



## Behind the Mask: The Life of Queen Elizabeth I

*Jane Resh Thomas*

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## **Behind the Mask: The Life of Queen Elizabeth I** Jane Resh Thomas

Elizabeth I (1533-1603) impressed herself more vividly on the memory of the world than any other monarch in the history of England. She successfully established and maintained power while refusing to bow to the wishes of those who believed no woman was fit to occupy the English throne. This biography describes the opulent but cruel childhood that shaped the woman Elizabeth became and details her triumphant reign, as well as the unrelenting forces that opposed her. Exploring the answers to some of history's most persistent and intriguing questions, Jane Resh Thomas has created a compelling account of Elizabeth's life that shatters the myths surrounding her and allows readers an unprecedented view of the queen as a human being. Full-color insert, chronology, bibliography, index.

## **Behind the Mask: The Life of Queen Elizabeth I Details**

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## **From Reader Review Behind the Mask: The Life of Queen Elizabeth I for online ebook**

### **Nancy says**

This was listed as a young adult book but it kept my attention throughout. It is very well written.

I have always been interested in Henry VIII and Elizabeth but this goes into more depth than I have previously heard. The book discusses in detail the inconsistency of Elizabeth and sister Mary's childhoods and the terror they must have grown up under. It covers Elizabeth through her death, and the kingdom even beyond, and the machinations of nobility and courtiers to manipulate their lives and into the future.

I would recommend this to anyone interested in history and human interaction.

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### **Maryem Benmansour says**

Behind the Mask

The Life of Queen Elizabeth I

Elizabeth, daughter of king Henri VIII has been one of the most remembered monarchs of England during her era. She had to learn to control her actions and words, by a very young age. She never could let her guards down and in the rare occasions where she tried to let her mask fall off her life was instantaneously put down to jeopardy. Elizabeth soon learned that she couldn't be herself; she had to be discreet, obedient, and submissive. When Elizabeth obtained the throne on the year of 1558, she allowed herself more freedom. Eventually she stopped hiding her cleverness, she commenced to play her music, and danced with vigor everyday she could. Not long after being queen, Elizabeth was referred to as "The Virgin Queen". She successfully established and maintained the power, while proving wrong all the ones who under regard women and think men should hold the throne. Hence, Elizabeth was determined that she would take care of her country with no man by her side to take the throne from her. If that meant that she would have to remain unmarried, "The Virgin Queen" was willing to pay this price. Many powerful forces opposed her but the queen had defeated them all. Thus, her triumphant reign will be well explained throughout this novel written by the wonderful author Jane Resh Thomas.

From all the fourteen questions that our beloved teacher has proposed to us, four of them attracted me. Elizabeth I queen of the great monarchy of England had been put to her rule in the 17 of November 1558. She was soon remembered as one of the most famous and loved British queen's of all time. Her marvelous and jubilant reign has changed Great Britain and it's power to this day. Elizabeth's life is a lesson every single person may relate to in anyway. Her private life has never been showed to the world. She hid it under a mask she never took off and even when she tried, her life was immediately put to risk. "The Virgin Queen's" life has been a lesson to my own personal life. It taught me to live my life as I want to, but learn to

trust very few people. I had so many questions about this beautiful queen that I decided to read this novel about her. For instance, I wanted to know how Mary Queen of Scots her so known cousin, was a threat to her and the English throne. Also, I wanted to find a justification of why Elizabeth decided to execute her and last I was curious about why she didn't want to marry anyone. Fortunately all the questions I had in mind have been answered in this magnificent novel. The way she treated others was spectacular, she was a very admired queen, and hence her attitude towards her people and servants was gentle and polite. All in all Elizabeth I has served as an inspiration for many British monarchs and women.

Throughout this fascinating novel, Jane Resh Thomas amazingly explores the hidden inner life of one of the world's most flabbergasting women. At such a time it is very difficult to picture how Elizabeth was able to survive her arduous childhood and still be able to emerge as such a strong and powerful woman. Unable to trust or obtain a confidant, she always had to keep what she thought inside hidden by the "mask" she was wearing. Her life was dangerous; hence she had to learn at a young age that those around her might not always be trustworthy or want the best for her. It very well explains her life and the way she managed to keep it safe. Elizabeth was a fabulous queen who shaped her nation and whose achievements will never be forgotten. I recommend this novel to all history lovers as well as for people that may want to acquire knowledge about Elizabeth and her reign. This book would be more suitable for highschoolers since it is a reference book. To sum up, The Life of Queen Elizabeth I is a very inspiring story, which I relished reading and I really hope that the people who choose to read it will feel the same.

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### **Diana says**

Elizabeth I of England was born into political turmoil; her father had annulled his marriage to Catherine of Aragon to marry her mother Anne Boleyn. Just a few years later, her mother was executed. Elizabeth maneuvered through four royal courts and eventually ascended the throne and became England's most famous monarch. This book details her life.

This book is very detailed, but at the same time puts difficult political situations into easy to understand words. Elizabeth's life, starting with before her birth, is comprehensively detailed. However, I found the reading to be a little dry. More effort should be made to personalize Elizabeth.

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### **Zina Benjelloun says**

Friday, February 6 2015

Queen Elizabeth 1 was the first Elizabeth of England who won the respect of her friends as well as enemies.

For this reason, her success lead to call her time period the Elizabethan Age. For instance, "She impressed herself more vividly on the memory of the world than any other monarch in English history" (Thomas 1). To conclude, Elizabeth's reign was remarkably grand and supreme that it was never forgotten and left a huge print in history.

King Henry 8, Queen Elizabeth 1's father, married his siter-in-law, Catherine of Aragon, with the permission of the pope. Of course, this was programmed for national purposes. "If carefully planned, they created alliances between political factions or between nations to consolidate the power of the crown" (Thomas 5). Indeed, the plan was accomplished since the marriage created an alliance between England and Spanish against France. Later on, Catherine was unable to deliver a male heir to throne. Because of that, her husband In conclusion, King Henry 8's marriage with Catherine of Aragon was somewhat a failure.

Catherine refused to divorce her husband however, the pope was given all rights to separate Catherine and King Henry 8. For this reason, Catherine took precautions by having her cousin, Hapsburg Holy Roman Emperor (Charles 5) , as a weapon. This left the pope no choice but to approve the marriage between Catherine and her husband. For instance, "If the pope dissolved Catherine's marriage, Charles might take revenge and attack him again with the Hapsburg army. This risk the pope could not take" (Thomas 7).

Although Queen Elizabeth 1 was such a significant queen, she also faced difficult moments in her life. Additionally, her father murdered her mother, Anne Boleyn, and abandoned his daughter most of her childhood. For example, "Doubt hounded her, but she hid it, like her mistakes, to survive. If she had shown any weakness, her enemies would have attacked" (Thomas 2). She was threatened with murder the day she was born until the day she died, imprisonment, death threats from her half-sister, and was forced to marry men she disliked. To sum up, Queen Elizabeth 1 had an extremely tough childhood however, she was able to outdo all of her weaknesses which led to her well-known success.

Friday, February 13 2015

Henry finally accomplished his goals. First of all, he divorced Queen Catherine and married Anne Boleyn. She bore him an air; everyone thought it would be a baby boy however it turned out to be the opposite. The little princess was named Elizabeth and was a dissapointment for her father. For instance, "When Anne became pregnant, the court astrologer and doctors told Henry wanted to hear. The baby would certainly be a boy, they said" (Thomas 10). To conclude, the king ended up achieving the impossible since the pope was against the divorce.

The king's health started to weaken and he had to chose a heir to his throne between his two daughters. His first child, Mary, was no longer a princess and Elizabeth quickly became the one and only heir to his throne. Mary became a bastard since her parents weren't married anymore. For example, "Suddenly Elizabeth had taken the place of her half-sister in both the marriage market and her father's affection" (Thomas 15). In conclusion, Mary was no longer the heir to Henry's throne, Elizabeth became the throne's only princess.

It was a rough lifetime for the king's first born, Mary. She continued to call herself a princess and couldn't decline her status even though her half-sister, Elizabeth, took her place. Additionally, Mary was forced to abandon her religion and betrayed her mother. "Mary signed the papers that declared her parents' marriage illegal. She also acknowledged her father as Supreme Head of the Church of England..." (Thomas 19). At last, Mary's glory moments were put to an end by her father, his wife, and Elizabeth's presence therefore, there was no threat.

Later on, things were very unpleasant concerning Anne. For this reason, she gave birth to two baby boys

seperately and they both died. The king saw this as a bad sign and Jane Seymour, Anne's maid of honor, became his lover. Anne was arrested and taken to the Tower. For instance, "Anne was tried with adultery with five men, including her brother" (Thomas 21). To sum up, Catherine suffered and no longer had her status of queen but that turned out to be the same destiny for Anne.

Friday, February 20 2015

Anne's adultery brought her to an end as well as other people she cared deeply about. For this reason, her fate was to watch her brother and other men accused die and then die a quick death herself. The king didn't order a coffin for her and she was buried without a religious service. Additionally, the king married Jane Seymour eleven days after Anne's death. For instance, "While she was distracted, the swordsman suddenly cut off her head with one stroke of his sharp blade" (Thomas 23). Finally, Anne was executed after being accused of adultery.

There is only one place where Elizabeth feels at ease and loosens up. Hence, this place was named Hatfield and it wasn't polluted by smoke, stench, and garbage. For example, "She was also protected by her isolation at Hatfield from infections such as pneumonia, bubonic plague (the Black Death), and 'the sweating sickness,' the most frequent causes of death" (Thomas 26). At last, Hatfield is a safe place where Elizabeth settled.

The king gave his final answer to the heritage of his throne regarding that he has no sons. For this reason, he said that Anne's children would be the heirs to his kingdom. For instance, "In disinheriting Mary, the king provided for an orderly transfer of power after his death, and had found a way to keep the throne in his immediate family, despite the lack of male heir" (Thomas 29). This would mean that Elizabeth would become queen after her father unless a male heir was born. Later on, Jane Seymour became pregnant and the king disinherited Elizabeth. In conclusion, the king had made his descision on the heritage of his throne and it came out to be Jane Seymour's baby boy.

Jane Seymour then died due to the hard labor she passed and the king married three other women before he got to the last one. His last wife was named Katherine Parr, she took care Elizabeth and gave her a convenient education. After the king banished Elizabeth from the court due to a misconduct, Katherine did something not all Henry's precedent wives would have done. For instance, "Katherine Parr spoke up for her, and months later Henry accepted Lady Elizabeth back into his good graces" (Thomas). To sum up, the king's mariage to Katherine Parr turned out working and it brought good into the royal court.

Friday, March 6,2015

At an early age, Elizabeth began having lessons who could also be called her hobbies. For this reason, she took lessons in sewing, dancing, manners, horseback riding, mathematic geography astronomy, and principles of architecture. For example, "She loved history above all and studied it for three hours a day, often reading several books about the same period to compare different authors' views" (Thomas 36). To conclude, Elizabeth took many lessons as a child but history is by far the best topic according to her.

In 1547, a very unexpected and tragic event happened. Additionally, King Henry had been bedridden and sadly died. Of course, there had to be a new king or queen in order for the rule to continue. For instance, "The nine-year old Prince Edward became the new King of England, Edward VI" (Thomas 37). In conclusion, King Henry died and his heir would be his younger son, Edward.

After Henry's death, Katherine married Thomas Seymour and became pregnant. For this reason, she died and

no there was no one to protect Elizabeth. For instance, "Now, at fifteen, Elizabeth was alone in a dangerous world, with no powerful sponsors to protect her.." (Thomas 43). Four months past since Katherine's death and Thomas went to the Tower being charged of treason. He tried to seize King Edward at night. Finally, Katherine's death had caused chaos and didn't turn out well in some people's cases.

Later on, Elizabeth appeared as a virtuous maiden which was a matter of economy but she wasn't poor. For this reason, she wore simple clothing with some ornaments most of the time in black and white and nothing more. This called attention to herself since all women wore vivid colors with many ornaments. For example, "She kept musicians in her household, but she did not spend money on jewels and gowns" (Thomas 45). To conclude, Elizabeth was different than other women since she would use her money on useful things and other women would only buy expensive clothing with many ornaments as a decoration.

Elizabeth's course to becoming Queen of England wasn't simple since the successor to the throne is a male and if there are no males, then the oldest female. In Elizabeth's case, it was extremely complicated she wasn't the oldest female, her older sister, Mary, was. The famous book, *Behind the Mask*, was written by Jane Resh Thomas. Queen Elizabeth encountered various challenges during her childhood. She had several step-moms such as Catherine Parr, Catherine Howard, Anne of Cleves, Jane Seymour, and Catherine of Aragon.

In England at that period of time, medical knowledge was mediocre. For this reason, they made people bleed for any sorts of sickness and used atrocious methods for curing. Such as, "One 'cure' was to swallow a live spider in molasses. As treatment for another condition, a pullet, a live young chicken, was tied to the patient's body until the bird died" (Thomas 49). Additionally, still royalty suffered from the physicians' makings. Therefore, the last of the Tudor kings, King Edward VI, died. To conclude, medical knowledge wasn't certain and efficient in the Elizabethan Era.

At age twenty, Elizabeth was suspected of a very important matter which she wasn't involved in. People suspected her of conspiring against Queen Mary's life which put her life in danger. Her sister treated her in a pathetic manner, "Having commanded her to court, Mary first refused to see her and then ordered her locked in the Tower of London" (Thomas 60). Elizabeth thought she was going to die so she wrote a letter to her sister the queen. She said: "I pray God I may die the shamefulst death that ever any died before I may mean any such thing..." (Thomas 61). Wyatt finally admit that Elizabeth wasn't part of the rebellion and stated that she was innocent. In conclusion, Elizabeth was suspected in conspiring against her sister, Queen Mary, which turned out to be false.

A marriage soon was held in England. Philip, a pious Catholic, made Queen Mary fall in love with him. For this reason, they married however, Philip married her for duty and she married him for love. Later on, Mary announced that she was pregnant but it was dangerous since she was aging. This caused a major problem, "If Mary did not survive childbirth, Philip would face a crisis in England; he might even be killed" (Thomas 68). Apparently, her pregnancy was false and it was only an appearance which maybe was a tumor. Also, Philip left Mary not long after her false pregnancy. Finally, the marriage between Queen Mary and Philip wasn't efficient for neither their families.

Elizabeth faced many different problems during the process of becoming queen of England since many people were against and preventing her. Elizabeth not only had a brother and an older sister, she was a female and only males were allowed to inherit the throne. The book, *Behind the Mask*, was written by Jane Resh Thomas. Queen Elizabeth's life was always threatened. For instance, she was suspected of conspiring against her sister, Mary. Finally, it turned out well since Wyatt finally admit that Elizabeth wasn't part of the rebellion therefore, she was innocent.

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### **Heather says**

This book gives a nice little overview of England's most famous (and my personal favorite) Queen. If you are looking for something indepth, this is not for you. It has some nice pictures of the various portraits done of her and, like I said, gives a good overview of who Elizabeth I was and the most important aspects of her reign.

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### **Cindy Raquepau says**

Like other teen books this biography contains a more realistic view of the life. This book includes descriptions of the many attempts and threats on her life, her issues with Mary Queen of the Scots, her love affairs or the lack thereof, and her loneliness. Easy narrative reading makes this an excellent choice for a school assignment, as well as, an interesting read for historical biography and Elizabethan history fans.

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### **Jessica Marcum says**

Biography: I liked it, I would definitely use it for 5th or 6th grade not the lower grades! It was an interesting story while being pretty accurate! The author cited herself well, I enjoyed it a lot more than I thought I would!

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### **Professional Fangirl says**

This was soooo good and well-written and like wow I never knew how badass Queen Elizabeth I was. But, tbh, I could've enjoyed this a lot more if I wasn't forced to read it for World History.

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### **Christie says**

This is a biography of Queen Elizabeth I for young readers. It is quite readable with simple text, lots of pictures, and only 180-some pages. Its a very thorough introduction to the Virgin Queen and Elizabethan England and I think that middle schoolers would get a lot out of it.

That being said it leaves something to be desired reading it as an adult. Its very simplified. There isn't anything in this book that you won't find in another biography of Elizabeth. It is a good introduction though and I plan to read another biography on Elizabeth I soon.

Royalty Reading Challenge: Read a Royalty Related Book that takes place in England.

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### **Zuhoor says**

Elizabeth wanted a stable family and the thrones she felt was rightfully hers but as her younger brother (King Edward) died, her sister Mary Tudor took the throne and didn't accept Elizabeth as one of her heirs. So, Elizabeth pledged her loyalty even as her own sister plotted for Elizabeth to be beheaded then as Mary fell ill, she finally agreed to give Elizabeth the throne she deserved.

The theme is loyalty because even though Elizabeth faced many challenges from her own family, all she did was show that she would always stay loyal and forgive them for whatever they did.

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### **Lily C says**

The book behind the mask is by Jane Resh Thomas. The genre is nonfiction. Its copyright is in 1998. I gave this book three stars out of five. This book was mostly interesting. The main character is Queen Elizabeth and she sounds like a great queen. Queen Elizabeth had a bit of a rough time in her younger years though. She was almost killed, but made it out alive. She also struggled with some sicknesses. Queen Elizabeth didn't want to marry anybody, and she never did. She said she was married to her people. I really liked how the author put a lot of detail into the book. I got the feel of what it was like during that time period. One thing I didn't like about the book was there was some information about the other queens of different lands. That made it confusing sometimes with all the characters brought into the book. Overall, this book was a great book to read to learn about history. I would recommend that everyone should read it.

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### **Lauren says**

This is one of the many books I acquired from my parents' collection, and I just couldn't read it fast enough. This was delicious and fascinating, especially after having recently watched "The Tudors" miniseries on Netflix. Thanks, Mom. <3

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### **Cheryl M. says**

Well written overview of the life of Queen Elizabeth.

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### **Sean says**

Every single sentence in this wonderful book oozes writerly consideration and consistency. Each paragraph is a carrot on a stick, leading us forward to our reward: more information presented in effortless prose about one of the most controversial and amazing historical figures of all time.

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## Courtney says

*Behind the Mask* is aimed at middle school and high school readers. Thomas opens the book with a cast of characters for quick reference; these allow readers who are unfamiliar with Tudor history to keep track of the many earls, dukes, and Marys that run rampant throughout the Elizabethan Age. The chapters aren't too long and include the occasional reproduction of a relevant painting, which humanizes the cast. Thomas attempt to imbue a sense of spark and excitement to a subject which many young readers may find boring. While she succeeds in accessibility, her clear bias in the favor of Elizabeth's unending virtue and intelligence cause me to question how multifaceted this portrait of Elizabeth I of England really is.

[Audience: 6th-12th graders]

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