . Feodor declared his kingdom open to all foreigners , and dismissed the English ambassador Sir Jerome Bowes , whose pomposity had been tolerated by the new Tsar 's late father . Elizabeth sent a new ambassador , Dr. Giles Fletcher , to demand from the regent Boris Godunov that he convince the Tsar to reconsider . The negotiations failed , due to Fletcher addressing Feodor with two of his titles omitted . Elizabeth continued to appeal to Feodor in half appealing , half reproachful letters . She proposed an alliance , something which she had refused to do when offered one by Feodor 's father , but was turned down .

= = = Barbary states , Ottoman Empire = = =

Trade and diplomatic relations developed between England and the Barbary states during the rule of Elizabeth . England established a trading relationship with Morocco in opposition to Spain , selling armour , ammunition , timber , and metal in exchange for Moroccan sugar , in spite of a Papal ban . In 1600 , Abd el @-@ Ouahed ben Messaoud , the principal secretary to the Moroccan ruler Mulai Ahmad al @-@ Mansur , visited England as an ambassador to the court of Queen Elizabeth I , to negotiate an Anglo @-@ Moroccan alliance against Spain . Elizabeth " agreed to sell munitions supplies to Morocco , and she and Mulai Ahmad al @-@ Mansur talked on and off about mounting a joint operation against the Spanish " . Discussions however remained inconclusive , and both rulers died within two years of the embassy .

Diplomatic relations were also established with the Ottoman Empire with the chartering of the Levant Company and the dispatch of the first English ambassador to the Porte , William Harborne , in 1578 . For the first time , a Treaty of Commerce was signed in 1580 . Numerous envoys were

dispatched in both directions and epistolar exchanges occurred between Elizabeth and Sultan Murad III . In one correspondence , Murad entertained the notion that Islam and Protestantism had " much more in common than either did with Roman Catholicism , as both rejected the worship of idols " , and argued for an alliance between England and the Ottoman Empire . To the dismay of Catholic Europe , England exported tin and lead (for cannon @-@ casting) and ammunitions to the Ottoman Empire , and Elizabeth seriously discussed joint military operations with Murad III during the outbreak of war with Spain in 1585 , as Francis Walsingham was lobbying for a direct Ottoman military involvement against the common Spanish enemy .

= = Later years = =

The period after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 brought new difficulties for Elizabeth that lasted the fifteen years until the end of her reign . The conflicts with Spain and in Ireland dragged on , the tax burden grew heavier , and the economy was hit by poor harvests and the cost of war . Prices rose and the standard of living fell . During this time , repression of Catholics intensified , and Elizabeth authorised commissions in 1591 to interrogate and monitor Catholic householders . To maintain the illusion of peace and prosperity , she increasingly relied on internal spies and propaganda . In her last years , mounting criticism reflected a decline in the public 's affection for her

One of the causes for this " second reign " of Elizabeth , as it is sometimes called , was the changed character of Elizabeth 's governing body , the privy council in the 1590s . A new generation was in power . With the exception of Lord Burghley , the most important politicians had died around 1590 : the Earl of Leicester in 1588 ; Sir Francis Walsingham in 1590 ; and Sir Christopher Hatton in 1591 . Factional strife in the government , which had not existed in a noteworthy form before the 1590s , now became its hallmark . A bitter rivalry arose between the Earl of Essex and Robert Cecil , son of Lord Burghley and their respective adherents , and the struggle for the most powerful positions in the state marred politics . The queen 's personal authority was lessening , as is shown in the 1594 affair of Dr. Lopez , her trusted physician . When he was wrongly accused by the Earl of Essex of treason out of personal pique , she could not prevent his execution , although she had been angry about his arrest and seems not to have believed in his guilt .

During the last years of her reign , Elizabeth came to rely on the granting of monopolies as a cost @-@ free system of patronage , rather than asking Parliament for more subsidies in a time of war . The practice soon led to price @-@ fixing , the enrichment of courtiers at the public 's expense , and widespread resentment . This culminated in agitation in the House of Commons during the parliament of 1601 . In her famous " Golden Speech " of 30 November 1601 at Whitehall Palace to a deputation of 140 members , Elizabeth professed ignorance of the abuses , and won the members over with promises and her usual appeal to the emotions :

Who keeps their sovereign from the lapse of error , in which , by ignorance and not by intent they might have fallen , what thank they deserve , we know , though you may guess . And as nothing is more dear to us than the loving conservation of our subjects ' hearts , what an undeserved doubt might we have incurred if the abusers of our liberality , the thrallers of our people , the wringers of the poor , had not been told us !

This same period of economic and political uncertainty , however , produced an unsurpassed literary flowering in England . The first signs of a new literary movement had appeared at the end of the second decade of Elizabeth 's reign , with John Lyly 's *Euphues* and Edmund Spenser 's *The Shepherdes Calender* in 1578 . During the 1590s , some of the great names of English literature entered their maturity , including William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe . During this period and into the Jacobean era that followed , the English theatre reached its highest peaks . The notion of a great Elizabethan age depends largely on the builders , dramatists , poets , and musicians who were active during Elizabeth 's reign . They owed little directly to the queen , who was never a major patron of the arts .

As Elizabeth aged her image gradually changed . She was portrayed as Belphebe or Astraea , and after the Armada , as Gloriana , the eternally youthful Faerie Queene of Edmund Spenser 's

poem . Her painted portraits became less realistic and more a set of enigmatic icons that made her look much younger than she was . In fact , her skin had been scarred by smallpox in 1562 , leaving her half bald and dependent on wigs and cosmetics . Her love of sweets and fear of dentists contributed to severe tooth decay and loss to such an extent that foreign ambassadors had a hard time understanding her speech . Sir Walter Raleigh called her " a lady whom time had surprised " . However , the more Elizabeth 's beauty faded , the more her courtiers praised it .

Elizabeth was happy to play the part , but it is possible that in the last decade of her life she began to believe her own performance . She became fond and indulgent of the charming but petulant young Robert Devereux , Earl of Essex , who was Leicester 's stepson and took liberties with her for which she forgave him . She repeatedly appointed him to military posts despite his growing record of irresponsibility . After Essex 's desertion of his command in Ireland in 1599 , Elizabeth had him placed under house arrest and the following year deprived him of his monopolies . In February 1601 , the earl tried to raise a rebellion in London . He intended to seize the queen but few rallied to his support , and he was beheaded on 25 February . Elizabeth knew that her own misjudgements were partly to blame for this turn of events . An observer reported in 1602 that " Her delight is to sit in the dark , and sometimes with shedding tears to bewail Essex " .

= = Death = =

Elizabeth 's senior adviser , William Cecil , 1st Baron Burghley , died on 4 August 1598 . His political mantle passed to his son , Robert Cecil , who soon became the leader of the government . One task he addressed was to prepare the way for a smooth succession . Since Elizabeth would never name her successor , Cecil was obliged to proceed in secret . He therefore entered into a coded negotiation with James VI of Scotland , who had a strong but unrecognised claim . Cecil coached the impatient James to humour Elizabeth and " secure the heart of the highest , to whose sex and quality nothing is so improper as either needless expostulations or over much curiosity in her own actions " . The advice worked . James 's tone delighted Elizabeth , who responded : " So trust I that you will not doubt but that your last letters are so acceptably taken as my thanks cannot be lacking for the same , but yield them to you in grateful sort " . In historian J. E. Neale 's view , Elizabeth may not have declared her wishes openly to James , but she made them known with " unmistakable if veiled phrases " .

The Queen 's health remained fair until the autumn of 1602 , when a series of deaths among her friends plunged her into a severe depression . In February 1603 , the death of Catherine Howard , Countess of Nottingham , the niece of her cousin and close friend Catherine , Lady Knollys , came as a particular blow . In March , Elizabeth fell sick and remained in a " settled and unremovable melancholy " . She died on 24 March 1603 at Richmond Palace , between two and three in the morning . A few hours later , Cecil and the council set their plans in motion and proclaimed James VI of Scotland as James I of England .

Elizabeth 's coffin was carried downriver at night to Whitehall , on a barge lit with torches . At her funeral on 28 April , the coffin was taken to Westminster Abbey on a hearse drawn by four horses hung with black velvet . In the words of the chronicler John Stow :

Westminster was surcharged with multitudes of all sorts of people in their streets , houses , windows , leads and gutters , that came out to see the obsequy , and when they beheld her statue lying upon the coffin , there was such a general sighing , groaning and weeping as the like hath not been seen or known in the memory of man .

Elizabeth was interred in Westminster Abbey , in a tomb shared with her half @-@ sister , Mary . The Latin inscription on their tomb , " Regno consortes & urna , hic obdormimus Elizabetha et Maria sorores , in spe resurrectionis " , translates to " Consorts in realm and tomb , here we sleep , Elizabeth and Mary , sisters , in hope of resurrection " .

= = Legacy and memory = =

Elizabeth was lamented by many of her subjects , but others were relieved at her death .

Expectations of King James started high but then declined , so by the 1620s there was a nostalgic revival of the cult of Elizabeth . Elizabeth was praised as a heroine of the Protestant cause and the ruler of a golden age . James was depicted as a Catholic sympathiser , presiding over a corrupt court . The triumphalist image that Elizabeth had cultivated towards the end of her reign , against a background of factionalism and military and economic difficulties , was taken at face value and her reputation inflated . Godfrey Goodman , Bishop of Gloucester , recalled : " When we had experience of a Scottish government , the Queen did seem to revive . Then was her memory much magnified . " Elizabeth 's reign became idealised as a time when crown , church and parliament had worked in constitutional balance .

The picture of Elizabeth painted by her Protestant admirers of the early 17th century has proved lasting and influential . Her memory was also revived during the Napoleonic Wars , when the nation again found itself on the brink of invasion . In the Victorian era , the Elizabethan legend was adapted to the imperial ideology of the day , and in the mid @-@ 20th century , Elizabeth was a romantic symbol of the national resistance to foreign threat . Historians of that period , such as J. E. Neale (1934) and A. L. Rowse (1950) , interpreted Elizabeth 's reign as a golden age of progress . Neale and Rowse also idealised the Queen personally : she always did everything right ; her more unpleasant traits were ignored or explained as signs of stress .

Recent historians , however , have taken a more complicated view of Elizabeth . Her reign is famous for the defeat of the Armada , and for successful raids against the Spanish , such as those on Cádiz in 1587 and 1596 , but some historians point to military failures on land and at sea . In Ireland , Elizabeth 's forces ultimately prevailed , but their tactics stain her record . Rather than as a brave defender of the Protestant nations against Spain and the Habsburgs , she is more often regarded as cautious in her foreign policies . She offered very limited aid to foreign Protestants and failed to provide her commanders with the funds to make a difference abroad .

Elizabeth established an English church that helped shape a national identity and remains in place today . Those who praised her later as a Protestant heroine overlooked her refusal to drop all practices of Catholic origin from the Church of England . Historians note that in her day , strict Protestants regarded the Acts of Settlement and Uniformity of 1559 as a compromise . In fact , Elizabeth believed that faith was personal and did not wish , as Francis Bacon put it , to " make windows into men 's hearts and secret thoughts " .

Though Elizabeth followed a largely defensive foreign policy , her reign raised England 's status abroad . " She is only a woman , only mistress of half an island , " marvelled Pope Sixtus V , " and yet she makes herself feared by Spain , by France , by the Empire , by all " . Under Elizabeth , the nation gained a new self @-@ confidence and sense of sovereignty , as Christendom fragmented . Elizabeth was the first Tudor to recognise that a monarch ruled by popular consent . She therefore always worked with parliament and advisers she could trust to tell her the truth ? a style of government that her Stuart successors failed to follow . Some historians have called her lucky ; she believed that God was protecting her . Priding herself on being " mere English " , Elizabeth trusted in God , honest advice , and the love of her subjects for the success of her rule . In a prayer , she offered thanks to God that :

[At a time] when wars and seditions with grievous persecutions have vexed almost all kings and countries round about me , my reign hath been peacable , and my realm a receptacle to thy afflicted Church . The love of my people hath appeared firm , and the devices of my enemies frustrate .

= = Family tree = =

= = = Ancestry = = =