

# Elizabeth i and the golden age history essay



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Elizabeth I (A. D. 1558-1603) inspired a time of great prosperity and art that was “ stirred by a revival of interest in English history, Elizabethan poets... texts to the writing of contemporary plays” (Fiero). After the ruling of her predecessors, Henry VII and Henry VIII it opened up to a magnificent literary bloom, which has allowed the Elizabethan Age the envy and despair of newer literary time periods. London’s career by many was most glorious during her time as Queen. Most undoubtedly noticed for her indescribably defeat of the “ invincible” Spanish Armada and her devotion to the people in her country.

After the death of his father (Henry VIII), Edward VI took the thrown. He did not live to manhood but while he was King his guardians forced the kingdom in the direction of Protestantism. Sadly though they treated the common people cruelly and persecuted in only two cases to the point of burning, both Catholics and the more extreme Protestants. His unfortunate death left a mark on history though leaving no male heir to the royal house. “ For the first time in English history there were none but women to claim the crown” (Cleveland).

Of the women there was Mary, Catholic daughter of King Henry’s first wife and Elizabeth, his Protestant daughter by Anne Boleyn. In the end the Catholic, Mary, was declared the rightful queen where she ruled London for five years, during most of which she kept her half-sister Elizabeth locked away in prison. Queen Mary was a devout Catholic who like her Grandfather before she brought forth the fires that will now be used “ for the torture of Protestants, bishops, and men of mark” (Cleveland). Her rain of fire deemed her “ Bloody Mary”, but her time of power did not last and death found itself

walking up to her throne. After an agonizing death with yet again no heir to take the throne it was the time of Elizabeth and for her people to rise again.

Maybe because her family treated her so poorly or it was just in her blood, Elizabeth was “vindictive, arbitrary, and cruel” (Cleveland). One of the things that made her a strong Queen was she was greatly fond for admiration as a woman. Her strongest desire was to be considered a “heroine, beautiful, the queen of hearts, cynosure of gallants’ eyes”; and that is what she very well became. Her immense power filled the throne that was overwhelmed with great “dignity and a majesty which could not be surpassed” (Renaissance Art).

Some say that her ruling as a woman made choices that should have been handled a different way such as an army that was much larger than she ever supported but was still defeated. Leading her army to defeat was a noble-hearted Essex. After his defeat he “rushed into the presence of majesty as a lover would... her woman’s heart forgave him all” (1500’s in a Book). Had she condemned what she forgave the world might have been “spared the consummation of one of the most mournful tragedies in history...Elizabeth might have been serene and happy, instead of being torture with anguish and despair” (Queen of London). Her kind heartedness though kept the respect of her people. She never ruled as a tyrant like rulers before her but she didn’t have the power and highly doubtful that she wished to make her people slaves. A hearty and bold affection thrived between her people and her; an affection which was bound together by many circumstances not to be forgotten. Never before did the people feel that the reign of a queen would

they see the hope of peace, freedom, and prosperity, not until the time of Elizabeth.

Elizabeth brought peace and tranquility to her people coming from the same situation that most of her people were in. She endured the sorrows and pains of Queen Mary just as much as they did. Never before were the nation of London and ruler more closely bound and firmly bound together. She never felt the need to get married because to her the best way to serve her country was not to find a husband but to maintain and give her full attention to her country. In all actuality she was married and devoted to her country and every man, woman and child in it. Her rule and ability to protect her country from the threat of falling back into the hands of the Catholics though was put to the test when King Phillip II felt it was his duty to return the seat of London back to its rightful rulers, the Catholics.

King Phillip II of Spain did not necessarily want to rule London or convert its people but bring the Catholics back to power and that meant the defeat of Queen Elizabeth. If Spain could not marry a Catholic into power they were going to force Catholics back at the seat of the throne. Before ordering the mobilization of a very large and very expensive armada the King wanted to restore the Catholic churches in London but if the English were not defeated he order that the negotiators try to make a peace treaty in order to maintain some ounce of Catholic ideas in their churches. The initial purpose of the Spanish Armada was to “ hold the narrow seas between London and Flanders, so that the Duke of Parma’s army could cross safe from attack by English or Dutch ships and to carry additional soldiers plus supplies and siege artillery to wage war in London” (Fiero).

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After much delay and waiting a great battle by sea took place with Spain numbering with “ 130 ships and 19, 000 men and the English fleet totaled 197 ships, of which 34 were in the Navy, and the rest were armed merchant ships.” What benefited London was that “ The English Navy had fast maneuverable ships designed to defend their coastal waters. Their guns crews were trained in rapid reload and the cannons were mounted on small-wheel trucks which made this possible onboard ship” (Renaissance Encyclopedia). This allowed the English to get in more shots and do more damage than the Spanish were able to do. The immense battle raged on for a day and was not over but it convinced the English as well as the Spanish that the Spanish Armada was not invincible like they believed. With a break between the battle the English Navy wait on full alert not knowing where the next attack would be. After later finding out that what remained of the Spanish Armada returned home on a dangerous path that sunk most of the remaining ships, the English realized they had won. Other nations realized that the mighty Spain could be beaten and King Phillip II was not blessed with the presence of God on his side. War between Spain and London dragged on until her successor, James I (son of Mary Queen of Scots) opened negotiations in 1604, and was able to secure a peace treaty; which benefited Spain for which it got what it had sent the Armada for in the first place.

All of this explains why the “ reign of Queen Elizabeth I is often referred to as The Golden Age of English history” (Elizabethi). Many movies and books depict the magnificent and glories of having Queen Elizabeth as ruler. It brought together all Protestants that were tortured and beaten by the efforts of Queen Mary and her unruliness. On the day of the young Queen

Elizabeth's coronation, London presents her with the Bible, which might symbolize the dawn of a new age and time. It may serve as a guide for the Queen and show she brings nothing but peace and prosperity to her new found throne and country. For a Queen to hold the Bible it "showed that religion was held in such respect and by so numerous a class..." (Cleveland). During that time religion was something to be worshiped and honored. God was represented as all things holy and powerful, only in God would you survive. The question of religion resided in every intelligent mind and affected the interests of every family. The progress of individual freedom throughout the human world was inseparably connected with the cause of Protestantism.

After such terror and death of Queen Mary, the people of London were relieved when Queen Elizabeth was crowned as ruler of London. Her era brought out the best of times in a long time. A time called the Elizabethan era inspired poets, artists, religion and the people all around. The Queen was pure and devout to what was truly good for the people of London. In her beliefs she was able to demonstrate that there were no ulterior motives behind her rulings and that she was anything but a selfish Queen. The time of Queen Elizabeth brought forth The Golden Age. The meaning behind Golden Age is a time of great prosperity and pleasure where everything is at peace and harmonious.

During the Elizabethan era a vast majority of theaters that witnessed the plays of the infamous William Shakespeare sprang up all around London demonstrating the inspiration Queen Elizabeth brought on to the arts of Theater. The flourishing theaters around brought in the people of London

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and allowed them to witness plays of a lifetime, along with it would boost the economy of the country. The inspiration that was brought forth due to the peace and prosperity of the country opened up a door for greatness because who wants to create works of art when the villages have to worry about being hung, burned or just straight beheaded.

Elizabethan theaters stretched from one side of the city limits to the other. A chain of theaters during that time were and still are, “ the Globe, the Theatre, Newington Butts, the Curtain Elizabethan Theatre, the Rose Theatre, the Swan Theatre, the Fortune Elizabethan Theatre, the Boars Head, the Bear Garden, the Bull Ring and the Hope Elizabethan Theatre”

(Elizabethan Era). The one responsible for introducing theater in London in the first place would be James Burbage. He was the famous theatrical entrepreneur who first introduced the Globe Theatre. Like most places though that had theater at that time, women were still not allowed to perform on stage which left men wearing uncomfortable costumes and more make-up than anyone should wear in one life time. (Spread of Theater Art)

Theater was just one of many ways that brought out a new idea in the Elizabethan era which some referred to as the Renaissance. During the Renaissance great pieces of art were created by great artists. Buildings rose, works of art were hung on the walls or even built out of walls. London prospered greatly during the Golden Age. A lot of artists like George Gower became a well and renowned artist. His works like many others were shown and displayed all over London where people became more intrigued in the arts and products that brought beauty to the country.

Another thing that became more known and available to the people of London was music. " Music was an important form of entertainment to the people who lived during the Elizabethan era" (Elizabethan-era). Instruments through this time ranged from stringed, wind, percussion, keyboard, song, dance, composers and Masques. Elizabethan music changed into varied and sophisticated forms. With the introduction and accompany of music, theater during the Elizabethan era was enhanced. Music was able to communicate different moods in order to be involved with theater while reflecting the plots of the plays and drama being heightened. Many different types of Elizabethan music were: Church, Court, Street, Town and Theater music. Able to perform to all different types of music was a great advantage because they could appeal to all people. There was no one that would not be entranced in the wonders of music. Those that had never heard of music before would instantly fall in love and want to hear more, and it spread all over. London was a little behind in the Renaissance but it did not take long for them to be drunk from it all like the rest of the world was. Like the meaning of Renaissance it was a time of new for these people, something they had never experienced before and nothing made it more possible than the Elizabethan era and the time of Queen Elizabeth.

Soon though, things slowly began to change and the normal had a new definition in the civilization of the Elizabethan era where nobles who could scarcely sign their names had risen to a new level into far higher estimation. Great warriors and battle men were now no longer embarrassed to display the ability to read and write. It turned that the ability of learning and knowing literature, " possession of delicate arts of poetry and music and



knowledge of how to maintain a full gracious conversation while having manners was a definition of a man with power" (Cleveland). Men tried to have full accomplishment of being a knight, being a good horseman and manage his ability to wield a lance. In other words the strong characteristics of an ancient knight were deteriorated down in the age of Elizabeth. This in turn allowed for more graceful and perfect qualities of the gentleman. A gentleman was not more thrived for than in days of Elizabeth. There were only two types of men back then amongst the poor people, the nobles who were not monsters but would not know manners if it slapped them in the face and there were the churchman who would rather be hanged than dare curse in the name of the Lord.

Some countries handled it differently compared to London. " Several European countries did not return to their prewar trend paths of growth after the war or even after the Golden Age" (Crafts and Mills). For some countries, the time that came with the end of the Golden Age represented a return to a stronger growth path, but not necessarily the same one they had lived through before the war. No one could return straight to what they came from, of living in fear and struggling, it was easier for them. The growth, with no concrete numbers available, was overwhelming though in the European countries. Studies have been conducted, modeled, and even compared to affects of World War I and II, trying to just figure out how the European countries were able to parallel their prospering growths all over the continent but it has not quite yet been figured out. Some say there just needs to be another Queen Elizabeth at power, and others say it could never happen again because in the U. S. there is always away to either get rid of

one power and bring in a new power or our laws prevent such anarchy like the rulings of Queen Mary.

If we were asked to characterize the age of which Queen Elizabeth lived, by one such single word, there wouldn't be one but magnificent. "The age of Elizabeth was distinguished by magnificence, in the highest sense of the word" (Cleveland). By the most intellectual display of all kinds of qualities, she would be the Hero of that age in time. Her reign brought forth great prosperities and allowed for the people of London to have a fighting chance in life. She did not rule them as slaves but as the people that make London what it is today. Without the people of London, it would not be able to function, and the Golden Age would not have become reality for them. The moment Elizabeth was crowned Queen of London was the moment the future changed in one hundred and eighty degrees, which brought forth the birth of the Golden Age and arts, artists, plays, play writers and so many more came out from the shadows and brought the country into the light.

None of the Golden Age and the glories that were brought forth in it like the Elizabethan era that allowed so many artists to become known, would have been possible without the start of Queen Elizabeth and her rulings. Queen Elizabeth allowed for such prosperity and tranquility. London may be thankful for having Elizabeth as their savior and Queen, but if it wasn't for the people of London, she would not have been able to do all that she did and become so respected and loved.

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