Hardships Suffered by Queen Elizabeth I

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The Hardships Suffered by Queen Elizabeth I

Thesis Statement: Throughout history, she is known to be the greatest monarch of the entire Tudor dynasty, if not in the entire existence of England. Her time on the throne witnessed great improvement. Without her headstrong will and unwavering attitude, who knows where England would have been today?

1. Introduction
   1. Birth
      1. 7 September 1533
      2. Daughter of Anne Boleyn and King Henry VIII.
      3. Born illegitimately
      4. Thesis Statement
   2. History
      1. Queen of England
      2. Last monarch of the Tudor dynasty.
      3. Her reign witnessed the time of expansion, and is branded the most accomplished rulers of England.
   3. Death
      1. 4 March 1603
      2. Throne hastily taken over by James VI of Scotland.
      3. Didn’t birth heirs, hence the title ‘The Virgin Queen’.

1. Personal Difficulties  
   1. Absence of a mother
      1. Anne Boleyn was executed when Elizabeth was three years old
   2. Father treated her badly
      1. King Henry VIII had moods that varied on who he was married to. He married six times.
      2. This made it worse for Elizabeth, as she loved her father dearly.
   3. Shunned
      1. Born out of wedlock
      2. Anne and Henry were not married when Elizabeth was born.
      3. Title of ‘Princess’ revoked, addressed by Lady Elizabeth.
   4. Thomas Seymour
      1. Abuse after the death of her father.
2. Situational Difficulties
   1. Imprisonment
      1. Her half-sister, Mary of Tudor (aka Bloody Mary), feared she would try to overthrow her, imprisoned Elizabeth, even though they were very close and supported each other
      2. Elizabeth was held at the Tower of London from 18 March 1554 until 19 May 1554, and then held under house arrest for a year.
      3. The Wyatt Rebellion
      4. Elizabeth rose to the throne after the death of her sister.
3. Ruling Difficulties
   1. Religion
      1. Elizabeth supposed the threat of a Catholic crusade against her, as she was a Protestant, which did happen ultimately.
         * She sought a solution that would not offend Catholics, while addressing the desires of English Protestants
           + The parliament of 1559, Elizabethan Religious Settlement, started to legislate for a church based on the [Protestant settlement of Edward VI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_VI_of_England#Reformation), with the monarch as its head, but with many Catholic features.
   2. Mary, Queen of Scots – the Queen’s cousin
      1. It was feared that the French would invade England, and put Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne.
         * The Treaty of Edinburgh was drawn on the 5th of July 1560, for peace between Scotland, France, and England.
      2. Mary was held at Carlisle Castle for nineteen years, before she was executed against orders of the Queen Elizabeth I.
   3. Spanish Armada
      1. After Sir Francis Drake, the English privateer, raided Spain’s fleet, the Spanish king Philip II decided to take the war to England.
      2. 12 July 1588, the Spanish Armada set sail to England, but were defeated at the coast of Ireland.
   4. Ireland
      1. Even though Ireland was under Queen Elizabeth’s reign, they were hostile toward her
         * This was because the Irish population observed Catholicism, while Elizabeth was Protestant.
      2. This resulted in Nine Years’ War, which lasted from 1594 to 1603.
         * Also called  Tyrone's Rebellion
         * The Irish were defeated in 1603, just after Elizabeth’s death.
4. The End
   1. Legacy
      1. Elizabeth was known to be a heroine of the Protestant cause.
      2. Leader of a golden age of progress.
      3. She was well known to be very cautious.

Quote:  "If I follow the inclination of my nature, it is this: beggar-woman and single, far rather than queen and married"

Elizabeth Tudor was born on the seventh of September in 1533 at Greenwich Palace. Anne Boleyn birthed her illegitimately with King Henry VIII (see figure 4), but was considered as successor to the throne, after older step-sister, Mary. She was named after grandmothers on both, maternal and paternal sides; Elizabeth of York and Elizabeth Howard. Henry’s second child born out of wedlock that lived on after birth, she was treated well and respectably. However, she grew up during hard times. She witnessed her father’s continuous habit of marrying, then beheading women, for the purposes of producing a son. King Henry’s madness went to such an extent, he even annulled his marriage to his first wife, rendering his oldest daughter illegitimate; merely to ensure the heir to the throne was male, if one were ever born.

Born into a family of royalty, as well as fiasco, Elizabeth was provided the adequate needs of a young princess, even if her title was demoted to ‘Lady’. She became accomplished in all sorts of abilities, subjects, and tongues. She was effortless in four languages, which included the Dutch native language of Flemish. After a change in tutor, she proceeded to learn Greek and French. When she reached the end of her studies, she was known to have one of the most brilliant minds in her time. She was considered to be a prodigy, with a real passion for learning. By the end of her life, she had great knowledge in four other languages. A Venetian ambassador once wrote; “she possessed [these] languages so thoroughly that each appeared to be her native tongue" (Venetian ambassador 1603).

Throughout history, she is known to be the greatest monarch of the entire Tudor dynasty, if not in the entire existence of England. Her time on the throne witnessed great improvement. Without her headstrong will and unwavering attitude, who knows where England would have been today?

The last to reign in the Tudor dynasty, Good Queen Bess left the country strong and powerful, and in capable hands. It was a bleak morning in March of 1603 when news spread of the demise of the ruler of England. No scholar is sure of what the cause of her passing was, but it was most presumably due to the failure of a vital organ. The following announcement was made later on the day she had died:

This morning, about three o’clock her Majesty departed from this life, mildly like a lamb, easily like a ripe apple from a tree… Dr Parry told me he was present, and sent his prayers before her soul; and I doubt not but she is amongst the royal saints in heaven in eternal joys. (1603 messenger)

Soon after the majority of the public were made known of this news, James VI of Scotland hastily took over the throne. James was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, and also Elizabeth’s nephew of sorts. Elizabeth appointed him successor because she thought of him to be a strong leader.

Anne Boleyn was executed on the false charges on treason, adultery, and incest, when Elizabeth was barely three years old. The absence of a mother did effect her, as she is known to have a lack of a female attitude. Henry fabricated these charges in order to get rid of his wife, due to her un-usefulness as a son bearer. The brief moment Elizabeth was considered legitimized was gone. Eleven days after the execution, Henry married Jane Seymour, who died shortly after the birth of their son, Prince Edward VI, in 1537. Edward died on the sixth of July in 1553.

King Henry VIII loved his two daughters, and had them set up in chambers fit for royalty. However, he experienced severe mood swings. As the years went by, he married six women, and put most to death. This was justified by his desire for a male inheritor, as a female regnant ruler was untraditional. Depending on whom he was married to at the time, Elizabeth’s treatment by her father varied in kindness and affection. This confused the young Lady, as she loved her paternal figure dearly. In one of her flawless homework diaries, she wrote of how much she loved her father, in Italian. When news of her father’s death struck, in 1547, it is said that she and Edward threw themselves against each other, and wept bitterly.

After the death of her husband, Catherine Parr became the widowed step-mother of Elizabeth. Catherine soon married Thomas Seymour, and they all lived under the one roof of Chelsea Manor. One problem, however, was Thomas himself. The Seymour brothers were uncles to the children of Henry and were the most powerful of families in the land. As said by Seymour’s descendent, John Seymour, Thomas was headstrong and took any opportunity given to him. He didn’t think of consequences on himself, nor the consequences on others. At first, he had wanted to marry into the royal line by marrying one of the two daughters of the late King Henry VIII. When his plan to do as such failed, he married the widow. With Elizabeth living with Katherine, and Thomas becoming her step father and guardian, a position of trust he abused, he had easy access to her. While Thomas was forty years old, Elizabeth was only fourteen, therefore lacking in power. He would fool around and “romp” with her. He also got hold of her bedroom key. Early in the morning, he would come in half dressed, and abuse her. Sometimes, Katherine would join, usually holding Elizabeth down as her husband toyed with the clothing of Elizabeth. Thomas only found her as a means to an end to the throne of England. All the while, Elizabeth was confused; scared but flattered; and would sometimes pretended it was a game in order to cope, but sometimes take drastic steps to avoid such treatment. When confronted by the governess, Seymour defended himself by saying:

 'By God's precious soul, I mean no evil, and I will not leave it!' (Thomas Seymour 1548).

Katherine died shortly after the birth of her and Thomas’s baby. Seymour intended to marry Elizabeth next, but he proved impatient waiting for the council’s agreement. A plot to kidnap the boy of a king was created, and one night, he was found with a sword in his hand, in Edward’s chambers. One of the dogs had been killed by him, and he was arrested on charge of treason. Elizabeth was beamed, though she had no involvement. This was the first of many scandals and issues Elizabeth had to face. She was let free because of the lack of evidence, and Thomas Seymour was put to death by the signature of his own brother. Sadly, it was through this hard method that Elizabeth had learnt that close relationships were a danger, as she would come to confirm, when meeting with a desperate Mary of Scots in upcoming events. From this point on, she trusted almost no one. She was left in peace at Hartsfield, to recover from the trauma that changed her views forever. Views that may have be responsible for her title of the Virgin Queen.

When the fifteen year old James died in 1553, Mary Tudor was put on the throne. She was notorious for her harsh punishments, which included disembowelment in front of a crowd, alive. She earned the title ‘Bloody Mary’ for this reason. Mary was raised Catholic, and was hell bent on restoring its practice. However, it wasn’t all that easy. The Protestants were active, and no amount of torture or public demonstrations could stop it. As Mary’s goal was to reinstate England to its ‘right’ faith of Catholicism, Elizabeth was a potential enemy, being Protestant herself. Elizabeth tried to steer clear of her half-sister, but avoid mandatory Mass as much as possible. Mary’s unforgiving nature did not end with the public. She knew of Elizabeth’s faith, and feared a rebellion would rise under her. She was a figurehead for the opposition after all. Though close as children, Elizabeth was imprisoned at the Tower of London from 18 March 1554 until 19 May 1554 by order of the then Queen. She was then held under house arrest for a year.

During her imprisonment, ‘Gloriana’ received a letter from Sir Thomas Wyatt. The letter regarded the man’s mission to stop Mary, who had decided upon the marriage of herself to a Spanish royal. This would insure Spanish ruling, and a stricter grip on Catholicism. Though thoroughly planed, the force of the queen was underestimated, and the Wyatt Rebellion failed. On April the 11th 1554, Thomas Wyatt was executed. Allowed a speech before the public execution, he bravely took on the responsibility of the rebellion, claiming Elizabeth’s innocence (which was false):

"I assure you that neither they nor any other now in your durance (the Tower) was privy to my rising". (Thomas Wyatt 1554)

However, Elizabeth was still detained, and a decision was made to throw her into the tower, again. She wrote to Mary, begging for her life. The letter sent was almost three pages long. She was frightened beyond measure, and believed she would be executed within hours. As she wrote on, her famed, clear writing descended into messy scrawl, portraying her true distress. The letter contained statements of how Elizabeth claimed herself a true subject to Mary.

It was said that the next eight weeks in the Tower was the darkest moment of her life. She suffered illness and psychotic breaks, and was desperate for it all to end, in either freedom, or death. Her cell, after all, *was* only a few yards away from the spot where her mother was beheaded, almost twenty years later. The letter sent so long ago was not yet returned by Mary. Instead Elizabeth was escorted by a hundred men to a home, under house arrest, for a year. In 1555, she was allowed to go back to Hatfield. She wanted to get away from the court as there was many a burning of Protestants. More than three hundred people who refused to embrace Catholicism died this way. Some victims were allowed gunpowder tied to their feet, so they would endure a faster death from an explosion.

Elizabeth fought Phillip and his plans to marry her off to a relative. She refused to be controlled by a man. Mary also was dying, but still resisted naming Elizabeth successor. That is, until ten days before her death, due to the push of her council. The end 1558 was when Mary Tudor died, and Elizabeth took over the ruling of England. As she rode out after the announcement of her succession, she was greeted with cheers, and gifted the grandest of coronations (see figure 2). She had survived yet another crisis.

After receiving the throne from Mary, Elizabeth found England in shambles. The nation was bankrupt, and run into backed into a corner, with France and Spain surrounding. It needed friends, allies. Although a marriage was needed to gain supporters, the Virgin Queen refused to marry, ending her Golden Speech with;

“[In] the end this shall be for me sufficient, that a marble stone shall declare that a Queen, having reigned such a time, lived and died a virgin.” (Elizabeth Tudor 1559).

The biggest issue at the time was her being a Protestant ruler in an official Catholic kingdom. Mary had used such brutal methods to instill the belief; it would be hard to reverse the Parliament’s decision. The Parliament finally agreed the grant to restore Protestantism. Bishops of the England churches were rallying, fighting for Mary’s methods and protesting against Elizabeth’s. Those who disagreed with Elizabeth’s changes in public were sent to the tower. However, she believed that it wasn’t her business of their faith, so the Catholics were allowed to celebrate Mass, though privately. The parliament of 1559, Elizabethan Religious Settlement, started to legislate for a church based on the [Protestant settlement of Edward VI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_VI_of_England#Reformation), with the monarch as its head, but with many Catholic features. Another ordeal suppressed. .

It was feared that the French would invade England, and put Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne. Mary Stuart, not to be confused with Mary Tudor, was the first cousin of Queen Elizabeth the First, from King Henry’s side. The French already had the power of Scotland in their hand, as Mary was the Queen of, and had married France’s heir, Prince Francis II. Mary had also spent thirteen years at French court, from the age of five. The French were seeking to expand their borders and gain the upper, stronger, hand in Europe. With many opposed to Elizabeth reining the country, as they disapproved her illegitimacy and Protestant faith, it was not hard to implement the idea of a rebellion. When Mary first stepped ashore the lands of England, Elizabeth was in sick health, with no heir. After recovering the disease, her first words were to create a law that protected her throne if she would die. With the Scots and French side by side, and Mary anticipating her death, she knew that her country was becoming vulnerable. In an attempt to protect her responsibility, Elizabeth proceeded to talk to the Scottish ambassador. She wanted to marry Dudley to Mary, whose husband had died, to solve the issue. Dudley was an old friend of the Queen’s. She was in love with him, but refused to marry because she knew she couldn’t have the danger of a king controlling her. The deal failed, as Mary refused to marry him, because of his lowly status, as he was not a prince or king. Even if the marriage proposal had failed, the issue was quickly suppressed, by the collaboration for a settlement. The Treaty of Edinburgh was drawn on the 5th of July 1560, for peace between Scotland, France, and England.

Also known as the treaty of Leith, it was an agreement signed by Queen Elizabeth, the Scottish Lords of Congregation, and the French representatives of King Francis II. One of the main terms was to withdraw each country’s troops from another country’s land. However, issues were still arising for Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. After a string of failures, Mary was abandoned. Broken in body and mind. She was unable to see her son anymore, as she had to abdicate the Scottish throne in his favor. She would never see him ever again. When Mary fled to England’s queen in search of protection, it was given, in the form of jail. Though kept with honor at Carlisle Castle, she was still a prisoner, for nineteen years. It was not before 1587, when she was executed *against* orders of the Queen Elizabeth I.

It was one ordeal after the other. It had not even been a full year after the accidental putting to death of Mary Stuart, when the Spanish Armada became a problem. Phillip II of Spain, Mary Tudor’s widow, was finally to avenge his loss of the English throne to the Protestant Queen. The Spanish Armada consisted of over a hundred fifty ships, and twenty-six thousand men. It was planned to attack and take over England. Had found negotiations futile, and abandoned any thought of reasoning with Spain. With the weather and conditions on the side of the Brits, Spain lost its top possession in a series of engagements with the English Fleet. The first of a series of defeats began at the coast of Ireland, on July 12. Sir Francis Drake was the lead privateer in charge of the Royal Highness’s naval army, and was the one to lead her and his country to victory. It was just before the final battle between two country’s fleets, when Elizabeth gave her most famous Tilbury speech, a speech so powerful and strong it struck fear into the hearts of the opposition. Remnants of the once proud Spanish fleet returned home in September of 1588. It was said that the ships were worn down, and the hulls were being bound together by cables to secure.

Ireland was yet one more concern to Queen Elizabeth. Though the nation was under her reign, they majority of its citizens were hostile toward her. This would be the result of the long feud between the Protestant and Catholic beliefs. Nine Year’s War, or Tyrone’s Rebellion was draining for both England and Ireland. At the height of the conflict, in 1600, there were as many as eighteen thousand soldiers fighting. From 1594, till the defeat of the Irish in 1603, Elizabeth carried out orders, but her health began to deteriorate. It was six days after the Queen’s death on March 24 1603, when a peace treaty was signed. The defeats of the Ireland people lead to the exile of the Gaelic Irish chieftains.

Elizabeth was known to be a heroine of the Protestant cause. She was strong willed, fierce, and independent. Back in the day, females were only known to be useful as breeding machines, so she had to struggle over the difficulty of her gender. Sexism was at its peak during the Tudor dynasty, and it is incredible as to how the Virgin Queen didn’t succumb to daily pressure of being a woman. Taking a stand against the downgrading of women was tough, she made her point by keeping her virginity intact and not birthing an inheritor for the throne. Back then, it was also unorthodox for females claiming heir to the throne. It was highly opposed. Besides Mary, her sister, she was the first woman in history to sit on the English throne.

Elizabeth was known to have said: "If I follow the inclination of my nature, it is this: beggar-woman and single, far rather than queen and married" (Elizabeth Tudor). This quote illustrates her ability to defend herself, and her quality of self-reliance. Self-reliance was an important attribute to possess as the status of dependency on a mistaken person could be the cause of a downfall. Mary Stuart was overthrown because she had married for love, and trusted her husband too freely. Too free for a woman in power should. Elizabeth’s rule was so victorious, and so successful that the entire Tudor dynasty goes by the name of the Elizabethan Era. One could only imagine how the well Queen treated her subjects, as it was during her time the true arts were discovered. Shakespeare literature was born; it was even encouraged, as this daughter of King Henry loved the Arts, and watched performances at the Globe Theatre regularly. It was truly the Golden Age, in which the most progress had been made.

The reigning of Elizabeth has lasted forty-four years, and is the longest in the history of rulers in England. Her time in power accomplished the most of all, and reaped the most benefits. Her reign witnessed the time of expansion, and is she branded the most accomplished rulers of England. For a person who has seen herself through many a war and plenty a calamity, she survived as a ruler farther than anyone else. It was noted from an early age: Roger Ascham said: “The constitution of her mind is exempt from female weakness, and she is embued with a masculine power of application.” (Ascham). England was struck dumb when the news of Elizabeth’s passing was reported. She was granted an effigy and grand tomb (see figure 3). As the last royal of the Tudors, she left with a huge impact on English land, and a strong hold of the political tribulations.

Elizabeth the First, Queen of England is a role model. To any woman, or man, she could a mentor, a hero. She was born into a life of political mess, grew up without the love of her, and was abused at a young age. She became queen at the age of twenty-five, ruled England successfully for forty-four years, and was threatened consistently. She had fiery red hair and a slender figure. She was the Virgin Queen Elizabeth. Long live the Queen.

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Figure 1: Figure 2:  
Elizabeth I , "Darnley Portrait", c 1575 Elizabeth I, Coronation Robes, c 1559



Figure 3: Figure 4:  
Effigy of Queen Elizabeth I at Westminster Abbey King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn

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