

LIVING IN FEAR: AN ANALYSIS OF WRITINGS BY ELIZABETH TUDOR, 1544-1565

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the writings of Elizabeth Tudor and determine whether she was aware of the instability of her position in her formative years. I analyze how Elizabeth used language to both conceal and reveal knowledge of her precarious status as a princess-in-waiting. The thesis considers who were the major figures in Elizabeth's early life and how did their actions and inactions affect her. I examine how the nature of letters changed during the period when Elizabeth's position was altered from illegitimate to presumptive heir. My major finding is that a close reading of Elizabeth's letters from 1544-1565 give insights into how the future queen managed to survive a difficult childhood and adolescence at court and away.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences have examined a thesis titled “Living in Fear: An Analysis of Writings by Elizabeth Tudor, 1544-1565,” presented by Kylie E. Lyle, Candidate for the Master of Arts degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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## Living in Fear: An analysis of writings by Elizabeth Tudor from 1544-1565

Elizabeth Tudor was the second unwanted daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. There was little expectation that this baby would amount to anything significant for English history. In 1536, when Elizabeth was three years old, her mother, Anne was arrested and executed for treason, adultery, and even incest with her brother. Following her mother's beheading Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and sent away to live in the country. Within ten days of her mother's beheading, Elizabeth's father married again. This time, when his third wife, Jane Seymour, gave birth it was to the male heir Henry had been waiting more than twenty-five years for. These events meant that Elizabeth remained illegitimate until the age of ten when her stepmother, Catherine Parr, convinced her father to include Elizabeth and her half-sister, Mary, in the line of succession. Elizabeth's early life was one of confusion and, at times, terror. An analysis of letters written by Elizabeth between 1544-1565 and the Preface she wrote to *Le miroir de l'âme pécheresse* in 1544, vividly reveals how aware she was of the precariousness of her status as princess, heir apparent and finally as a young monarch. This thesis first examines the complex and fearful nature of Elizabeth's relationship to her father, half-brother and half-sister, and how this led her to guard her words and actions. In the second section a close analysis of Elizabeth's writings is carried out to come to some conclusions on how Elizabeth attempted to survive and protect herself from a young age until 1558.

Henry VIII was King of England from 1509 to 1547. In this time, he fathered three legitimate children by three of his wives and several illegitimate children with his mistresses. Given his many marriages and the resultant chaos of familial loyalties, Henry's daughters

were declared legitimate at times and illegitimate at others. Similarly, the King's desire for a male heir led him to break from the Church of Rome in order to divorce his first wife and marry his pregnant Protestant mistress. He would marry four more times, and have one child, a son called Edward by his third wife, Jane Seymour, in October 1537. Henry VIII's death at age fifty-five in 1547 would come as a hard blow to the fourteen-year-old Elizabeth, the thirty-one-year-old Mary, and the nine-year-old Edward.

Catherine Parr was Henry VIII's sixth and final wife. At the age of thirty-one, Parr was already twice widowed and had no children. She became deeply involved in the education of Henry's two younger children, Edward and Elizabeth. Catherine would also be instrumental in convincing Henry to pass the Third Succession Act<sup>1</sup> that would reinstate Mary and Elizabeth into the line of succession for the throne of England, Ireland and France. One letter that Elizabeth wrote to Catherine Parr was to praise her and demonstrate the amount of knowledge she had gained from her stepmother's tutelage. After the death of Henry in 1547, Elizabeth went to live in the household of Catherine and her new husband, Lord Admiral Thomas Seymour. In May 1548, Elizabeth was forced to leave their household due to allegations of inappropriate behavior by Seymour towards Elizabeth. The last letter Elizabeth wrote to Catherine was an apology for any sort of impropriety that Catherine believed had resulted from these accusations. Shortly afterwards, Catherine gave birth to her only child, Mary, in August of 1548; Catherine died eight days later of puerperal fever. As her mother's wealth was left entirely to her father and later confiscated by the Crown, little Mary Seymour was left a destitute orphan in the care of Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of

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<sup>1</sup> Philippa Jones, *Elizabeth: Virgin Queen*. (London: New Holland Publishers Ltd., 2010).

Suffolk, who appears to have resented this imposition.<sup>2</sup> After 1550 Mary Seymour disappears from historical record completely, and as no claim was ever made on her father's meagre estate, it implies that she did not live past the age of two.

Edward VI (1547-53) was the youngest child and the only legitimate male offspring of Henry VIII and his third wife Jane Seymour. Edward was four years younger than Elizabeth, and although she was female, the half-siblings were educated together at Hatfield House in Hertfordshire. Edward was only nine years old when he was crowned king after his father's death and his uncle, Edward Seymour, was named as Lord Protector.<sup>3</sup> Early in his reign, Edward VI had to sign the death warrant of his uncle Thomas Seymour on charges of treason against the Crown and conspiring to marry Lady Elizabeth without permission. The most important event of Edward VI's reign was the drastic radicalization of the Protestant faith in England; in six years the Anglican Church went from a Catholic liturgy<sup>4</sup> and structure, to one that came to identify as Protestant. The king became very ill in 1553 and tried to change the line of succession. In a letter analyzed in this thesis Elizabeth inquires after her brother's health and tells him that she hopes that he soon recovers. Edward opposed the succession of Mary not only on religious grounds but also on those of legitimacy and male inheritance. This would also leave Elizabeth out of the succession, even though she identified as a Protestant. When Edward VI was fifteen years old and his illness was discovered to be terminal, his council drew up the "Devise for Succession" to stop England

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<sup>2</sup> Linda Porter, *Katherine the Queen: The Remarkable Life of Katherine Parr, the Last Wife of Henry VIII*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> A title used in British Constitutional Law for the head of state. It is defined as exercising an individual regency while the monarch was still a minor and unable to rule alone.

<sup>4</sup> The form according to which public religious worship was to be conducted.

from returning to Catholicism. In this Devises, the king named Jane Grey (c.1537-1554) his first cousin once removed, as his successor.

Edward Seymour was the eldest brother of Henry VIII's third wife, Jane Seymour. He became his nephew's Lord Protector, upon election by a Council that the late King had set up in his will. He was appointed to rule on behalf of his nephew until Edward reached the age of eighteen. Seymour was popular with the common people, but his policies often angered the gentry. Seymour was popular due to his attempt to forbid enclosures of common land and this would lead to his eventual downfall.<sup>5</sup> He was overthrown by John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland with the aid of his son, Guildford. Guildford Dudley was married to Jane Grey, who would be named as Edward VI's successor. Elizabeth wrote letters to Edward Seymour to thank him for the favors that he bestowed upon her while he was in power. Seymour was taken prisoner in 1549 and sent to the Tower. Shortly after his release in 1550 he was arrested again and executed for attempting to overthrow John Dudley who had replaced him as Lord Protector.

Princess Elizabeth's extended family also gave her reasons to fear for her life at times. Within this sphere she had to balance her desire to be acknowledged as having royal status with being submissive to those who had power over her. Catherine Knollys (c. 1524-1569) was a cousin of Elizabeth's through her mother, Anne Boleyn. Knollys was born Catherine Carey and was the daughter of Mary Boleyn and William Carey. Due to Mary Boleyn having been a mistress of Henry VIII's there was some question about the true parentage of Catherine. It was rumored that she and her brother were in fact the illegitimate children of the king. Catherine was twelve years older than her cousin Elizabeth and she may

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<sup>5</sup> The taking of arable common land by the propertied class to use as pasturage.

have witnessed her aunt, Anne Boleyn's, execution when she was a very young girl. Due to being closely related to Elizabeth, Catherine was rewarded with the post of a Maid of Honor to Henry VIII's fourth and fifth wives, Anne of Cleves and Katherine Howard. In April 1540, she married Sir Francis Knollys and moved to Reading in Berkshire. A surviving letter from Elizabeth concerns her comforting Catherine in her faith after the death of Edward VI and the new reality that Elizabeth's older sister, Mary, was going to ascend to the throne. As a staunch Protestant there was a very real possibility of turmoil for Catherine and her family when Mary did become Queen due to her strict adherence to Catholicism.

Mary Tudor (1516-1558) was the eldest and only surviving child of Henry VIII and his first wife, Katherine of Aragon. Initially, Mary lived a very comfortable life, however, her status began to change when her father began a relationship with Anne Boleyn. Wishing to end his marriage to Katherine of Aragon, in 1527 Henry sought a divorce or annulment from Pope Clement VII. This request was refused perhaps due to the influence of Catherine's nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who had gone to war with the Italian city-states and was holding the Pope hostage. In 1534, Henry VIII broke from the Catholic Church and created the Church of England, with him as the Supreme Head. Katherine of Aragon refused to recognize the new church and was punished by being permanently separated from her daughter. Mary's refusal to recognize her father's new marriage to Anne Boleyn would continue to put her at odds with the king. In contrast to Mary, Elizabeth was born an unwanted daughter, but became more treasured by Henry VIII than her sister, who would be forced to work as a maid for the newborn Elizabeth by Anne Boleyn. Once Anne Boleyn fell out of favor and was executed, both Mary and Elizabeth were declared illegitimate by their father who was now married to his third wife, Jane Seymour. After the

execution of Anne Boleyn, the relationship between Elizabeth and Mary remained cordial. Elizabeth would write to her sister inquiring about her health and wellbeing, most likely to stay in her sister's good graces. In 1555, after Edward's death and the brief usurpation of the throne by Jane Grey, Mary I became the first female sovereign of England in several centuries.

Historiography for Elizabeth and her extended family is vast and there are numerous books and articles written about each of them. The seminal work on Henry VIII was written by J.J. Scarisbrick in 1968. For this thesis, the text utilized was *Henry VIII: Court, Church, and Conflict* by David Loades.<sup>6</sup> Loades presents this notorious king as a self-righteous individual who believed in a special relationship with the Almighty that gave him a unique claim upon the obedience of his subjects. A distinctive portrait is created to show that Henry VIII was neither genius, nor a tyrant but rather a man like any other, except for the extraordinary circumstances that he found himself in. This author uses a large amount of primary and secondary sources to provide a detailed examination of Henry VIII's life and those that surrounded him during his reign. Loades deals with Henry VIII's reign topically rather than chronologically so the text at points feels disjointed. Overall this is an easily readable, very informative biography of King Henry VIII of England.

Henry VIII's successor was his only son, Edward VI. In *The Lost King of England*<sup>7</sup>, Chris Skidmore provides a description of how in the six years of Edward's reign, court intrigue, deceit and treason almost plunged the country into a civil war. In many history texts, due to the short duration of his reign, Edward VI, is overshadowed by his father, Henry VIII, and his half-sister, Elizabeth I. Skidmore provides a full length text to describe a young

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<sup>6</sup> David Loades, *Henry VIII: Court, Church, and Conflict*. (Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Chris Skidmore, *Edward VI: The Lost King of England*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007).

monarch who in a short time managed to change England by creating his own device changing the line of succession and pushing Protestantism as the state religion. The religious shift was the main emphasis of this text and Skidmore makes the argument that Edward VI's role in the English Reformation was formative and compelling, which is a continually argued topic written about Edward VI. This text provides a well-researched insight into a predominantly overlooked monarch.

Queen Mary I won her throne back from Jane Grey after her younger brother, King Edward VI, died. A large point of contention between Mary I and Edward VI was religion. In numerous monographs on Mary I her life is distilled into a few dramatic episodes including her triumph over Jane Grey, the burning of Protestants and her short marriage to Phillip II of Spain. In *Mary I: England's Catholic Queen*<sup>8</sup>, John Edwards presents an original and deeply researched portrait of Mary I. Edwards provides an interesting understanding of Mary's religious faith and policies, and her historical significance to England. This text uses Continental archives, especially Spanish ones to demonstrate how Mary's culture, Catholic faith, and politics were thoroughly Spanish, and greatly influenced by her mother's family. Edwards closes the text by arguing that at the end of her life Mary had no children, she was very ill, deserted by her Spanish husband, and she died in full knowledge that her Protestant half-sister Elizabeth would undo her work and reap the benefits of Mary's achievement in government.

One interesting text included in this historiography is *A Crown for Elizabeth*<sup>9</sup> which provides an account of the birth, childhood and early years of Mary, Edward, and Elizabeth Tudor. This text is very sympathetic and analyzes documents for insights into motives and

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<sup>8</sup> John Edwards, *Mary I: England's Catholic Queen*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Mary Luke, *A Crown for Elizabeth*. (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1970).

actions of these figures. Sometimes this is nothing but inference and conjecture because it is impossible to know exactly what these figures were thinking. Luke writes this text chronologically presenting the early life of the Tudor children, moving into the reign of Edward, then onto Mary's reign, and she ends right as Elizabeth becomes Queen. *A Crown for Elizabeth* stresses the similarities in the strengths of each of the siblings. Edward VI had courage and conviction, and after exploitation early on in his reign by contentious lords he began to learn how the game was played. Mary at the age of thirty-three had to face her twelve-year-old brother to plead for privileges to practice her Catholic religion. Luke states that the nickname "Bloody" assigned to Mary is unfair given that the Church called for the burnings and was no longer ruled by the Crown. Finally, Luke characterizes Elizabeth as the shrewd observer of Council politics in the lives of her siblings and how disastrous her sister's marriage was, and claims this resulted in Elizabeth, once she became queen, ensuring she was the mistress of war and defender of royal power. This text provides some useful information but can be described as more of a novelization of the Tudors at points but gives a background to the early lives of the Tudor offspring that most times is overlooked in historiography.

A more politically driven biography about Elizabeth I, in the Profiles in Power series is titled *Elizabeth I*.<sup>10</sup> This is a revisionist text looking more at how power was wielded during Elizabeth's reign instead of the policies that resulted from it. It reappraises Elizabeth's role in government and nation and explores how she exercised her power. Specifically, the author examines Elizabeth's relationships with statesmen of her time and the key institutions of the sixteenth century, including the Church, the nobility, the Privy Council, her royal

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<sup>10</sup> Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I (Profiles in Power)*. (London: Routledge, 1988).

court, Parliament, military and naval commanders and the people of England, are explored. This book does not follow the usual chronology of Elizabeth's life and reign; instead it concentrates on relations with the centers of power. *Elizabeth I* provides a new way to analyze Elizabeth's reign even if the author is highly critical of Elizabeth throughout the text.

Another biography, also titled *Elizabeth I*<sup>11</sup> is a more sympathetic biography that utilizes an abundance of primary sources to shed light on Elizabeth's actions. Anne Somerset makes the argument that the execution of Elizabeth's mother cast a dark shadow over her entire life. Since Elizabeth was an intensely private person, she left behind very few accurate portraits for painters or biographers. Somerset focuses on Elizabeth's complex political life, documenting religious conflicts, wars, explorations, conspiracies and the rough justice that marked a rather successful forty-five-year reign. The argument is made that Elizabeth flaunted her femininity and used her marital availability as a chief asset in her foreign affairs. Somerset also makes it very clear that Elizabeth was also very human and was prone to fits of temper and had an irascible fear of being assassinated. This biography is clear and well informed but glosses over Elizabeth's early life.

Essentially many of the texts written about Elizabeth Tudor, gloss over her childhood. The first major event usually covered is the death of her mother Anne Boleyn. Elizabeth is then sent off to live in the country in relative obscurity, until her father married Catherine Parr. She takes a great interest in ten-year-old Elizabeth's and six-year-old Edward's education. Many texts start providing a plethora of information after the Thomas Seymour scandal and authors agree that Elizabeth had a bright, magnetic personality.

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<sup>11</sup> Anne Somerset, *Elizabeth I*. (New York: Anchor, 1991).

The historiography concerning the writings of Elizabeth generally focus on those she produced as a monarch rather than a princess. Specifically, they have been analyzed to draw conclusions about Elizabeth's refusal to marry. In *Elizabeth I: The Voice of a Monarch*<sup>12</sup> Ilona Bell makes the claim that Elizabeth's words and actions disturbed previously held conceptions of sex and gender and challenged the patriarchal assumptions of politics and marriage. The early letters as examined in this thesis point to Elizabeth being aware of the consequences of being a female and therefore subservient to males. Elizabeth's gender continually plays a factor through her writing, even as a girl, Elizabeth realized that being a female in this society was a detriment.

In 1994, Carole Levin produced a critical text titled *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power*.<sup>13</sup> Levin is fascinated by the fact that Elizabeth was a successful yet unmarried monarch for forty-five years, a fact unparalleled by any other woman of the time but also a source of cultural anxiety. Elizabeth I and Mary I were the first women to be crowned Queens of England since the Norman Conquest. Levin's work is a cultural biography that focuses on how Elizabeth represented herself and how people in turn responded to her as an unmarried woman of power.<sup>14</sup> She looks not only at the conventional historical sources but also how Elizabeth was constructed socially in gossip, in rumors, in slander, and even in dreams. The title of the book comes from the speech that Elizabeth gave at Tilbury camp after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1558. In the speech Elizabeth claims, "I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the

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<sup>12</sup> Ilona Bell, *Elizabeth I: The Voice of a Monarch*. (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, xiii.

heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too...<sup>15</sup>” This statement was made to quell the fears of the men under her authority, that she did not understand their anxieties about being led by a woman. Elizabeth was also aware that King of England would bring forth old memories of Henry VIII and their love for him.

One of the earliest collections of writings both by and to Elizabeth can be found in *The Girlhood of Queen Elizabeth: A Narrative in Contemporary Letters* (1909) edited by Frank Arthur Mumby. This text includes some of the letters and then gives a brief explanation about the context in which they were written. It includes letters that are analyzed within this paper.

A collection of Elizabeth’s letters came to light in 2013 that were analyzed by Alan Bryson and Mel Evans in an article titled “Seven rediscovered letters of Princess Elizabeth Tudor”.<sup>16</sup> These authors make the argument that these letters show how Elizabeth negotiated her way through the governments of her younger half-brother Edward VI and then older half-sister Mary I. In particular, the letters include evidence of Elizabeth’s household and estate management, legal actions and the establishment of patronage for her servants. The state of her emotions is not a factor that these authors focus upon. Bryson and Evans additionally argue that the holograph letters of Elizabeth that still exist are prized documents but provide more information about her education than her actual life. This argument is very literal and critical of Elizabeth’s writing and does not consider the underlying emotional elements of the letters that they were analyzing.

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<sup>15</sup> Marcus, Leah and et. Al. (*Elizabeth I: Collected Works*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Alan Bryson and Mel Evans, "Seven Rediscovered Letters of Princess Elizabeth Tudor," *Historical Research* 90, no. 250 (2017): 830-858.

Elizabeth's letters survive either as holographs<sup>17</sup> or scribal copies<sup>18</sup> and are housed in various archives. The principal published source of Elizabeth's writings is *Queen Elizabeth I: Selected Works* by Steven W. May.<sup>19</sup> It includes poems, speeches, letters, prayers, and translations. A critical component that is missing from May's collection is the responses or initial letters that caused Elizabeth to write what she did. The first fourteen of Elizabeth's letters are analyzed in this thesis and span from 1544-1556. While this sample only represents a fraction of the letters that Elizabeth wrote and is complicated by the responses that have not survived, it is the extant collection that survives from her early years. I have kept the numbering from May's book of 1 through 14 and provide the full text of the letter in the appendix.

The first two letters to be analyzed for what they reveal of the young Elizabeth's feelings about her position, date from 1544 and 1548. They were both written to Elizabeth's final stepmother Catherine Parr. Letter 1 was a preface to a translation of the French meditation *Le Miroir de l'âme Pécheresse*, "Glass of the Sinful Soul," It had been composed by Marguerite, Queen of Navarre (1492-1549). Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, met Queen Marguerite when she was at the French court and may have been given a copy of the poetic monologue. Elizabeth may not have known much about Marguerite and the connection to her mother. It is also possible that Catherine Parr may have suggested this poem to her young stepdaughter as an exercise in both theology and languages or Elizabeth, as a precocious child with a mind of her own, may have initiated this work knowing that it would please her

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<sup>17</sup> A document written entirely in the handwriting of the person whose signature it bears. These letters are authenticated by comparison to writings known to have been written by the author.

<sup>18</sup> A written manuscript produced by a scribe or copyist, as distinct from the original manuscript produced by the author or at the author's dictation.

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth and Steven W. May, *Queen Elizabeth I: Selected Works*. (New York: Washington Square Press, 2005).

stepmother the queen. Somehow, *Le Miroir de l'âme Pécheresse*, found its way into Elizabeth's hands when she was eleven years old and intrigued her enough to translate it into English and add a preface.<sup>20</sup>

Part of the appeal of this project may be due to the common experiences of Marguerite and Elizabeth. They were born as the undesired female offspring of powerful kings and were also the older sisters of the desired male heir. Both women were part of a family trinity; Elizabeth with her brother Edward and sister Mary and Marguerite with her brother, Francois and mother, Louise. Marguerite and Elizabeth had brilliant minds and it can be argued that they were intellectually as well as diplomatically superior to their younger brothers. One main difference, however, between Elizabeth and Marguerite is that Elizabeth was declared illegitimate numerous times in her early life whereas there was never a question of Marguerite's paternity. She was not viewed as a threat because Salic law did not allow for any female to ever ascend to the throne of France.<sup>21</sup>

At age eleven, Elizabeth became the first translator of *Le miroir de l'âme pécheresse* or *The Glass of the Sinful Soul* into English. The poem was written by Marguerite in 1531, after the death of her infant son. Elizabeth may not have known much about Marguerite and the connection to her mother. On the one hand it contains lessons in humility and warnings against female wickedness, while on the other hand, there are lessons in the power that women can seize and wield. The poetic monologue is almost forty pages long and was described in France as "a poetic manifesto of reformist doctrine that caused an explosion of

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>21</sup> Susan Snyder, "Guilty Sisters: Marguerite De Navarre, Elizabeth of England, and the Miroir De L'âme Pécheresse," *Renaissance Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (1997): 443-458.

disapproval among French religious authorities.” According to Luca Manini<sup>22</sup> “In her translation, Elizabeth is generally true to the original text; she sometimes omits or adds some words, she condenses some sentences and expressions, she tones down some references to the perfect fusion between man and God, without altering the general sense of Marguerite de Navarre’s meditative and confessional poetic monologue.” The Glass of a Sinful Soul was later published and distributed by John Bale<sup>23</sup> in England in 1548 with many revisions and changed the title to “A Godly Meditation of the Christian soul.”

In the poetic monologue,<sup>24</sup> the narrator presents herself as a wretched sinner who has violated and betrayed her relationship with God so considerably that she does not deserve his grace.<sup>25</sup> The emphasis of the work is on personal piety, exaggerated deprecation, preoccupation with death, and total dependence on divine grace for salvation through biblical allusions. These include the stories of Miriam, the prodigal child, the Virgin Mary, and the adulterous wife of the prophet Hosea. Illustrating these ideas is done using familial archetypes-- daughter, mother, sister and wife—and they are then explored using biblical episodes. The identity of the sinful sister and model of Miriam may have been the portion that resonated the most with Elizabeth. The story of Miriam in the Bible is that she was struck with leprosy for challenging the supremacy of her brother, Moses. She was then cured through an intercession of that same brother and so could return to the Israelite camp.

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<sup>22</sup> Luca Manini, "Elizabeth I Translates Marguerite De Navarre - Bibliomanie.it," , accessed November 30, 2018,

[http://www.bibliomanie.it/the\\_mirror\\_of\\_oneself\\_elizabeth\\_I\\_translates\\_marguerite\\_de\\_navarre\\_manini.htm](http://www.bibliomanie.it/the_mirror_of_oneself_elizabeth_I_translates_marguerite_de_navarre_manini.htm)  
<sup>23</sup> 1494-1563, an English churchman, historian, controversialist, and Bishop of Ossory. A defender of the female martyr Anne Askew.

<sup>24</sup> Also known as a dramatic monologue, a type of poetry written in the form of a speech of an individual character

<sup>25</sup> "Guilty Sisters: Marguerite De Navarre, Elizabeth of England, and the Miroir De L'ame Pecheresse.," The Free Library, , accessed October 24, 2018, <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Guilty+sisters:+Marguerite+de+Navarre,+Elizabeth+of+England,+and+the...-a019793518>.

Elizabeth may have felt that her only salvation was to not challenge her brother and to remain a faithful servant to him. From the analysis later of her letters, it is obvious that Elizabeth hoped for forgiveness if she were somehow to challenge Edward or his authority over her.

In the preface she composed to her translation of *Le Miroir de l'âme Pécheresse*, Elizabeth used words like noble, virtuous, and humble. These were three very important characteristics of a noble woman of the sixteenth century and were meant to flatter Catherine Parr and for Elizabeth to put herself in the good graces of the Queen. She continues to describe her “simple wit” and “small learning” so as not to appear boastful and perhaps avoid criticism by Catherine of Elizabeth’s intelligence and wit at the tender age of eleven. Similar sentiments can be found in Elizabeth’s letters to her sister and brother when they became monarchs. She signed the letters with phrases such as “your most humble servant” or “your most faithful subject,” to highlight her submission and obedience to the king and queen.

In June of 1548, four years after completing her project in translation and writing a new preface to *Le Miroir de l'âme Pécheresse*, Elizabeth sent a letter of apology to Catherine Parr. It concerned the scandal involving Elizabeth and Catherine’s new husband, Thomas Seymour. After the death of her father, Elizabeth lived in Catherine’s household from January or February of 1547 to May 1548 when rumors of a possible affair started to circulate. Thomas Seymour was the younger brother of Edward Seymour, the Lord Protector, and uncle to King Edward VI. He was given many high honors during and after his sister’s (Jane Seymour) reign as queen, such as escorting the next queen to be, Anne of Cleves, from France to England in 1539. When his elder brother was named Lord Protector, he was angered and made Lord High Admiral as a concession. Thomas married Catherine Parr less than five months after the death of Henry VIII. Once they were married, Thomas moved into

Chelsea Manor where Catherine and her fourteen-year-old stepdaughter were living. It appears that he became too familiar with Elizabeth and was witnessed entering her bedchamber before she was dressed for the day and romping and tickling her. Katherine Ashley, Elizabeth's governess, reported this to Catherine. At first, she dismissed this behavior as innocent fun and even joined in with the romps on a few occasions. Once Catherine became pregnant in 1548, however, she began to be concerned with the flirtatious relationship that her husband had with Elizabeth and the scandal that it could lead to. Catherine eventually sent Elizabeth to Hertfordshire to live with Sir Anthony Denney and Joan Champernowne, who was also sister to the governess Katherine Ashley. This removed Elizabeth from her household and her husband's presence but allowed Catherine to have Elizabeth watched and reported upon.

In the letter, Elizabeth expresses sorrow at having to leave Catherine's household through phrases such as "manifold kindness," "replete with sorrow," and "no less thankful." It is apparent that Elizabeth was aware that she had been sent away at the initiative of Catherine. She attempts to mitigate this act through thanking Catherine for having trusted Elizabeth while "All men judge the contrary." The preface not only shows Elizabeth's intelligence, but it also showed her love for her stepmother, in that it would have taken many hours of work, and her appreciation of Catherine's religious views. The letters provide insight into how Elizabeth viewed Catherine as a mother figure and friend at a time when Elizabeth greatly needed a role model. Elizabeth greatly understands the strain put on their relationship and how precarious her life became after the rumors of the alleged affair spread.

After the death of Catherine Parr, Elizabeth wrote letters to Edward Seymour, the Lord Protector. Elizabeth was still living in Cheshunt, a town twelve miles north of London.

The manor house was built on land that had been given to Cardinal Thomas Wolsey by Henry VIII. Through careful analysis of these letters Elizabeth understands that her brother, even though King in name, held no real power.

Letter 3 is dated sometime after May 1548<sup>26</sup> to the Lord Protector. Superficially Elizabeth is writing to the Lord Protector for sending a court physician to tend to her when she became ill after leaving Catherine Parr's household. Elizabeth addresses Seymour as "my very good Lord," during this period Elizabeth was without her two trusted servants, Katherine Ashley and Thomas Parry who had been dismissed from her household, arrested, and questioned vigorously about the relationship between Elizabeth and his younger brother Thomas Seymour. Without these two important people in her household Elizabeth was grateful for any help she received no matter the source. Elizabeth is very thankful towards the Lord Protector and says that she could continue to write him but does not want to seem overly grateful "...desiring you to give him thanks for me who can ascertain you of mine estate of health wherefore I will not write it."<sup>27</sup> The letter ended with more thanks and to add an extra bit of warmth to the letter Elizabeth sends her best wishes to Seymour's wife. Seymour's wife, Anne Seymour nee Stanhope, was a great rival to Catherine Parr. After the death of Henry VIII, Edward Seymour, acted as King in all but name, and with this power, Anne began to consider herself the first Lady in the Realm. Parr won this battle by invoking the Third Succession Act whereby she established that Anne Seymour, Duchess of Somerset, came after Queen Catherine, Princess Mary, Princess Elizabeth, and Anne of Cleves. Later when news of the alleged events between Thomas Seymour and Elizabeth became known, Anne Seymour took it upon herself to reprimand and scold Katherine Ashley. Any

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<sup>26</sup> No exact date is given for this letter except for some time after May 1548.

<sup>27</sup> May, *Selected Works*, 100.

information about how Elizabeth felt about Anne Seymour is sparse or lacking, but due to Elizabeth's close relationship with Catherine Parr an inference that it was not congenial can be made.

Letter 4 was written in January 1549 to Edward Seymour and has an apologetic and frantic tone to the writing. Elizabeth again proclaims the gentleness and goodwill that the Lord Protector has shown her and thanks him for his counsel of her as a friend. She summarizes the interrogation that she went through with Master Tyrwhitt. Elizabeth explains that she knew that there would be suspicions if she chose to get involved with the Lord Admiral. In fact, there were rumors after the death of Catherine Parr that Elizabeth was planning to become engaged to the Lord Admiral, Thomas Seymour. She assures the Lord Protector that: "And also I told Master Tyrwhitt that to the effect of the matter I never consented unto any such thing without the Council's consent thereunto,"<sup>28</sup> proving that even at fifteen years old she showed an understanding of how the government works. Elizabeth was proud of her chaste reputation and virginal image. It acted as a shield against gossip and lies. This reputation was threatened and would be potentially destroyed if stories that she was with child by the Lord Admiral came to be believed. Elizabeth vehemently denied the rumors and called them "shameful slander." It was a serious situation to be in as engagement followed by a marriage ceremony was enough to make a child legitimate.

Elizabeth also defended Katherine Ashley and Thomas Parry throughout the letter claiming that they had no knowledge of the Lord Admiral's intentions towards her, nor did they encourage any sort of misbehavior between the two of them. The context for this needed defense is the many events that occurred between May 1548 and January 1549 in Elizabeth's

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 103.

life. Catherine Parr died in childbirth in September 1548 and twelve days before this letter was written the Lord Admiral was arrested, while attempting to break into the King's apartment where he shot and killed the King's dog. The reasons he was breaking in are not clear, but it has been speculated that he was possibly trying to abduct the young King and keep him in his custody. This incident, added to being caught outside the king's bedroom at night with a loaded pistol, was interpreted in the most menacing light, so the very next day Thomas Seymour was sent to the Tower.

Seymour's arrest began to cast suspicion on his associates, and this included Elizabeth's servants. A distraught Elizabeth did not realize this until her most trusted servants, including Katherine Ashley, began to be arrested. Edward VI's privy council was sure of Elizabeth's complicity with Seymour's actions and they believed they could bully a confession out of her. She would endure weeks of relentless interrogation, but the council found itself in a sharply defined game of wits with Elizabeth, who proved to be a master of logic, defiance, and shrewdness. This experience was a sign of Elizabeth's strong and distinctive personality and it seems to have made her, for the first time in her young life, fully aware of the serious, even deadly, nature of her succession rights to the throne.<sup>29</sup> The letter to the Lord Protector was most likely written after these events occurred. Elizabeth begs for her name to be cleared so that blemish would not follow her around.

Master Tyrwhitt and others have told me that there goeth rumours abroad which be greatly against my honour and honesty (which above all other things I esteem), which be these; that I am in the Tower; and with child by my Lord Admiral. My lord, these are shameful slanders, for the which, besides the great desire I have to see the King's Majesty, I shall most heartily desire your lordship that I may show myself there as I am.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Mary Luke, *A Crown for Elizabeth*. (New York: Coward-McCann, 1970).

<sup>30</sup> May, *Selected Works*, 103-104.

Elizabeth wastes no space with declarations of innocence or outraged humility. She had defended herself and her servants against inexcusable accusations with courage and dignity, and more than hinted that she would expect an apology

In Letter 5 Elizabeth continues her pleading and the defense of her actions. Within the letter she says that she will continue to claim her innocence, using words such as “honor” and “honesty”. She explains that everything that the King is told about what she says during interrogation or otherwise will continue to remain true. “...I assure your Grace I will declare them most willingly, for I would not (as I trust you have not) so evil a opinion of me that I would conceal anything that I knew, for it were to no purpose...”<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth explains that she knows that if she were to hide anything that would put her into a precarious situation. She was aware of people having ill will towards her and how it could threaten her life. In a letter at the age of fifteen she states that “...you said you would warn me of all evils that you should hear of me...”<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth informs Edward Seymour that she has and will continue to do whatever Master Tyrwhit commands of her. “...I have done so and will do as he willethe me (as he doth not) to nothing but to that which is mine honor and honesty.”<sup>33</sup>

Two weeks later Letter 6, was sent from Elizabeth to Edward Seymour. It is dated, February 21, 1549, and begins with

Having received your Lordship’s letters, I perceive in them your goodwill toward me because you declare to me plainly your mind in this thing, and again for that you would not with that I should do anything that should not seem good unto the Council, for which thing I give you most hearty thanks.<sup>34</sup> Hopeful that he will continue to show her goodwill, Elizabeth continued “And whereas I do understand that you take in evil part the letters that I did write unto your Lordship, I am very

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 108.

sorry that you should take them so...<sup>35</sup>” Elizabeth apologized for criticizing Seymour in her previous letter for the way she was being treated by Tyrwhitt. Elizabeth is also very smart when she makes the statement, “...and not that I dislike anything that your Lordship of the Council think good, for I know that you and the Council are charged with me or that I take upon me to rule myself...<sup>36</sup>” She is endearing herself to Seymour by saying that she would never think that anything they believed was for the good of her person would be misbegotten or done with ill intentions. Elizabeth mentions that due to her being unable to govern herself, as a female, that they would do that for her, and she had seen no real example of this. “...howbeit you did write that if I would bring forth any that had reported it, you and the Council would see it redressed, which thing though I can easily do it...<sup>37</sup>” She is keeping the Lord Protector and the Council to their word on keeping her person as well as her reputation protected. As a young woman, this shows a great deal of constraint, even as a princess she would be prone to emotions as any other person, but she does not act upon any of these notions of fits of rage or sadness but remains logical and level headed. Elizabeth knows that anything negative tied to her could have severe, even deadly consequences, such as imprisonment in the Tower or even death if considered too much of a threat.

Letter 7 was written on March 7, 1549 and is the final communication between her and Edward Seymour. On March 20, 1549, Thomas Seymour is executed on charges of treason and suspicion of a plot to marry Lady Elizabeth. The Seymour family was ruined and John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, was created the new Lord Protector.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 108.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 109.

This series of four letters, prove that Elizabeth was in almost weekly contact with Edward Seymour. She certainly viewed him as possessing a power that her twelve-year-old brother did not. Elizabeth may have been writing letters to her brother as well but did not ask for favors or help from him. Elizabeth continued with her quest against those speaking ill of her due to the illicit intentions of Thomas Seymour. She then turned to petitioning on the behalf of her beloved governess, Katherine Ashley. Ashley had been arrested in January 1549 for possible involvement in the actions of Seymour and was being held as a prisoner in the Tower. "...first because she hath been with me a long time and many years, and hath taken great labor and pain in bringing me up in learning and honesty, and therefore I ought of very duty speak for her..."<sup>38</sup> The key words in this sentence are "labor" and "pain" as well as "learning" and "honesty." Labor and pain bring up the idea of childbirth and the idea that Elizabeth viewed Mistress Ashley as a mother figure who has molded her young charge into a proper young royal. Katherine Ashley fulfilled the role of mother that Elizabeth was missing. Her own mother was executed when she was only three years old and then she had four more stepmothers-- all before the age of fourteen. Elizabeth believes that it is her "duty" to speak on behalf of her governess, thus implying that she believes it her moral obligation to ask for forgiveness. This letter ends with "Your assured friend to my little power."<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth was trying to stay in the good graces of Edward Seymour by pledging her friendship to him and guaranteeing that she understood she only has a little power. At fifteen years old, Elizabeth recognized that but one careless word from her could have sealed the fate of all those who were dear to her, and possibly have cost her own life as well. In such

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 112.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 113.

extremely difficult, and what must have been very frightening circumstances, with virtually no assistance, Elizabeth managed to uphold her innocence and that of her governess.<sup>40</sup>

There is a two-year gap between Letter 7 and Letter 8, with the dates jumping from March 7, 1549 to May 15, 1551. England was in an uproar over Edward VI's radicalization of the Church of England and pushing it towards Protestantism. The king enacted the Act of Uniformity which brought about the use of the Common Prayer Book<sup>41</sup> in the Anglican Church. The introduction of this text into English churches brought about rebellion in small northern provinces that remained predominantly Catholic. In July and August 1549, Kett's Rebellion was occurring in East Anglia. The rebels were against the enclosure<sup>42</sup> of the farms in their town. Individuals that had supported Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries were finding themselves having to choose between supporting the Crown's decisions or following their own religion. Edward Seymour was sympathetic towards the anti-enclosure movement, but his views were not held by the rest of the Council. The Earl of Warwick crushed the rebellion with a hastily assembled army and then ousted Edward Seymour as the Lord Protector. In the aftermath of the Seymour scandal, Elizabeth led a rather quiet life. Not much evidence is available to deduce exactly what Elizabeth was experiencing in the years 1549 to 1551. She visited court at Christmas time at the invitation of her brother, the King, and then again in 1551. Edward and Elizabeth had a decent relationship. From age six, Edward began a formal education under Richard Cox and John Cheke, this also included tutoring in French, Spanish, and Italian from Elizabeth's tutor Roger Ascham.

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<sup>40</sup> In September 1549, Katherine Ashley and the manservant, Thomas Parry, had been reinstated to their former positions at Hatfield. Both confessing, under duress, of knowledge that Thomas Seymour had marital intentions toward Elizabeth.

<sup>41</sup> It was viewed as a compromise between old and new ideas and was in places diplomatically ambiguous in its implied teaching; this aroused opposition from both conservatives and the more extreme reformers.

<sup>42</sup> The legal process in England of consolidating small landholdings into larger farms. Once consolidated the use of the land became restricted to the owner and was no longer for communal use.

Letter 8 begins with Elizabeth flattering her brother by telling him that with all the wealth and power he has that requesting her portrait was not worthy of his time and money. In common with Edward's protestant belief, Elizabeth claims that she would not have anyone worry about her outward appearance. Instead she would always wish to prove the strength and cunningness or honesty of her mind,

...in which if the inward good mind toward your Grace might as well be declared as the outward face and countenance shall be seen, I would nor have tarried the commandment but prevent it, nor have been the last to grant but the first to offer, but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present.<sup>43</sup>

To push this humbling point home, Elizabeth goes on to write that although the beauty of the painting as well as the beauty of the body may fade, her mind will always be her most outstanding feature. The princess adds that, "...my inward mind wisheth that the body itself were oftener in your presence."<sup>44</sup> This would ensure Elizabeth's safety. She then tells her brother that she is going to start living by the motto *Feras non culpes quod vitari non potest* from Horace meaning "What cannot be avoided must be endured." In other words, she was going to stop complaining about her living conditions in the knowledge that it was weakening the bond she had with him.

Elizabeth ends her letter by blessing her brother and telling him that she continually asks God to keep him healthy and wishes for him to have a long reign. According to May, there is strong evidence for this letter being written in 1547 to accompany the portrait of herself that currently is part of the royal collection at Windsor Castle. Yet, in the letter Elizabeth recorded that she was at Hatfield when she wrote it. As she was not residing there

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<sup>43</sup> May, *Selected Works*, 115.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 116.

on May 15, 1547, it appears that it was in 1551 that the king asked for her portrait. This was the only year during his reign that she was in residence at Hatfield on May 15.<sup>45</sup>

Throughout her life, religion continued to be important to Elizabeth, whether it was to appease her own soul or that of others. Many authors have written articles analyzing her religious writings or the devotions that she herself wrote.<sup>46</sup> Included in the collection assembled by May are several of the prayers that Elizabeth composed. These prayers are argued to have provided a sense of comfort to the mind of a very intelligent woman, who in every other aspect of her life kept these ideas private. Elizabeth went through several changes religiously throughout her life and remained in good favor with each change. Under the reign of Henry VIII and then under Edward VI, Elizabeth was a Protestant; when her sister Mary became Queen, Elizabeth would make the conversion to Catholicism to appease her older sister and not put her life in danger. Mary I was known for burning Protestants at the stake and this scared many Protestants to either convert or travel abroad so they would not be persecuted. Elizabeth's ability to survive these religious changes provides evidence to the religious tolerance that she would practice during her reign.

In January of 1552, young King Edward VI, signed the writ of execution for his remaining uncle, Edward Seymour. Letter 9 was written by Elizabeth to her brother in 1552. Edward VI had been ill for months and wrote in his journal that, "I fell sick of the measles

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 117.

<sup>46</sup> Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and Religion, 1558-1603*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002).

William P. Haugaard, "Elizabeth Tudors Book of Devotions: A Neglected Clue to the Queens Life and Character," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 12, no. 2 (1981): 79-106.

Anne McLaren, "Gender, Religion, and Early Modern Nationalism: Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, and the Genesis of English Anti-Catholicism," *The American Historical Review* 107 no.3 (2002): 739-767.

John Warren, *Elizabeth I: Religion and Foreign Affairs*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2002).

and the smallpox.”<sup>47</sup> Eighteen-year-old Elizabeth again writes from Hatfield House about the great sadness that she felt at hearing that her brother was ill. She adds that she is possibly the only person to feel her sadness that deeply but to claim that would seem flattering and she omits it as a point of pride.<sup>48</sup> As a sixteenth century woman Elizabeth would not want to seem boastful or prideful, so she tries to draw attention away from this fact. Elizabeth used words like “satisfied” and “assured” to prove that she was happy that her brother was no longer ill. She then assured him, that his letter was more precious to her than any jewel he could have sent, “...assuring your Majesty that a precious jewel at another time could not so well have contented as your letter in this case hath comforted me.”<sup>49</sup>

Elizabeth goes on to write that like a good father punishing their child when they are in the wrong, she believes that God, who favors monarchs above everyone else, has prepared the King for better health. These words play upon her religious beliefs and her role as an older sister to the king. She keeps the theme of forgiveness going by asking the King to forgive her for not replying to his letter in a prompter manner and asks him to attribute that to her flawed mind and lazy hand. Signed “Your Majesty’s most humble sister to command, Elizabeth.”<sup>50</sup> She had to learn how to create a balance between her role as an older sister but also a subject to the most powerful person in the country. This could be a difficult task; the role of an older sibling is usually as a protector and dominant, but Elizabeth had to be subservient and rely upon a brother who was four years younger than her and king. Elizabeth

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<sup>47</sup> Edward VI, *The Chronicle and Political Papers of King Edward VI*. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966). It is unlikely that the King suffered from both measles and smallpox simultaneously. But this initial disease may have compromised his health enough for the tuberculosis that he was afflicted by towards the end of 1552 to take hold and led to his eventual death in July 1553.

<sup>48</sup> May, *Selected Works*, 118.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 118.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 119.

used her role as sister as a signifier that she does remember that there are men and others who run and control every aspect of her life.

Letter 10 was not written to King Edward VI but to Elizabeth's much older half sister Mary. It came a year and a half after the three siblings had been together for Christmas in 1550. This was a rare event as to avoid any confrontation over her Catholic faith with Edward. Mary generally remained on her own estates and rarely attended court.<sup>51</sup>

Elizabeth addressed the letter of 1552 to her "good sister" and almost insists that there was no ill will between the sisters with their differing natures and religions. The main reason for Elizabeth writing this letter was hearing that her sister is ill but also unhappy with a dispute that was occurring between their households. She then uses words like "unpleasant" and "fearful" to describe her sister's sickness, Elizabeth uses these phrases to show that she does empathize with her sister. She tries to prove that she is suffering because her sister is unwell. Elizabeth is apologetic to her sister about her manservant who was married to one of Mary's own servants. She gives the explanation that Jane Russell<sup>52</sup> is duty bound to obey her husband but is in the employ of the Princess who will always be first. Elizabeth gives this long explanation to tell Mary that she has approved her servant coming to see his wife at Mary's estate. She then thanks her sister for writing to her and almost apologizes for being annoying by saying that she is thankful for her sister writing to her even though it may be painful for her to do so. This entire letter is in deference to her older sister and Elizabeth bends to Mary's will by allowing her to have things the way she wanted. Elizabeth is worried

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<sup>51</sup> Mary and Elizabeth had a complicated relationship, and both share similar experiences in how they had been treated by their father. Both princesses faced alienation by being sent off the country estates and threats of disinheritance numerous times, Mary was declared a bastard when Henry VIII divorced her mother; Elizabeth was declared illegitimate after her mother was put on trial, convicted of treason, and executed. They remained friendly but politically were rivals due to their religion as well as their own political alliances.

<sup>52</sup> Mary's servant, married to William Russell, Elizabeth's Groom of the Chamber.

that she has caused offense and her younger brother was ill all the time, it is logical to argue that she had begun to wonder when Mary was going to become Queen.

Letter 11 was the last letter that Elizabeth would send to her younger brother before his death at the age of fifteen in July of 1553.<sup>53</sup> Edward was sick again, and Elizabeth sought to express surprise and concern in the letter she wrote to him.

Like as a shipman in stormy weather plucks down the sails, tarrying for better wind, so did I, most noble King, in my unfortunate chance a-Thursday pluck down the high sails of my joy and comfort...<sup>54</sup>

Elizabeth is conveying sadness at the idea that her brother is again suffering from disease, when she had been in such a happy state when she thought he was on the mend. She tells him that she feared for his life and she is never going to doubt his goodwill again. She writes, “For if your Grace’s advise that I should return (whose will is a commandment) had not been, I would not have made the half of my way the end of my journey.<sup>55</sup>” Elizabeth continued on explaining that she would have come to see him at court if he had not written to her and told her to return to Hatfield House, but because he is King and his word is law, she turned back around and did not go see him as to not anger him. Elizabeth ends the letter calling herself “Your Majesty’s humble sister to commandment.”<sup>56</sup> There were fears about who was to succeed Edward from 1551-1553 as his sicknesses became more frequent and severe. As Edward was so young there was no direct heir to the throne, he would therefore be

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<sup>53</sup> This letter is dated May or June of 1553. Edward became ill with a fever and cough in January 1553. He began feeling better in April and May, watching ships on the Thames, but on June 11 he relapsed. Edward VI made his last public appearance on July 1 of 1553. Edward succumbed to his illness in the evening of July 6, 1553 and was buried a month later at the Lady Chapel in Westminster Abbey. The cause of his death is uncertain but historians such as Chris Skidmore believe that he contracted tuberculosis after his bout of measles and then smallpox. The surgeon who opened Edward’s chest after his death found that, “the disease whereof his majesty dies was the disease of the lungs.” Chris Skidmore, *Edward VI: The Lost King of England*. (London: Weidenfield & Nicholson, 2007).

<sup>54</sup> May, *Selected Works*, 122.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 122.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 122.

presumably succeeded by his Catholic elder sister Mary. Given her religion and gender this was thought to be unacceptable by many at the court. To remedy this situation Edward signed an act of succession in June 1553 that eliminated both of his sisters from ascending to the throne in favor of their cousin, Lady Jane Grey. Elizabeth and Mary were excluded because of bastardy. Both Mary and Elizabeth were declared bastards under Henry VIII and never made legitimate again.

Through the machinations of John Dudley, Earl of Northumberland and Lord Protector of Edward VI, Jane Grey ascended to the throne of England on July 10, 1553 with her husband, Guildford Dudley, as Queen's Consort. They did not anticipate on how quickly their supporters would abandon Queen Jane for the claim of Mary to be queen. Shortly before Edward VI's death, Mary was summoned to London to visit her dying brother. She was warned that the summons was a pretext on which to capture her and thereby facilitate Lady Jane's accession. Mary instead went to East Anglia where she owned extensive estates and Dudley had ruthlessly put down Kett's Rebellion. The Privy Council of England suddenly changed sides and proclaimed Mary as queen on July 19 and so deposed Jane. Her father in law was executed less than a month later. Jane continued to be held in the Tower and was convicted of high treason in November 1553, which carried a sentence of death. Due to her support from her Catholic adherents, Mary ascended to the throne of England. Mary initially spared her life but once she began to be viewed as a threat her execution was carried out on February 12, 1554.<sup>57</sup>

Letter 12, in May's collection, introduced a new figure into Elizabeth's narrative as young royal, namely her cousin, Catherine Knollys. The exact date of this letter unknown but

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<sup>57</sup> Nicola Tallis, *Crown of Blood: The Deadly Inheritance of Lady Jane Grey*. (New York: Pegasus Books, 2017).

from the subject matter included within it the date can be discerned as being after the death of Edward VI in July 1553, in the letter Elizabeth mentions a journey, during Mary I's reign Catherine and her family travelled to Germany. Catherine was a staunch Protestant and was greatly affected by the death of Edward VI. Elizabeth attempts to assure her cousin that Catherine's choice to leave England due to fear of persecution during the reign of Mary, was just a test of her faith rather than an abandonment of her country, "Relieve your sorrow for your far journey with joy your short return and think this pilgrimage rather a proof of your friends than a leaving of your country."<sup>58</sup> Mary, as a devout Catholic, was determined to crush the Protestant faith. Elizabeth outwardly conformed by attending Mass as ordered by the queen<sup>59</sup> but resisted privately and remained loyal to her small group of friendly supporters. Elizabeth assured her cousin that distance and time would not affect the goodwill of her friends, there is "a old saying, when bale is lowest, boot is nearest when your need shall be most your shall find my friendship greaterest."<sup>60</sup> Her promise she writes was forever even if her power was small, she planned on her cousin being able to come back and welcomed with open arms. Elizabeth continued the use of the words small and power<sup>61</sup> even in this letter to her cousin who was far removed from the throne. She uses her classical learning by referring to Lethe's flood, the mythical river of forgetfulness in Hades. Without background knowledge of Greek mythology, Catherine would not have understood what Elizabeth was writing about which remains uncertain. She is writing to say that she will not

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<sup>58</sup> May, *Selected Works*, 114.

<sup>59</sup> David Loades, *Elizabeth I: The Golden Reign of Gloriana*. (London: The National Archives, 2003).

<sup>60</sup> An example of Elizabeth's habit of grafting superlatives onto comparative forms. "Greater" and "Greatest." May, *Selected Works*, 124.

<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth was trying to diminish her claim or access to any sort of power. Sometimes letters did not always go directly to the person they were addressed to and if a letter like this had fallen into an enemies hands Elizabeth would have been in grave danger.

forget about her cousin and her kindness while she is living on the Continent.<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth implies that she is hopeful for her cousin's return but also grieves the loss of a friendly voice. She signs the letter "your loving cousin and ready friend" invoking feelings of familiarity and comfort with her cousin. There is no fear that she might inadvertently say or do something that would put Elizabeth's person in danger. Elizabeth saw her cousin infrequently and only when they were both at Court together. This letter is less submissive in tone than the ones that she wrote to Catherine Parr, Edward Seymour, and Edward VI. Elizabeth is less afraid for her position when she wrote this letter and feels less inclined to censor herself.

Letter 13 is one of the most poignant and fearful Elizabeth wrote. It is addressed to Mary I and in it, Elizabeth is begging for her life and for her sister to not listen to lies that were being spread about her involvement in the rebellion. In 1554, Thomas Wyatt led an uprising in England over concern for Queen Mary's determination to wed Phillip of Spain. Mary's overthrow was implied in the rebellion, not an expressly stated goal. The rebels planned on marrying Elizabeth to Edward Courtenay, a Protestant lord, and placing her on the throne in her sister's stead. Elizabeth writes, "...I most humbly beseech your Majesty to verify in in me and to remember your last promise and my last demand that I be not condemned without answer and due proof..."<sup>63</sup> Elizabeth tells her that she wishes to plead her case in front of the Queen, that only she, the godly anointed monarch, can judge her answers to be true or not. "...therefore I humble beseech your Majesty to let me answer afore

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<sup>62</sup> Catherine and her family would not return to England until after the death of Mary I and the ascension of Elizabeth I in 1558. Catherine would become a Lady of the Queen's bedchamber and her husband Francis would become a Privy Councilor as well as the Vice Chamberlain of the household.

<sup>63</sup> May, *Selected Works*, 126.

yourself and not suffer me your counsellors, yea and that afore I go to the Tower (if it be possible), if not afore I be further condemned.”<sup>64</sup>”

The letter was written one day before Elizabeth was transported to the Tower of London, to be held on precautionary measures. It can be inferred that Elizabeth greatly feared being held in the Tower, as her own mother was held there and then executed on possibly false charges when Elizabeth was aged 3. Elizabeth asked her sister to use her conscience to guide her and not the wills and lies of others. This goes against the notion that women of the time only used their emotions to make decisions, women were not supposed to be guided by intelligence or wit.

Also I must humbly beseech your Highness to pardon this my boldness, which my innocency procures me to do, together with hope of your natural kindness, which I trust will not see me cast away without desert, which what it is I would desire no more of God but that you truly knew, which thing I think and believe you shall never by report know unless yourself you hear.<sup>65</sup>

Elizabeth was in a dire situation and that realization comes through very clearly in the supplication for an audience with Mary before she decided to do anything that would cause harm to Elizabeth’s body. She used the example of Edward Seymour and Thomas Seymour, writing that she had heard the story told that Edward Seymour had said that if he had been allowed to speak to his brother that he would not have suffered or died but due to the persuasions of others, he became convinced that if Thomas survived he would not be safe. Elizabeth tells her sister the trials of the Seymour family are not to be compared to her royal highness. Elizabeth includes the phrase “evil persuasions.”

If Elizabeth was positive that her sister believed in her innocence, she would not have been insistent upon their meeting in person. Knowing the charges against her stemmed from

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 126.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 127.

the failed rebellion by Wyatt, Elizabeth makes the continued claim that she never wrote or received any letters from him or the French King. "...and to this truth I will stand in to my death."<sup>66</sup> The case against Elizabeth was aggravated because a copy of one of her letters to Mary had been discovered among papers forwarded to the King of France by his ambassador to England. Mary's government took this as evidence that Elizabeth had been conspiring with the French.<sup>67</sup> Mary later declared war on France in support of her husband and against the advice of her own councilors. Elizabeth signs her letter calling herself, "Your Highness' most faithful subject that hath been From the beginning and will be to my end."<sup>68</sup> The use of the word subject is used to purvey the idea that Elizabeth is subordinate under the tutelage of the queen and would remain that way until her death. Use of the word subject also conveys that Elizabeth was not a traitor to the Catholic faith and remained dutiful and devout.

Elizabeth remained a prisoner in the Tower for two months until May 19 when she was put under house arrest and confinement at Woodstock Manor.<sup>69</sup> The marriage of Phillip of Spain to Mary of England took place in July. Elizabeth was at Woodstock under the charge of Sir Henry Bedingfield for almost a year until she was recalled to court in April of 1555 to attend the final stages of Mary's pregnancy. When it became clear that Mary's pregnancy would bear no child, according to Antoine Noailles, the French Ambassador, Elizabeth's succession seemed assured.<sup>70</sup> Elizabeth was at court until October of 1555, and apparently restored to her sister's favor. Mary then allowed Elizabeth to return to Hatfield.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 127.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 128-129, England and France had a very volatile relationship during the sixteenth century. Henry VIII invaded France in 1513 to defend the Papacy from its enemies and France with military force. -J.D. Mackie, *Earlier Tudors, 1485-1558*. (London: Oxford Press, 1952).

<sup>68</sup> May, *Selected Works*, 128.

<sup>69</sup> A royal residence built in Oxfordshire built as a hunting lodge by Henry I in 1129.

<sup>70</sup> Anna Whitelock, *Mary Tudor: England's First Queen*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2009).

The last letter, to be analyzed, Steven May has numbered as Letter 14, comes almost two and a half years after letter 13 and two years before Mary I would die, and Elizabeth I would ascend to the throne of England. In the years leading up to this letter, the Tudor family and England would go through several traumatic events. Mary I in her religious zealotry would start burning Protestants to force her country to embrace Catholicism, one of the most notable being Thomas Cranmer.<sup>71</sup> In May of 1556, Mary's government foiled yet another plot by Henry Dudley and Sir Anthony Kingston to place Elizabeth on the throne. Again, members of Elizabeth's personal retinue, including Catherine Ashley, were arrested and interrogated. Elizabeth, however, merely found herself and her household placed under the control of Mary's privy councilor, Sir Thomas Pope. Mary assured her that she had full confidence in Elizabeth's innocence of any part in the intrigue.

The letter relies heavily upon religious imagery and scriptural knowledge to pull at Mary's heartstrings and appeal to her religious nature. Elizabeth started off the letter by calling her sister "most noble queen" and writes, she would cause no dishonor to any she felt was truly worthy of her time, meaning that anyone that was truly loyal would continue to find themselves in beneficial situations. There is then a comparison made between the pagans of Roman times and Christians of modern times and how those that choose to remain Protestant or go against their anointed ruler should be punished. Elizabeth continues explaining that she was not a part of this dangerous group and how she believes it is just someone's way of spiting her,

Of this I assure your Majesty though it be my part above the rest to bewail such thing though my name had not been in them, yet it vexeth me to much than the devil own

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<sup>71</sup> (1489-1556) Former Archbishop of Canterbury and major leader in the English Reformation. Put on trial for treason and heresy and imprisoned for two years. Made several recantations after being put under pressure from the Church. On the day of his execution, he withdrew his recantations, died a heretic to Roman Catholics and a martyr for the principles of the English Reformation.

me such a hate as to put me in any part of his mischievous instigations, whom as I profess him my foe, that is all Christians' enemy so wish I he had some other way invented to spite me.<sup>72</sup>

This is the most tenuous of the letters, it comes after another plot to depose the queen that placed an unsuspecting Elizabeth at the center. Elizabeth used imagery from the Bible to relay to her sister that there are evil forces at hand, refers to the lamb trapped in the horns of Basan's bulls<sup>73</sup> She remains happy that her sister remains in good health and thanks God that he allows this to remain so. Elizabeth professed that anyone who had bad intentions towards the queen is not a friend of hers but a foe. At the end of her letter Elizabeth reminded her sister, the queen, that she has been a faithful subject since the beginning of her reign even though outside forces have not always allowed her to be viewed that way. She ends her letter saying "And thus I commit your Majesty to God's tuition, whom I beseech long time to preserve..."<sup>74</sup> Elizabeth is saying that she hopes that her sister remains alive and healthy and in good spirits. She is trying to say that she wishes no ill will against the queen and wishes to remain in good graces so as not to place herself into harm. Elizabeth attempted to distance herself from any plot or wrongdoing to the queen, she knew that any sort of ill action that led back to her would have potentially led to harm.

This is the last letter analyzed in the sample before Elizabeth became queen on November 7, 1558. The letters span just over a decade in the life of Elizabeth and show many changes that occurred in that short period of time. Through analysis of these letters, the people they were written to and the content within each one a great attention and awareness can be detected. First Elizabeth was continually unsure whether she would remain in the line of succession. As the heir apparent to Mary, she was being used as a political pawn in the

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<sup>72</sup> May, *Selected Works*, 131.

<sup>73</sup> Psalm 22:12, "Many bulls surround me, strong bulls of Bashan encircle me." An aggressive enemy.

<sup>74</sup> May, *Selected Works*, 131.

plots of others, sent to the Tower and put under house arrest, before finally being allowed to return to her home. On November 17, 1558 she became Queen of England and reigned for forty-five years.

Analysis of the letters and poetic monologue provide a valuable insight into the mind of Elizabeth. She carefully constructed letters dependent upon the recipient. Even as a child at age eleven, Elizabeth was able to profess her love and devotion for her stepmother, but she also knew that she was in a position of subservience and provided this in the form of the translation of *Le Miroir de l'âme Pécheresse*. Elizabeth carefully chose her words so she would not provide any evidence to prove that she was involved in any plots against the Crown or the Council. She had a few occasions where she was greatly afraid that something dire would happen to her and this is conveyed through these letters. Elizabeth discovered how to balance her roles as sister, princess, woman, intellectual, cousin, daughter, and submissive through her writing. Careful analysis of the letters proves that she knew that her position was always perilous and usually in flux. This insight never left her during Elizabeth's long reign and to some extent may explain her reluctance to place herself under the control of a husband.

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## Appendix: Letters for Analysis

Letter 1. Princess Elizabeth's dedicatory letter prefaced to the holograph "Glass of the Sinful Soul," presented as a New Year's gift to Queen Catherine Parr, December 31, 1544.

To our most Noble and virtuous Queen, Katherine, Elizabeth, her humble daughter, wisheth perpetual felicity and everlasting joy.

Not only knowing the affectuous will and fervent zeal the which your Highness hath towards all godly learning, as also my duty towards you (most gracious and sovereign princess), but knowing also that pusillanimity and idleness are most repugnant unto a reasonable creature, and that (as the philosopher sayeth) even as an instrument of iron or of other metal waxeth soon rusty unless it be continually occupied, even so shall the wit of a man or woman wax dull and unapt to do or understand anything perfittly unless it be always occupied upon some other manner of study, which things considered hath moved so small a portion as God hath lent me to prove what I could do. And therefore have I (as for assay or beginning, following the right notable saying of the proverb aforesaid), translated this little book out of French rhyme into English prose, joining the sentences together as well as the capacity of my simple wit and small learning could extend themselves.

The which book is entitled or named the *mirior* or glass of the sinful soul, wherein is contained how she (beholding and contemplating what she is) doth perceive how of herself and of her own strength she can do nothing that good is or prevaileth for her salvation for her salvation unless it be through the grace of God, whose mother, daughter, sister, and wife by the scriptures she proveth herself to be. Trusting also that through His incomprehensible love, grace, and mercy she (being called from sin to repentance) doth faithfully hope to be saved. And although I know that as for my part which I have wrought in it, (as well spiritual as manual), there is nothing done as it should be nor else worthy to come in your Grace's hands, but rather all unperfit and uncorrect, yet do I trust also that albeit it is like a work which is but new begun and shapen, that the file of your excellent wit and godly learning in the reading of it (if so vouchsafe your Highness to do) shall rub out, polish, and mend (or else cause to mend) the words (or rather the order of my writing), the which I know in many places to be rude and nothing done as it should be. But I hope that after to have been in your Grace's hand there shall be nothing in it worthy of reprehension and that in the meanwhile no other (but your Highness only) shall read it or see it, lest my faults be known of many. Then shall they be better excused (as my confidence is in your Grace's accustomed benevolence) than if I should bestow a whole year in writing or inventing way for to excuse them. Praying God almighty the Maker and Creator of all things to grant unto your Highness the same New Year's Day a lucky and a prosperous issue and continuance of many years in good health and continuance of many years in good health and continual joy and all to His honor, praise, and glory. From Ashridge the last day of the year of our Lord God 1544.

Letter 2. Elizabeth to Queen Catherine Parr, June (?) 1548

Although I could not be plentiful in giving thanks for the manifold kindness received at your Highness' hand at my departure, yet I am something to be borne withal, for truly I was replete with sorrow to depart from your Highness, especially seeing you undoubtful of health, and albeit I answered little, I weighed it more deeper when you said you would warn me of all evils that you should hear of me, for if your Grace had not a good opinion of me you would not have offered friendship to me that way that all men judge the contrary. But what may I more say than thank God for providing such friends to me, desiring God to enrich me with their long life and me grace to be in heart no less thankful to receive it than I now am glad in writing to shew it. And although I have plenty of matter, her I will stay, for I know you are not quiet to read.

From Cheston this present Saturday.

Your Highness humble daughter  
Elizabeth

Letter 3. Elizabeth to Edward Seymour, duke of Somerset, Lord Protector, after May 1548

My very good Lord,

Many lines will not serve to render the least part of the thanks that your Grace hath deserved of me, most especially for that you have been careful for my health and sending unto me not only your comfortable letters, but also physicians as Doctor Bill, whose diligence and pain has been a great part of my recovery, for whom I do most heartily thank your Grace, desiring you to give him thanks for me, who can ascertain you of mine estate of health wherefore I will not write it. And although I be most bounden to you in this time of my sickness, yet I may not be unthankful for that your Grace hath made expedition for my patent. With my most hearty thanks and commendations to you and to my good Lady your wife. Most heartily fare your well, from Cheshunt this present Friday.

Your assured friend to my power,

Elizabeth

Letter 4. Elizabeth to Edward Seymour, duke of Somerset, Lord Protector, January 28, 1549.

My Lord,

Your great gentleness and goodwill toward me as well in this thing as in other things I do understand, for the which, even as I ought, so I do give you most humble thanks. And whereas your Lordship willeth and counseleth me, as a earnest friend, to declare that I have declared to Master Tyrwhitt, I shall most willingly do it.

I declared unto him first that after that the Cofferer had declared unto me what my Lord Admiral answered for Allen's matter, and for Durham Place, that it was appointed to be a mint, he told me that my Lord Admiral did offer me his house for time being with the King's Majesty. And further said and asked me whether if the Council did consent that I should have my Lord Admiral, whether I would consent to it or no. I answered that I would not tell him what my mind was, and I inquired further of him what he meant to ask me that question or who bade him say so, but that he perceived (as he thought) by my Lord Admiral's inquiring whether my patent were sealed or no, and debating what he spent in his house, and inquiring what was spent in my house, that he was given that way rather than otherwise. And as concerning Kat Ashley, she never advised me unto it but always (when any talked of my marriage) that she would never have me marry neither in England nor out of England without the consent of the King's Majesty, your Graces, and the Council's, and after the Queen was departed, when I asked of her what news she heard from London, she answered merrily, "They say there that your Grace shall have my Lord Admiral, and that he will come shortly to woo you." And moreover I said unto him that the Cofferer sent a letter hither that my Lord said that he would come this way as he went down to the country. Then I bade her write as she thought best, and bade her show it me when she had done. So she writ that she thought it not best for fear of suspicion, and so it went forth. And my Lord Admiral, after he heard that, asked of the Cofferer why he might not come as well to me as to my sister, and then I desired Kat Ashley to write again (lest my Lord might think that she knew more in it than he) that she knew nothing in it but suspicion. And also I told Master Tyrwhitt that to the effect of the matter I never consented unto any such thing without the Council's consent thereunto.

And as for Kat Ashley or the Cofferer, they never told me that they would practice it. These be the things which I both declared to Master Tyrwhitt and also whereof my conscience beareth me witness, which I would not for all earthly things offend in anything, for I know I have a soul to save as well as other folks have, wherefore I will above all things have respect unto the same.

If there be any more things which I can remember I will either write it myself or cause Master Tyrwhitt to write it. Master Tyrwhitt and others have told me that there goeth rumors abroad which be greatly both against mine honor and honesty, which above all other things I esteem, which be these, that I am in the Tower and with child by my Lord Admiral. My Lord, these are shameful slanders, for which besides the great desire I have to see the King's Majesty, I shall most heartily desire your

Lordship that I may come to the court after your first determination, that I may shew myself there as I am. Written in haste from Hatfield that 28 of January.

Your Assured friend to my little power,

Elizabeth

Letter 5. Elizabeth to Lord Protector Edward Seymour, February 6, 1549.

My Lord, I have received your gentle letter and also your message by Master Tyrwhitt for the which two things especially (although for many other things) I cannot give your Lordship sufficient thanks. And whereas your grace doth will me to credit Master Tyrwhitt, I have done so and will do as he willeth me (as he doth not) to nothing but to that which is for mine honor and honesty. And even as I said to him, and did write to your lordship, so I do write now again that when I have forgotten I assure your Grace I will declare them most willingly, for I would not (as I trust you have not) so evil a opinion of me that I would conceal anything that I knew, for it were to no purpose; and surely forgetfulness may well cause me to hide things, but undoubtedly else I will declare all that I know.

From Hatfield the 6 of February.

Your assured friend to my little power.

Elizabeth

Letter 6. Elizabeth to Lord Protector Edward Seymour, February 21, 1549.

My Lord,

Having received your Lordship's letters, I perceive in them your goodwill toward me because you declare to me plainly your mind in this thing, and again for that you would not wish that I should do anything that should not seem good unto the Council, for the which thing I give you most hearty thanks. And whereas I do understand that you do take in evil part the letters that I did write unto your Lordship, I am very sorry that you should take them so, for my mind was to declare unto you plainly, as I thought, in that thing, which I did also the more willingly because (as I writ to you) you desired me to be plain with you in all things. And as concerning that point that you writ that I seem to stand in mine own wit in being so well assured of mine own self, I did assure me of myself no more that I trust the truth shall try. And to say that which I knew of myself I did not think should have displeased the Council of your Grace.

And surely the cause why that I was sorry that there should be any such about me was because that I thought the people will say that I deserved through my lewd demeanor to have such a one, and not that I mislike anything that your Lordship of the Council shall think good, for I know that you and the Council are charged with me or that I take upon me to rule myself, for I know they are most deceived that trusteth most in themselves, wherefore I trust you shall never find that fault in me, to which thing I do not see that your Grace has made any direct answer at this time. And seeing they make so evil reports already, shall be but a increasing of their evil tongues, howbeit you did write that if I would bring forth any that had reported it, you and the Council would see it redressed, which thing though I can easily do it, I would be loath to do it for because it is mine own cause, and again that should be but a breeding of a evil name of me that I am glad to punish them and so get the evil will of the people, which thing I would be loath to have.

But if it mought so seem good unto your Lordship and the rest of the Council to send forth a proclamation into the countries that they refrain their tongues, declaring how the tales be but lies, it should make both the people think that you and the Council have great regard that no such rumors should be spread of any of the King's Majesty sisters as I am, though unworthy. And also I should think myself to receive such friendship at your hands as you have promised me, although your Lordship hath shewed me great already. Howbeit I am ashamed to ask it any more because I see you are not so well minded thereunto. And as concerning that you say that I give folks occasion to think in refusing the good to uphold the evil, I am not of so simple understanding nor I would that your Grace should have so evil a opinion of me that I have so little respect to mine own honesty that I would

maintain if I had sufficient promise of the same, and so your grace shall prove me when it comes to the point.

And thus I bid you farewell, desiring God always to assist you in all you affairs. Written in haste from Hatfield this 21 of February.

Your assured friend to my little power,  
Elizabeth

Letter 7. Elizabeth to Lord Protector Edward Seymour, March 7, 1549

My Lord,

I have a request to make unto your Grace which fear has made me omit til this time for two causes, the one because I saw that my request for the rumors which were spread abroad of me took so little place, which thing when I considered, I thought I should little profit in any other suit; howbeit, now I understand that there is a proclamation for them (for the which I give your Grace and the rest of the Council most humble thanks), I am the bolder to speak for another thing. And the other was because peradventure your Lordship and the rest of the Council will think that I favor her evil-doing for whom I shall speak for, which is for Catherine Ashley, that it would please your Grace and the rest of the Council to be good unto her, which thing I do not to favor her in any evil (for that I would be sorry to do), but for these considerations which follow, the which hope doth teach me in saying that I ought not to doubt but that your Grace and the rest of the Council will think that I do it for three other considerations: first because that she hath been with me a long time and many years, and hath taken great labor and pain in bringing of me up in learning and honesty, and therefore I ought of very duty speak for her, for Saint Gregory sayeth that we are more bound to them that bringeth us up well than to our parents, for our parents do that which is natural for them, that is, bringeth us into this world, but our bringers-up are a cause to make us live well in it. The second is because I think that whatsoever she hath done in my Lord Admiral's matter as concerning the marrying of me, she did it because, knowing him to be one of the Council, she thought he would not go about any such thing without he had the Council's consent thereunto, for I have heard her many times say that she would never have me marry in any place without your Grace's and the Council's consent. The third cause is because that it shall and doth make men think that I am not clear of the deed myself, but that it is pardoned in me because of my youth, because that she I loved so well is in such a place. Thus hope prevailing more with me than fear hath won the battle, and I have at this time gone forth with it. Which I pray God be taken no other ways that it is meant. Written in haste from Hatfield that 7 day of March.

Also if I may be so bold, not offending, I beseech your Grace and the rest of the Council to be good to Master Ashley her husband, which because he is my kinsman I would be glad he should a { }  
Your assured friend to my little power,

Elizabeth

Letter 8. Elizabeth to King Edward VI, May 15, 1551

Like as the rich man that daily gathereth riches to riches and to one bag of money layeth a great sort till it come to infinite, so methinks your majesty, not being sufficed with many benefits and gentleness shewed to me afore this time, doth now increase them in asking and desiring where you may bid and command, requiring a thing not worthy for your Highness' request—my picture, I mean, in which if the inward good mind toward your Grace might as well be declared as the outward face and countenance shall be seen, I would nor have tarried the commandment but prevent it, nor have been the last to grant but the first to offer, but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present. For though from the grace of the picture the colors may fade by time, may give by weather, may be spotted by chance, yet the other nor time with her swift wings shall overtake, nor the misty clouds with their lourings may darken, nor chance with her slipperly foot may overthrow.

Of this, although yet proof could not be great because the occasions hath been but small, notwithstanding as a dog hath a day, so may I perchance have time to declare it in deeds where now I do write them but in words. And further, I shall most humble beseech your majesty that when you shall look on my picture you will vouchsafe to think that as you have but the outward shadow of the body afore you, so my inward mind wisheth that the body itself were oftener in your presence. Howbeit because both my so being, I think, could do your Majesty little pleasure, though myself great good, and again because I see you yet not the time agreeing thereunto, I shall learn to follow this saying of Horace, *Feras non culpes quod vitari non potest*.

And thus I will (troubling your Majesty, I fear), end with my most humble thanks, beseeching God long to preserve you to His honor, to your comfort, to the realm's profit, and to my joy. From Hatfield, this 15 day of May.

Your Majesty's most humble, sister  
and servant, Elizabeth

Letter 9. Elizabeth to King Edward VI, April 21, 1552

What cause I had of sorry when I heard first of your Majesty's sickness all men might guess, but none but myself could feel, which to declare were or might seem a point of flattery, and therefore to write it I omit. But as the sorrow could not be little because the occasions were many, so is the joy great to hear of the good escape out of the perilous diseases. And that I am fully satisfied and well assured of the same by your Grace's own hand I must needs give you my most humble thanks, assuring your Majesty that a precious jewel at another time could not so well have contented as your letter in this case hath comforted me. For now do I say with Saint Austin that a disease is to be counted no sickness that shall cause a better health when it is past than was assured afore it came. For afore you had them, every man thought that that should not be eschewed of you that was not scaped of many. But since you have had them, doubt of them is past and hope is given to all men that it was a purgation by these means for other, worse diseases which might happen this year. Moreover, I consider that as a good father that loves his child dearly doth punish him sharply so God, favoring your Majesty greatly, hath chastened you straitly, and as a father doth it for the further good of his child, so hath God prepared this for the better health of your Grace. And in this hope I commit your Majesty to his hands, most humbly craving pardon of your Grace that I did write no sooner, desiring you to attribute the fault to my evil head and not to my slothful hand.  
From Hatfield this 21 of April,

Your Majesty's most humble  
sister to command,  
Elizabeth

Letter 10. Elizabeth to Princess Mary, October 27, 1552 (?)

Good Sister,

As to hear of your sickness is unpleasant to me, so is nothing fearful for that I understand it is your old guest that is wont oft to visit you, whose coming though it be oft, yet is it never welcome, but notwithstanding it is comfortable for that *Iacula praevisa minus feriunt*. And as I do understand your need of Jane Russell's service, so am I sorry that it is by man's occasion letted, which if I had known afore, I would have caused his will give place to need of her service, for as it is her duty to obey his commandment, so is it his part to attend your pleasure. And as I confess it were meter for him to go to her since she attends upon you, so indeed he required the same, but for that divers of his fellows had business abroad, that made his tarrying at home.

Good sister, though I have good cause to thank you for your oft sending to me, yet I have more occasion to render you my hearty thanks for your gentle writing, which how painful it is to you I may well guess by myself, and you may well see by writing so oft how pleasant it is to me. And thus

I end to trouble you, desiring God to send you as well to do as you can think and wish or desire or pray. From Ashridge scribbled this 27<sup>th</sup> of October.

Your loving sister. Elizabeth

Letter 11. Elizabeth to King Edward VI, May or June (?), 1553

Like as a shipman in stormy weather plucks down the sails, tarrying for better wind, so did I, most noble King, in my unfortunate chance a-Thursaday pluck down the high sails of my joy and comfort, and do trust one day that as troublesome waves have repulsed me backward, so a gentle wind will bring me forward to my haven. Two chief occasions moved me much and grieved me greatly, the one for that I doubted your Majesty's health, the other because for all my long tarrying I went without that I came for. Of the first I am relieved in a part, both that I understood of your health and also that your Majesty's lodging is far from my Lord Marke[ss's] chamber. Of my grief I am not eased, but the best is that whatsoever other folks will suspect, I intend not to fear your Grace's goodwill, which as I know that I never deserved to faint, so I trust will stick by me. For if your Grace's advise that I should return (whose will is a commandment) had not been, I would not have made the half of my way the end of my journey. And thus as one desirous to hear of your Majesty's health, though unfortunate to see it, I shall pray God forever to preserve you. From Hatfield this present Saturday.

Your Majesty's humble sister to commandment

Elizabeth

Letter 12. Elizabeth to Lady Catherine Knollys, 1553

Relieve your sorrow for your far journey with joy of your short return and think this pilgrimage rather a proof of your friends than a leaving of your country. The length of time and distance of place separates not the love of friends nor deprives not the shew of goodwill. A old saying, when bale is lowest, boot is nearest, when your need shall be most, you shall find my friendship greaterest. Let other promise and I will do, in words not mo, in deeds as much. My power but small, my love as great as they whose gifts may tell their friendships' tale Let will supply all other want, and oft sending take the lieu of often sights. Your messengers shall not return empty nor yet your desires unaccomplished. Lethe's flood hath here no course, good memory hath greatest stream, and to conclude—a word that hardly I can say, I am driven by need to write—farewell it is, which, in the sense one way I wish, the other way I grieve.

Your loving cousin and ready friend,

Cor rotto.

Letter 13. Elizabeth to Queen Mary I, March 17, 1554

If any ever did try this old saying that a king's word was more than another man's oath, I most humbly beseech your Majesty to verify it in me and to remember your last promise and my last demand that I be not condemned without answer and due proof, which it seems that now I am, for that without cause proved I am by your Council from you commanded to go unto the Tower, a place more wonted for a false traitor than a true subject which, though I know I deserve it not, yet in the face of all this realm appears that it is proved, which I pray God I may die the shamefullest death that ever any died afore I may mean any such thing. And to this present hour I protest afore God ( who shall judge my truth whatsoever malice shall devise) that I never practiced, concealed, nor consented to anything that might be prejudicial to your person any way, or dangerous to the state by any mean, and therefore I humbly beseech your Majesty to let me answer afore yourself and not suffer me to trust your counsellors, yea and that afore I go to the Tower (if it be possible), if not afore I be further condemned; howbeit I trust assuredly your Highness will give me leave to do it afore I go for that thus shamefully I may not be cried out on as now I shall be, yea and without cause.

Let conscience move your Highness to take some better way with me than to make me be condemned in all men's sight afore my desert known. Also I most humbly beseech your Highness to pardon this my boldness, which my innocency procures me to do, together with hope of your natural kindness, which I trust will not see me cast away without desert, which what it is I would desire no more of God but that you truly knew, which thing I think and believe you shall never by report know unless by yourself you hear. I have heard in my time of many cast away for want of coming to the presence of their prince, and in late days I heard my Lord of Somerset say that if his brother had been suffered to speak with him he had never suffered, but the persuasions were made to him so great that he was brought in belief that he could not live safely if the Admiral lived, and that made him give his consent in his death. Though these persons are not to be compared to his death. Though these persons are not to be compared to your Majesty, yet I pray God as evil persuasions persuade not one sister against the other, and all for that they have heard false report and not harkene[d] to the truth known.

Therefore once again kneeling with humbleness of my heart because I am not suffered to bow the knees of my body, I humbly crave to speak with your Highness, which I would not be so bold to desire if I knew not myself most clear as I know myself most true. And as for the traitor Wyatt, he might peradventure write me a letter, but on my faith I never received any from him, and as for the copy of my letter sent to the French King, I pray God confound me eternally if ever I sent him word, message, token, or letter by any means, and to this my truth I will stand in to my death.

I humbly crave but only one word of answer from yourself.

Your Highness' most faithful subject that hath been  
From the beginning and will be to my end.  
Elizabeth

Letter 14. Elizabeth to Queen Mary, August 2, 1556

When I revolve in mind (most noble Queen) the old love of paynims to their prince and the reverent fear of Romans to their Senate, I can but must for my part and blush for theirs, to see the rebellious hearts and devilish intents of Christians in names, but Jews indeed, toward their anointed king, which methinks, if they had feared God thought they could not have loved the state, they should for dread of their own plague have refrained that wickedness which their bounden duty to your Majesty hath not restrained. But when I call to remembrance that the devil, *tenquam leo rugiens circumit querens quem deuorare potest*, I do the less marvel though he have gotten such novices into his professed house, as vessels (without God's grace) more apt to serve his palace than meet to inhabit English land. I am the bolder to call them his imps for that St. Paul sayeth *seditiosi filij sunt diaboli* and since I have so good a buckler I fear the less to enter into their judgment.

Of this I assure your Majesty though it be my part above the rest to bewail such things though my name had not been in them, yet it vexeth me too much than the devil owen me such a hate as to put me in any part of his mischievous instigations, whom as I profess him my foe, that is all Christians' enemy, so wish I he had some other way invented to spite me. But since it hath pleased God thus to bewray their malice afore they finish their purpose, I most humbly thank Him both that He hath ever thus preserved your Majesty through His aid much like a lamb from the horns of these Basan's bulls, and also stirs up the hearts of your loving subjects to resist them and deliver you to His honor and their shame. The intelligence of which proceeding from your Majesty deseveeth more humble thanks than with my pen I can render, which as infinite I will leave to number. And among earthly things I chiefly wish this one, that there were a good surgeons for making anatomies of hearts that might shew my thoughts to your Majesty as there are expert physicians of the bodies able to express the inward grieves of their maladies to their patient. For then I doubt not but know well that whatsoever other should suggest by malice, yet your majesty should be sure by knowledge so that the more such misty clouds obfuscates the clear light of my truth, the more my tried thoughts should glister to the dimming of their hidden malice.

But since wishes are vain and desires oft fails, I must crave that my deeds may supply that my thoughts cannot declare, and they be not misdeemed there as the facts have been so well tried. And

like as I have been so well tried. And like as I have been your faithful subject from the beginning of your reign, so shall no wicked persons cause me to change to the end of my life. And thus I commit your Majesty to God's tuition, whom I beseech long time to preserve, ending with the new remembrance of my old suit more for that it should not be forgotten than for that I think it not remembered. From Hatfield this present Sunday the second day of August.

Your Majesty's obedient subject and humble sister,

Elizabeth

## VITA

Kylie E. Lyle was born on June 25, 1990 in Kansas City, Missouri. Educated in public schools, Ms. Lyle graduated from Raytown Senior High School in Raytown, Missouri in 2008. She earned two Associate degrees from Kansas City Kansas Community College, an Associate of General Studies in 2010 and an Associate of Arts in Sociology in 2011. Ms. Lyle then transferred to the University of Missouri-Kansas City in August 2012 where she received her Bachelor of Art in Secondary Social Studies Education in 2014. She also received her teaching credentials to teach high school Social Studies.

Ms. Lyle returned to the workforce after receiving her bachelor's degree and began the pursuit of her Master of Art in History in 2015. Upon completion of her degree, Ms. Lyle plans on pursuing her career in teaching at the high school or community college level.