

## *THE SUMMER OF 1548*

---

### **KATHERINE PARR AND THE LORD ADMIRAL**

Henry VIII stipulated the order of succession to the throne in his will and the conditions of guardianship of his son, Edward, because his son would become king while still a minor. The stipulations provided that a council of sixteen men should rule England during Edward's minority. These were all men who were loyal to Henry and accepted the doctrine of royal supremacy over the church. Henry clearly foresaw the dire consequences that could arise if one man held too much power in the young king's name. Despite such precautions, Edward Seymour, the young king's uncle, quickly developed influence over the young king, pushed aside others on the council, and gained total control over England as the de facto king. He assumed the role of Lord Protector and made himself Duke of Somerset.



Figure 1. Thomas Seymour, Lord Admiral

With the death of Henry VIII, those in power were now dedicated Protestants both because of their religious beliefs and because many had profited handsomely by Henry's confiscation of church property. This group was even more tolerant of Protestantism than Henry, and several of Henry VIII's conservative religious restrictions were repealed. Despite his strong Protestantism, Edward Seymour had a tolerant religious streak in him and refused to let anyone be tortured or burned for religious views, which was seen as a sign of weakness by many. Bishops Gardiner and Bonner, for instance, were not executed, but only confined in the Tower with the required creature comforts.

Thomas Seymour, Edward's brother, was a man equally dedicated to his own advancement and power, and he was intensely jealous of his brother's new position as Lord Protector. Thomas Seymour was a rogue, a bounder, and a man of apparently infinite energy, unlimited schemes, and blind ambition. These qualities, combined with an almost complete lack of discretion and political sense, doomed him for a quick and bloody end in

the world of high court intrigue. As Lord Admiral of England, Thomas Seymour had the responsibility to protect English shipping interests in the English Channel from pirates. As a fox in charge of the chicken coop, he arranged with the pirates to use his property in the Scilly Isles as a haven in return for a percentage of the booty.

After the death of the Henry VIII, Thomas Seymour proposed marriage to the young Princess Elizabeth, who was twelve years old at the time. This was a brash attempt to enter the royal line of succession through marriage. In an era of sudden and untimely deaths, Elizabeth had only her sister, Mary, before her in order of succession. In addition, Mary was a fervent Catholic adamantly opposed by the Protestant faction ruling the country through the young king. If for any reason both Edward VI and then Mary died, Thomas Seymour would be the de facto king by controlling his young bride. It is very doubtful that the council would ever have approved a marriage between Princess Elizabeth and Thomas Seymour, but if Elizabeth married him secretly or without the permission of the council, the deed would be fait accompli, and the council and his brother would be helpless.

Elizabeth promptly rejected Seymour's proposal with a letter that indicates maturity beyond her years, but Katherine Parr may have edited it, as Elizabeth was a part of the Dowager Queen's household at Chelsea and Hatfield:

Therefore, my lord Admiral, permit me to say frankly that since there is no one in the world who holds your merit in higher esteem than I do, nor finds greater pleasure in your society while I may regard you as a disinterested friend—I shall continue to preserve the satisfaction of looking upon you as such, apart from that closer intimacy of marriage, which often causes the possession of personal merits to be forgotten. Let your lordship be persuaded that if I refuse the good fortune of being your wife, I shall never cease to interest myself in all which may add greater glory to yourself, and that I shall make it my greatest pleasure to remain,

Your servitor and good friend, ELIZABETH<sup>1</sup>

Quickly recovering from Princess Elizabeth's rejection, Thomas Seymour rekindled the old embers of his aborted romance with Katherine Parr and produced a conflagration. There had been a romance brewing between Katherine Parr and Thomas Seymour after the death of her second husband while Henry VIII was alive. However, the King must have developed a fascination for Katherine Parr while still married to Katherine Howard, and he appointed Thomas Seymour to various positions that required him to be out of the country or at sea, far away from the comely young widow.

Often true rogues and scoundrels can make otherwise stable, virtuous, intelligent and wise women completely lose their heads, fall deeply in love, and behave in ways that completely contradict their previously stable behavior. At any rate, Katherine Parr had clearly fallen in love with Thomas Seymour when she first met him and later wrote:

I would not have you think that this mine honest good will toward you to proceed of any sudden motion or passion for as truly as God is god, my mind was fully bent the other time I was at liberty to marry you before any man I knew.<sup>2</sup>

The expression “love is blind” derives from the mythological representation of a blind Cupid flying about shooting his arrows willy-nilly into the most inappropriate couples. Katherine had been in arranged, practical marriages to men since she had been a teenager. Nowhere did the dart of love produce a more tragic passion or strike a more vulnerable target than Katherine Parr.

## **MARY SEYMOUR DISAPPEARS**

Thomas Seymour proposed to Katherine Parr and she accepted. Thomas then moved to obtain permission to marry from his nephew, the young king. He needed this permission because Katherine Parr was Queen Dowager, an important personage within the aristocratic hierarchy. Thomas Seymour was the favorite of the young king, who often resented the stern rule of his other uncle. Periodically, Thomas gave gifts of several pounds in gold to the young king. His generosity was contrasted by his brother’s niggardly policies in keeping the young king completely financially dependent upon him. The little boy king noted the events in his journal with a certain sense of satisfaction when he crossed his stern protector. His notes reveal the tensions between Thomas and his brother, the Lord Protector:

The lord Seimour of Sudley married the quene whose nam was Katarine, with which maring the lord Protectour was much offended.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Seymour and Katherine Parr were married during May 1547 in a private ceremony. His marriage to Elizabeth’s stepmother made Thomas Seymour stepfather to Elizabeth. He was already her stepuncle because he was the uncle of her stepbrother Edward VI. Perhaps the irrepressible Thomas Seymour provided some necessary élan vital to Katherine’s life that had been missing in her previous three marriages. Her balance and good judgment had been replaced by a marriage of passion, but she had

chosen an impossible boulder who was to bring much grief to all concerned.

Katherine Parr, Thomas Seymour, and Elizabeth lived at the household in Chelsea. Also living in the household at various periods was Lady Jane Grey, who had a claim to the throne as granddaughter of Henry VII. Lady Jane Grey was the daughter of Mary Tudor, Henry VIII's youngest sister. She was close enough to the throne to be of interest to Thomas Seymour's schemes.

In the spring of 1548, Katherine Parr found herself pregnant with Thomas Seymour's child, expected in late August or September of that year:

On Wednesday, 13 June 1548, Seymour accompanied his wife, who was now six months pregnant, and his young ward, Lady Jane Grey, from Hanworth to Sudeley Castle in Gloucestershire.<sup>4</sup>

Now one would expect that Elizabeth would accompany the Queen to Sudeley Castle<sup>a</sup> to be present at the birth of the child, but inexplicably Princess Elizabeth was sent to Cheshunt<sup>b</sup> a few weeks before Katherine moved to Sudeley Castle. At Cheshunt, Elizabeth was under the watchful eye of Sir Anthony Denny. Sir Denny was married to Mary Champernowne, the sister of Elizabeth's governess, Katherine Champernowne-Ashley. This movement was "in the week after Whitsun in 1548,"<sup>5</sup> which fell on May 20, 1548, so the date would be the week of May 27, 1548. This was the last week that Elizabeth saw her beloved stepmother alive. Princess Elizabeth would stay at Sir Anthony Denny's household from May 1548 until October of that year.

On August 3, 1548, Mary Seymour was born to Katherine Parr and Thomas Seymour at Sudeley Castle. Katherine was in her thirty-sixth year. Shortly thereafter, she was on her deathbed due to complications from the birth. She developed a puerperal fever, from an infection of the placental site that can spread from the uterine wall and into the bloodstream. These infections are generally the result of handling of the mother with unclean hands during the delivery. The death scene of Katherine Parr with her husband Thomas Seymour was poignant yet

---

<sup>a</sup> Hatfield was one of the main residences of Elizabeth and English royalty. It was located north of London. Cheshunt is a few miles east of Hatfield. Hedingham (Oxford's home) was located further east and north of Cheshunt. Sudeley Castle was located to the far west of London, slightly south of Stratford-upon-Avon.

<sup>b</sup> Sir Anthony Denny lived at Cheshunt Nunnery which became crown land after the dissolution of the monasteries in 1537. Henry VIII rented it out to Denny, who was Yeoman of the Wardrobe. By 1809 it was in ruins and it was demolished in the early 1950's. Housing now stands on the site.

strangely ambivalent. It is possible that Katherine died of an infection, which was common to childbirth given the midwife practices of the day. Nevertheless, Katherine was reported to have had a disturbing interchange with her husband on her deathbed, as reported by Elizabeth Tyrwhitt, a stepdaughter by another marriage:

Two days before the death of the Queen, at my coming to her in the morning, she asked me where I had been so long, and said unto me that she did fear such things in herself that she was sure she could not live. I answered, as I thought, that I saw no likelihood of death in her. She then, having my Lord Admiral by the hand, and divers others standing by, spake these words, partly, as I took, idly (in delirium): 'My Lady Tyrwhitt, I am not well handled, for those that be about me careth not for me, but stand laughing at my grief. And the more I will to them, the less good they will to me.' Whereunto my Lord Admiral answered, 'Why, sweetheart, I would you no hurt.' And she said to him again, aloud, 'No, my Lord, I think so'; and immediately said him in his ear, 'but my Lord you have given me many shrewd taunts.' These words I perceived she spake with good memory, and very sharply and earnestly; for her mind was sore disquieted. My Lord Admiral, perceiving that I heard it, called me aside, and asked what she said, and I declared it plainly to him. Then he consulted with me that he would lie down on the bed with her, to look if he could pacify her unquietness with gentle communication, whereunto I agreed; and by the time that he had spoken three or four words to her she answered him roundly and sharply, saying, 'My Lord, I would have given a thousand marks to have had my full talk with Huick (her doctor) the first day I was delivered, but I durst not for displeasing you.' And I, hearing that, perceived her trouble to be so great that my heart would serve me to hear no more. Such like communications, she had with him in the space of an hour, which they did hear that sat by her bedside.<sup>6</sup>

Queen Katherine Parr died on the morning of September 5, 1548. Her deathbed scene raises two important questions. First, was Thomas Seymour either a contributor to Katherine's death or negligent in her welfare? Second, why was a stepdaughter by a first marriage long since past (Lady Jane Grey was there) present at the birth, but Elizabeth was not? When first arriving at Cheshunt, Elizabeth wrote Katherine Parr and the letter indicates the depth of feeling she had for her stepmother:

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 leaving 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 show it; and although I have plenty of matter, here I will stay, for I know you are not quiet to read. From Cheston [Cheshunt], this present Saturday.

Your Highness' humble daughter, Elizabeth.<sup>7</sup>

Despite these deep feelings toward Katherine Parr, she did not attend the delivery of the birth of Katherine Parr's child; the child was named Mary Seymour. This was strange, indeed, and there must have been some pressing reason to keep her from Katherine's bedside.

Katherine left her property and fortune to her husband in a will dictated to her doctor and chaplain. Her will indicates that she died loving her husband, whatever his faults:

That she, then lying on her death-bed, sick of body, but of good mind and perfect memory and discretion, being persuaded, and perceiving the extremity of death to approach her, gives all to her married spouse and husband, wishing them to be a thousand times more in value than they were or [had] been.<sup>8</sup>

English and world history may have been very different if this good woman had survived this childbirth. In an Elizabethan world of treacherous scoundrels, neurotics, and sociopaths, Queen Katherine Parr stands as a fortress of resolve, virtue, good judgment and intellectual acumen, which makes events at Chelsea between her, her husband, and Elizabeth that much more inexplicable. While it is only speculation, it would seem that Elizabeth's early life, relations with her sister, and early reign as monarch would have been different if Queen Katherine Parr had been present to provide her wisdom and be a moderating influence.

After Katherine's funeral, Thomas Seymour went to gather his followers in the west of England. He intended to marry Elizabeth and win over the king and council. His plan was to gather his thousands of tenants and servants and stage a rebellion to overthrow his brother and make himself Lord Protector. Thomas Seymour was not successful in his attempts to raise an armed following, but he did have access to the young king. He had induced the young king to give him a key to his chamber, which he had copied. Thus, history rewards us with one of its more amusing vignettes in this aborted coup d'etat.

On January 18, 1549, Thomas Seymour went to the king's chamber with his duplicate key to kidnap his nephew, and he managed to reach the king's chambers. His plan might have been successful except for the king's pet spaniel. The dog barked, a gun went off, the guards alerted, the plot foiled, Thomas Seymour arrested, and the Tower acquired a new prisoner. Later interrogations revealed that part of this plot involved

blackmailing one of the directors of the mint to coin money to be used for raising a private army. A bill of attainder was quickly passed on Thomas Seymour. A bill of attainder was an act of Parliament that by majority vote condemned a man to death without benefit of trial. The bill had to be signed by the king, but required no legal confrontation between the accused and his accusers. Henry VIII had sent many men to their deaths using the bill of attainder. (This despicable legal practice was eventually repudiated.)

Edward Seymour, Lord Protector and Duke of Somerset, was now in a difficult situation. If he forced the young king to sign the bill, clearing the way for execution of his brother, he could be accused of being too weak to protect his own brother and therefore unable to protect other aristocrats who pledged loyalty to him. On the other hand, if Edward did not have the king sign the bill, he would leave his notorious, hotheaded, and treasonous brother as an ever-present locus of dissent, and he would be accused of not punishing acts of treason. Edward Seymour decided after some delay to have the young king sign the death warrant. After some pressure, the young king signed the bill of attainder, sending his favorite uncle to the block. Thomas Seymour was executed in the spring of 1549. He had so many transparent schemes that he hardly constituted any real danger to the realm. He was executed more for his audacious stupidity than anything else, but dead is dead, and dead he was. Elizabeth was to say of the event, "This day died a man with much wit, and very little judgment."<sup>9</sup>

At Thomas's death, his daughter, Mary Seymour, was less than a year old. At first, she was taken in by her aunt, the wife of her uncle, Edward Seymour, but these duties were passed to the Duchess of Suffolk, Katherine Brandon, who took the baby with her to Grimsthorpe. The costs of maintaining the child were considerable given the number of servants and other expensive goods and services involved with raising an almost royal child. The Duchess of Suffolk wrote to William Cecil who was then an administrator on the Lord Protector's staff. Her first letter reveals the lack of concern of her aunt and uncle, Edward Seymour, for the child:

I have so wearied myself with letters (to the duke and duchess of Somerset) that I have none for you. Another time you will have letters when they have none. I reminded my lady of her promise of some pension for maintaining the late queen's child who, with a dozen others, lies at my chamber. The continuation of this will keep me in debt this year. The marquess of Northampton [Queen Katherine Parr's brother] to whom I should deliver her, has as weak a back for such a burden as I, and would receive her, but more willingly with appurtenances. Never a word that I ask you.

July 24 [1549] Grimsthorpe

Katherine [Brandon], Duchess of Suffolk <sup>10</sup>

She followed the letter with another that gives a more detailed description of her plight:

It is said that the best means of remedy to the sick is first plainly to confess and disclose the disease wherefore lieth for remedy; and again, for that my disease is so strong that it will not be hidden, I will disclose me unto you. First, I will (as it were under *benedicite* and in high secrecy) declare unto you that all the world knoweth, though I go never so covertly in my net, what a very beggar I am. This sickness, as I have said, I promise you, increaseth mightily upon me. Amongst other causes whereof is, you will understand not the least, the Queen's child hath lain, and yet doth lie at my house, with her company about her, wholly at my charges. I have written to my Lady Somerset at large; which was the letter I wrote (note this) with mine own hand unto you; and among other things for the child, that there may be some pension allotted unto her according to my Lord Grace's promise.

Now, good Cecil, help at a pinch all that you may help. My Lady also sent me word at Whitsuntide last by Bartue (Richard Bertie, the Duchess of Suffolk's steward, whom she later married) that my Lord's Grace, at her suit, had granted certain nursery plate and stuff as was there in the nursery. I send you here enclosed (a list) of all parcels as were appointed out for the child's use; and that ye may the better understand that I cry not before I am pricked, I send you Mistress Eglonby's letter unto me, who, with the maids, nurses, and others, daily call on me for their wages, whose voices mine ears may hardly bear, but my coffers much worse. Wherefore I cease, and commit me and my sickness to your diligent care, with my hearty commendations to your wife.

At my manor of Grimsthorpe, the 27th August.

Your assured loving friend,

K. Suffolk<sup>11</sup>

This letter was dated August 27 but no year put on the letter; most likely, it was the year following the child's birth, that is, 1549. A few months later, Parliament restored the lands of her father to the young Mary, but not her appropriate titles. Susan E. James in *Kateryn Parr: The Making of a Queen* reports on it thus:

Restored in blood on 22 January 1550, Mary Seymour was made legally eligible to inherit any family property to which she might subsequently fall heir. Lands formerly owned by her parents, forfeited at her father's death, had already been snapped up by new owners. Mary Seymour disappears from the records shortly after this. As her maintenance grant was not renewed on 17 September 1550, when the original 18-month grant would have expired, Kateryn Parr's 'so pretty a daughter', almost certainly died at Grimsthorpe sometime around her second birthday, and she is probably buried somewhere in the church at Edenham, which still contains memorials to the family of her guardian, the Duchess of Suffolk.<sup>12</sup>

When historians use words such as “almost certainly,” they should be interpreted as “we have absolutely no idea, and this is a guess.” Rather than have an uncomfortable mystery, historians prefer to ignore the anomalies of history with a soothing denial or conjecture presented as fact. Historians tend to identify with the subjects of their biographies and unconsciously become their advocates. Thus, Henry VIII was not a paranoid sociopath (Mary even more so), he was just someone who put people to the stake and executed wives. Known scandalous behaviors of Elizabeth are muted as historians polish the images of those they study, royalty.

Mary Seymour was not an important person in the Elizabethan hierarchy, nor was she an important person in English history. She was the infant daughter of the deceased Dowager Queen, and she was not in line for the throne. The property of her father had been confiscated by the Crown and sold. She would not have been wealthy; yet, Mary Seymour’s disappearance has profound implications for Elizabethan history and the history of William Shakespeare. This was a concrete



Figure 2. William Cecil, Lord Burghley

example of how a child could be made to “disappear.” Furthermore, the disappearance of Mary Seymour was incontrovertibly linked to William Cecil while he was serving under Edward Seymour, the Lord Protector.

William Cecil was the son of a small landowner, who profited through transactions connected with Henry VIII’s confiscation of church properties. He attended Cambridge and was attracted to the Protestant teachings of the university, and he became part of the newly emerging Protestant class of scholars and politicians. He took legal training at Gray’s Inn and then entered government service under Edward Seymour, Lord Protector to Edward VI. He became Master of the Court of Request, Member of Parliament for Stamford, secretary to the Lord Protector, a member of the Privy Council, and Secretary of State. In 1551, he was knighted, but it was not until Elizabeth’s reign and his daughter’s marriage to the Earl of Oxford that he became Lord Burghley.

He was well connected to Katherine Parr and provided an introduction for her second book, *The Lamentations of a Sinner*. He was the crafty and intelligent man who could provide help to Katherine in a difficult situation. It is likely and logical that Katherine Parr would later turn to William Cecil for help in a distressful situation that needed discreet handling at the highest level of government.

William Cecil survived the eventual fall and execution of Edward Seymour and then served in the government of his successor, John Dudley (Duke of Northumberland). He was saved from going to the block when Princess Mary became queen only because he had been a useful informant to Mary. His early warning to Mary thwarted the plans to capture her and put Lady Jane Grey on the throne. If there was ever a political animal that had the ability to always land on his feet, no matter who might be in power, it was William Cecil. Historians describe William Cecil as a sage advisor and Tudor loyalist. They credit his council with England's moderate path in religion, fiscal responsibility in government, and avoidance of foreign conflicts. This is all true. He had two goals: the welfare of England and the welfare of the Cecil family within England. He succeeded admirably at both goals.

William Cecil and his son Robert were the most influential ministers of the Elizabethan era, and a great deal of credit must be given to them. Yet, a more objective look at their influence reveals that their methods were not always so pleasant. Both were masters of intrigue and experts at the arts of spying, counterfeiting evidence, and using torture to gain needed confessions. As Cecil put it so well, he was a master of "throwing the stone without that the hand be seen."<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps William Cecil was Shakespeare's model for the wily, old Antigonus of *The Winter's Tale*, who leaves the changeling babe on the shore of Bohemia:

**ANTIGONUS**

Come, poor babe:

I have heard, but not believed, the spirits o' the dead

May walk again: if such thing be, thy mother

Appear'd to me last night, for ne'er was dream

So like a waking. To me comes a creature,

Sometimes her head on one side, some another;

I never saw a vessel of like sorrow,

So fill'd and so becoming: in pure white robes,

Like very sanctity, she did approach

My cabin where I lay; thrice bow'd before me,

And gasping to begin some speech, her eyes

Became two spouts: the fury spent, anon

Did this break-from her: "Good Antigonus,

Since fate, against thy better disposition,  
Hath made thy person for the thrower-out  
Of my poor babe, according to thine oath,  
Places remote enough are in Bohemia,  
There weep and leave it crying; and, for the babe  
Is counted lost for ever, Perdita,  
I prithee, call't. For this ungentle business  
Put on thee by my lord, thou ne'er shalt see  
Thy wife Paulina more." And so, with shrieks  
She melted into air. Affrighted much,  
I did in time collect myself and thought  
This was so and no slumber. Dreams are toys:  
Yet for this once, yea, superstitiously,  
I will be squared by this. I do believe  
Hermione hath suffer'd death, and that  
Apollo would, this being indeed the issue  
Of King Polixenes, it should here be laid,  
Either for life or death, upon the earth  
Of its right father. Blossom, speed thee well!       (Laying down babe.)  
There lie, and there thy character: there these;       (Laying down bundle.)  
Which may, if fortune please, both breed thee, pretty,  
And still rest thine. The storm begins; poor wretch,  
That for thy mother's fault art thus exposed  
To loss and what may follow! Weep I cannot,  
But my heart bleeds; and most accursed am I  
To be by oath enjoin'd to this. Farewell!  
The day frowns more and more: thou'rt like to have  
A lullaby too rough: I never saw  
The heavens so dim by day. A savage clamour!  
Well may I get aboard! This is the chase:  
I am gone for ever. (Exit pursued by a bear.)

*The Winter's Tale, Act 3, Scene 3*

Mary Seymour had disappeared into a vast fog of English history.

## **ELIZABETH UNDER SUSPICION**

Elizabeth was at Cheshunt with Sir Anthony Denny and his wife, Joan Champernowne, when Katherine Parr gave birth in late August 1548 at Sudeley Castle. Joan was the sister of Elizabeth's governess, Kat Champernowne Ashley, and a childhood friend of Katherine Parr. She was a part of the Protestant-Humanist alignment of Queen Katherine Parr. When Anne Boleyn became queen, Anne Parr (Katherine Parr's sister), Joan Guildford, and Joan Champernowne became maids of honor. When Henry VIII was married to Anne of Cleves in 1539, Joan Champernowne (Lady Denny) was one of her ladies-in-waiting. Later, Joan Champernowne became one of Katherine Parr's ladies-in-waiting.

Sir Anthony Denny was an intellectual companion of Henry VIII, a gentleman of the Privy Chamber, a religious sparring partner, a confidant, and a touchstone for the king's new ideas. He also was a confidential agent for many of the king's affairs. He was the second son of a Chief Baron of the Exchequer. He attended St. Paul's School under William Lily, and through his education and close association with Cambridge became a strong supporter of the Protestants and the humanist cause. He received Waltham Abbey in Essex for his home and an abbey at St. Albans, plus thousands of acres of land for income. He had control in the last years of Henry's life of over £200,000 of the king's money. He was a man trusted by those who desired to protect Henry VIII's Protestant daughter.

Elizabeth did not leave the Denny's until the fall of 1548, when she left Cheshunt for Hatfield accompanied by Edward Seymour's eldest son, John Seymour. She sent a note to the Lord Protector, thanking him for his concern about her health and for sending physicians to see to her health. Historians of the period agree that Elizabeth was "sick" during the summer of 1548, even if no one can accurately define the sickness, yet there are no records of any physician seeing her until the fall of 1548, when Doctor Thomas Bill visited her on orders of the Lord Protector. Elizabeth writes thanking the Lord Protector on October 15, 1548:

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 of 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.<sup>14</sup>

Several medical accounts allude to the fact that Elizabeth would be fifteen in September of 1548 and her sickness related to the onset of

menarche, but other than that, the record remains silent as to what might have caused this illness. It was indeed strange that the second in line to the throne should be sick for such a period and yet there would be no record of any doctor visiting her until the Lord Protector sends one long after the supposed illness. While there is a detailed record of Elizabeth's health throughout her reign, there is only speculation about this sickness. Whatever it was, it had to be serious enough to incapacitate her so she could not be with her stepmother's lying in and childbirth, a life-threatening situation for any Elizabethan woman.

On August 2, 1548, Kat Ashley wrote to William Cecil to intervene with Edward Seymour, the Lord Protector, to obtain the exchange of an English prisoner in Scotland. Elizabeth added a postscript that began "I pray you further this poor man's suit," and signed it "your frende Elizabeth." This was the first recorded connection between Elizabeth and William Cecil. There seem to be no prior meetings or correspondence between Elizabeth and William Cecil before this note, though it was, of course, possible that she had met him on one of her infrequent visits to her brother at court. Many historians have commented that this letter was the beginning of a lifelong relationship between William Cecil and Elizabeth, which is true, but none have considered what might have started this friendship. Nor has anyone questioned the extraordinary closing.

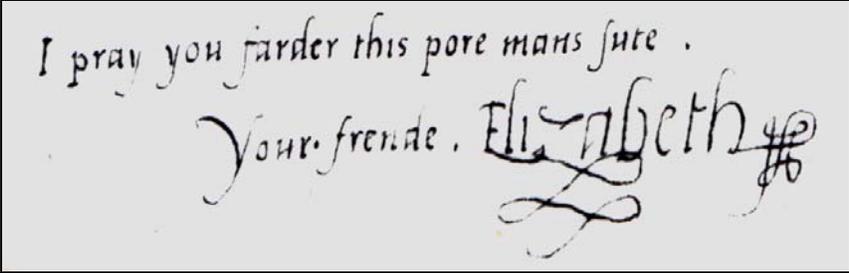
A photograph of a handwritten note in cursive script. The text reads: "I pray you farder this pore mans sute .  
Your frende . Elizabeth" followed by a large, decorative flourish.

Figure 3. Elizabeth's Signature

This letter implies that a level of admiration and mutual trust had developed between them, but what did William Cecil do that encouraged such familiarity and gratitude on the part of the future queen? Elizabeth was going beyond all bounds of Elizabethan formality, putting their relationship on a very personal basis with "your frende Elizabeth." How did William Cecil all of a sudden become a "frende?" A year or two later, he became her surveyor at a salary of £20 per year. During this period, Elizabeth instructed Thomas Parry to include a note to Cecil:

Write my commendations in your letter to Mr. Cecil, that I am well assured, though I send not daily to him, that he doth not, for all that, daily forget me.<sup>15</sup>

One can understand Elizabeth being friendly all her life with those who had been loyal and trustworthy (Ashley and Parry), or ones she found as congenial, such as Roger Ascham; there was no reason for her to be so friendly to Cecil unless he had done an extraordinary deed for her. This greeting and closing implies that William Cecil had done something extraordinary to gain the trust of the young woman who said she was not won with trifles.

By the late fall of 1548, Katherine Parr was dead and Elizabeth had left the Denny family to resume her residence at Hatfield. Thomas Seymour was in the west of England fomenting dissent with his plans to usurp his brother. His unsuccessful attempt to kidnap his nephew, Edward VI, led him to the Tower, and interrogations were begun to determine the extent of his activities. Kat Ashley and Thomas Parry were arrested and sent to the Tower, where they subsequently signed confessions or statements. The council was especially concerned about whether Elizabeth received a proposal of marriage, or whether Thomas had in fact married Elizabeth after the death of his wife in the fall of 1548. Marriage was not a personal event but rather a matter of state.

The examinations of Kat Ashley and Thomas Parry taken at face value reveal an indiscretion by the young princess and an irate Katherine Parr sending Elizabeth off to be more closely chaperoned. Katherine, in this view, was acting prudently and getting Elizabeth out of the clutches of her husband, Thomas Seymour. This story is sufficient for orthodox historians to explain the events and end any further questioning.

Viewed with a more suspicious, less tolerant eye, the interrogations reveal gross improprieties being taken with the young Princess Elizabeth. The relations between Thomas Seymour, as later described by Elizabeth's governess Katherine Ashley were, in the euphemism of our day, "inappropriate." The full deposition or confession of Kat Ashley follows:

*The Confession of Katharine Aschyly.  
What familiaritie she hath knowen betwixt the Lord Admirall,  
and the Lady Elizabeth's Grace?*

She saith at *Chelsy*, incontinent after he was married to the Queene, he wold come many Mornyngs into the said Lady *Elizabeth's* Chamber, before she were redy, and sometyme before she did rise. And if she were up, he wold bid hir good Morrow, and ax how she did, and strike her upon the Bak or on the Buttocks famylearly, and so go forth through his Lodgings; and sometyme go through to the Maydens, and play with them, and so go forth: And if she were in hir Bed, he wold put open the Curteyns, and bid hir good Morrow, and make as though he wold come at hir: And she wold go further in the Bed, so that he could not come at hir.

And one Mornying he strave to have kissed hir in hir Bed: And this Examine was there, and bad hym go away for shame. She knoweth not whither this were at *Chelsy*, or *Hanworth*.

At *Hanworth*, he wold likewise come in the Mornying unto hir Grace; but, as she remembreth, at all Tymes, she was up before, savyng two Mornyngs, the which two Mornyngs, the Quene came with hym: And this Examine lay with hir Grace; and ther thei tytled [ticked] my Lady *Elizabeth* in the Bed, the Quene and my Lord Admirall.

An other Tyme at *Hanworth*, in the Garden, he wrated with hir, and cut hir Gown in an hundred Pieces, beyng black Cloth; and when she came up, this Examine chid with hir; and her Grace answerid, She could not do with all, for the Quene held hir, while the Lord Admirall cut it up.

An other Tyme at *Chelsey*, the Lady *Elizabeth* heryng the Pryvie-Lock undo, knowyng that he wold come in, ran out of hir Bed to hir Maydens, and then went behynd the Curteyn of the Bed, the Maydens beyng there; and my Lord tarried to have hir com out, she can not till how long. This Examine hard of the Gentlewomen. She thinks Mr. *Power* told it her. And then in the Galery this Examine told my Lord that thes Things were complayned of, and that my Lady was evill spoken of: The Lord Admirall swore, God's precious Soule! He wold tell my Lord Protector how yt slawnderid hym, and he wold not leave it, for he ment no Evill.

At *Seymour-Place*, when the Quene lay there, he did use a while to come up every Mornying in his Nyght-Gown, barelegged in his Slippers, where he found commonly the Lady *Elizabeth* up at her Boke: And then he wold loke in at the Gallery-Dore, and bid my Lady *Elizabeth* good Morrow, and so go his way. Then this Examine told my Lord it was unsemly Sight to come so bare leggid to a Maydens Chambre; with which he was angry, but he left it.

At *Hanworth*, the Quene told this Examine that my Lord Admirall looked in at the Galery-Wyndow, and se my Lady *Elizabeth* cast hir Armes about a Man's neck. The which Heryng, this Examine enquired for it of my Lady's Grace, who denyed it weepyng, and bad ax all hir Women: Thei all denyed it: And she knew it could not be so, for there came no Man, but *Gryndall*, the Lady *Elizabeth's* Scholemaster. Howbeit, thereby this Examine did suspect, that the Quene was gelows betwixt them, and did but

feyne this, to thentent that this Examinee shuld take more hede, and be, as it were in wache betwixt hir and my Lord Admirall.

She saith also, that Mr. *Ashley*, hir Husband, hath diverse Tymes given this Examinee warnyng to take hede, for he did fere that the Lady *Elizabeth* did bere som Affection to my Lord Admirall, she semyd to be well pleased therewith, and somtyme she wold blush when he were spoken of: And one other told hir so also, but she cannot tell who it was.

Kateryn Aschyly<sup>16 c</sup>

The cofferer, Thomas Parry, gives his account of hearsay evidence about Queen Katherine Parr, which has explicit reasons for Elizabeth's departure from Hatfield. He was recalling his conversations with Kat Ashley:

I do remember also, she told me, that the Admirall loved her but to well, and hadd so done a good while; and that the Quene was jealous on hir and him, in so moche that one Tyme the Quene, suspecting the often Accesse of the Admirall to the Lady *Elizabeth's* Grace cam sodenly upon them, wher they were all alone, (*he having her in his Armes:*) wherefore the Quene fell out, bothe with the Lord Admirall and with her Grace also.

And hereupon the Quene called Mrs. *Ashley* to her, and told her Fany [wish] in that Matier [matter], and of this was moch Displesure. And it was not long, before they partid asondre their Famylyes; and, as I remembre, this was the Cause why she was sent from the Quene; or ells that her Grace partid from the Quene: I do not perfectly remembre whether of both she said, she went of herself, or was sent awaye.

Why, quoth, I hath ther been such familiaritie in dede betwene them? And with that, she sighed, and said, as I remembre, I will tell you more another Tyme; and all this, as I remembre, was on *Twelf Eve* last [around Christmas], that she told me these Thyngs. And at the same Tyme she told me, that he myght compass the Cownsell [council], if he wold, I remember she said more, "That if the King's Majestie, that Dede is, had "lyved a littell longer, she [Elizabeth] shuld have been his Wief." But after she hadd told me the Tale of the fynding of her Grace in his Armes, she semed to repent, that she had gone so farre with me, as she did; and prayed me in any wise that I wold not disclose thes Matters: And I said I wold not. And agayn she prayed me not to open yt, for her Grace shuld be dishonored for ever, and she likewise undone. And I said I wold not; and said I had rather be pulled with Horses, thene I wold, or such like Words.<sup>17</sup>

The statements of Kat Ashley and Thomas Parry are incriminating and they reveal Elizabeth had overly familiar relations with Thomas Seymour, but not that she agreed to marry him, nor do they mention anything other than what can be interpreted as good natured, but improper behavior

---

<sup>c</sup> In a side note to the page in Haynes, it says, "From the Original, written by Sir *Tho. Smith*, and sign'd *Kateryn Aschyly*." Sir Thomas Smith was Principal Secretary to the Lord Protector, and he was associated with the younger William Cecil at Cambridge. Later Sir Thomas, would be a tutor for Edward de Vere., 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford.

toward the young princess. Nevertheless, does “(he having her in his Armes:) wherefore the Quene fell out, bothe with ther Lord Admirall and with her Grace also,” imply a greater level of sexual involvement?

The completeness and truthfulness of these depositions has to be tempered with the knowledge of who was taking the depositions. That person was Sir Thomas Smith, reporting directly to Edward Seymour, the Lord Protector. Smith was also a friend of William Cecil, who was serving as secretary for Edward Seymour, so it is unlikely that Cecil would not have known of the depositions. The objective would seem to be to put enough on the record to incriminate Thomas Seymour, but not any truly damaging information about Princess Elizabeth, if Sir Thomas Smith, William Cecil, and Edward Seymour were already privy to a secret.

Lord Robert Tyrwhit, who was interrogating Elizabeth, was sure that all the participants (Elizabeth, Kat Ashley, and Thomas Parry) were covering something, as is obvious in his report to the Lord Protector. His comments are pointed and skeptical, and lead one to believe that he was unaware of any cover-up of the events during the summer of 1548:

They all synge onne Songe, and so I thynke they wuld not unless they had sett the Nott befor ... or ells they could not so well agree.<sup>18</sup>

Tyrwhit further writes to the Lord Protector:

I do verily believe that there hath been some secret promise between my Lady, Mistress Ashley and the cofferer, never to confess till death; and if it be so, it will never be gotten of her, but either by the King's Majesty, or else by your Grace.<sup>19</sup>

It hardly seems that what Parry and Ashley described was something they will “never confess till death.” Is there a deeper secret that will not reveal? Tyrwhit thinks Elizabeth was lying to him, but he cannot prove it or force her to confess. He says:

But in no way she will not confess any practice by Mistress Ashley or the coffer concerning my Lord Admiral; and yet I do see it in her face that she is guilty, and do perceive as yet she will abide more storms ere she accuse Mistress Ashley.<sup>20</sup>

To summarize to this point, Elizabeth was inexplicably absent from her stepmother's lying in and not present when she died from complications from childbirth. Ostensibly, the reason was that she was sick, although she was not visited by a doctor, nor was the sickness ever defined. The depositions of Kat Ashley and Thomas Parry revealed that there was some inappropriate behavior between her and her stepfather. While this was all rather strange, it cannot be said that it was overwhelmingly suspicious. All

of Elizabeth's biographers have issued mild rebukes for the princess's behavior and explained it away as the indiscretions of a very young woman.

However, Elizabeth then revealed that something far more important might have happened at Cheshunt. With her governess and cofferer in prison, Elizabeth wrote a letter to the Lord Protector at the beginning of 1549. She realized the danger she was in if she had compromised herself with Thomas Seymour. The letter was a masterful piece of diplomacy, evasion, guile, and challenge, written when she was fifteen years old without the guidance of any other adult. Further, she knew nothing of what Kat Ashley or Thomas Parry had revealed under threat of torture.

Elizabeth writes about rumors of her being pregnant:

Master *Tirwhit* and others have tolde me that there goeth rumours Abrode, wiche be greatly bothe agenste my Honor, and Honestie (wich, above al other thinkes I estime) wiche be these; that I am in the Tower, and with Childe by my Lord Admiral. My Lord, these ar shameful Schandlers [slanders], for the wiche, besides the great Desire I have to see the Kinge's Majestie, I shall most hartily desire your Lordship that I may come to the Court after your first Determination; that I may shewe myself there as I am. Written in haste from *Atfelde* this 28<sup>th</sup> of January. [1549]

*Your assured Friend to my little power.*  
Elizabeth<sup>21</sup>

In her letter, Elizabeth denied that she was in the Tower, which everybody knew to be true, and then she denied that she was pregnant, which nobody, on record at least, had ever suggested. The letter indicates that either there were rumors of her being pregnant or that she wanted to forestall any thoughts in that direction. Yet, the wording of the letter is crafty. She denies that she was "with Childe," but she does not deny that she had a child. This is a small but important distinction. Elizabeth at this point had little knowledge of what Edward Seymour, the Lord Protector believes, or knows, about her behavior with the Lord Admiral. This key sentence may have been an attempt to ferret out from the Lord Protector's reaction what he knows about the summer of 1548.

Further, Elizabeth confronts Edward Seymour with the thought of her coming to court. There, she would have been a direct threat to Edward Seymour's control and influence over the young king. Elizabeth was a precociously intelligent and had the advantage of being in line to the throne. The maturity in this letter was far beyond her years; she managed both to be contrite and to put the Lord Protector in a difficult situation. If she came to Court, courtiers and politicians would curry favor with her, just in case she succeeded to the throne.

In a second communication to the Lord Protector and the council, Elizabeth continues to defend her virtue and asks that the council send messengers into the counties to stop the rumors of her having a child:

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, or 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 that they are most deceived that trusteth most in themselves, wherefore I trust that you shall never find that fault in me, to the 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 an increasing of these 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 loathe to do, because it is mine own cause; and, again, that it should be but abridging of an evil name of me that am glad to punish them, and so get the evil will of the people, which thing I would be loth to have. But if it might seem good to 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’s sisters.*<sup>22</sup>  
[Italics added]

The letter indicates previous correspondence on the subject, and in this letter, Elizabeth protests that she “deserved through my lewd demeanor, to have such a one.” Here, the lady does protest too much and is giving away the circumstances of her relation with Thomas Seymour (that is, that she was a willing party to her involvement). Again, Elizabeth does not clearly say that she did not have such a “one.” She confronts the issue of whether her “lewd demeanor” was the cause of it, but there is no clear denial of having any such child. She does not say the rumors are false; rather, she says the rumors are damaging to the “king’s majesty’s sisters.”

Elizabeth goes on to say that she will not name those who are spreading such rumors, even though the council has agreed to redress the issue if she would report such persons. She says she feels that this is not a good idea because the blame will fall back on her. Instead, she asks that the council put forth a proclamation to stop the gossip, which would have only fanned the flames.

Perhaps Elizabeth was discreetly told to drop the subject. This is the last known letter on the subject of a child. There was further correspondence about the return of her governess, and after much negotiation in which Elizabeth again showed courage, diplomacy and fortitude, Katherine Ashley and Thomas Parry returned to her household.

A year or so later, William Cecil became an overseer of Elizabeth's estates and she paid him £20 a year. William Cecil was one of the first men appointed to her council when she became queen, and he was forever a power within the English government.

A third hand account of Elizabeth raises further suspicions about the summer of 1548. Lady Jane Dormer was one of Queen Mary's ladies-in-waiting. She married the Duke of Feria, a Spaniard who was attached to Prince Philip of Spain when he came to wed Mary. The duchess gave the account below, not recorded until many years later, to a household servant. It can only be described as rumor, but it does reveal what might have been believed in the court of Catholic Mary, and its detail gives it credibility. The account gives a description of a girl that fits young Princess Elizabeth, a "very fair young lady," and it shows how a midwife might have been brought into the household to attend the princess. It was possible, even probable, that the midwife would have gossiped about such an event to her neighbors, and the rumors that Elizabeth mentions in her letter to the Lord Protector could have spread from there:

In King Edward's time what passed between the Lord Admiral, Sir Thomas Seymour and her Doctor Latimer preached in a sermon, and was a chief cause the parliament condemned the Admiral. There was a bruit of a child born and miserably destroyed, but could not be discovered whose it was; only the report of the mid-wife, who was brought from her house blindfold thither, and so returned, saw nothing in the house while she was there, but candle light; only, she said, it was the child of a very fair young lady. There was muttering of the Admiral and this lady, who was then between fifteen and sixteen years of age. If it were so, it was the judgment of God upon the Admiral; and upon her, to make her ever after incapable of children ... The reason why I write this is to answer the voice of my countrymen in so strangely exalting the lady Elizabeth, and so basely depressing Queen Mary.<sup>23</sup>

Was there a child by Elizabeth that was "miserably destroyed"? Or, did this child, like Mary Seymour, disappear into the fog of English history?

## **A CHANGELING CHILD?**

The ambiguities, uncertainties, distinctions, and contradictions of Elizabethan history dissolve into a great gray mist. Out of this mist, emerge simple-minded, one-dimensional characters and simple-minded renderings of complex issues. The Virgin Queen was a myth created by the Tudor propaganda machine that was copied uncritically by the vast majority of historians in the following centuries. Despite substantive evidence to the contrary, Elizabeth emerges as the dedicated public servant whose devotion to the emerging English nation knew no bounds. While Elizabeth had her virtues, her life and character are much more complex and involved than portrayed by conventional historians. To characterize Elizabeth as the Virgin Queen is to read her press releases, not the historical record. Moreover, to think such happenings did not occur just because they were not fully recorded is to ignore the politics of what is recorded and not recorded as history. So, to think that Elizabeth did not have children because they were not documented is to contradict the culture she lived in, contradict what is known of her personally, and contradict the ability of a society to cover-up unwanted information

In over four hundred years, there have been no critical investigations of whether or not Elizabeth had children. This question has remained strictly out of bounds as a subject of historical investigation. Some historians take the Virgin Queen route wherein Elizabeth was a Puritan virgin devoted only to her country. Others are a little more candid and admit that Elizabeth engaged in some flirtatious behavior with the opposite sex but always conclude that she remained chaste throughout her life. None have investigated the rumors concerning Queen Elizabeth with any historical diligence or accuracy.

A more suspicious and suspecting mind could interpret the events of 1548 unfolding at the time like this: Katherine is either unaware of what is transpiring between Elizabeth and her husband, or in the libertine spirit of Marguerite of Navarre, she is encouraging or condoning the relationship. Whatever the situation, in April of 1548, Elizabeth can no longer hide the fact that she is six months pregnant by Thomas Seymour. Katherine Parr removes Elizabeth from the household at Hatfield and sends her to Sir Anthony Denny. She does this with the assistance and knowledge of Edward Seymour (the Lord Protector), Sir Thomas Smith, and William Cecil. In this smaller household of close confidants, Elizabeth does not see any doctors that summer, even though reported as “sick,” because any

examination would have revealed she was pregnant. Elizabeth gives birth to a child during July 1548.<sup>d</sup>

Months later, the plan unravels when the rash and foolish actions of Thomas Seymour cause the arrest of Elizabeth's servants. They are interrogated about his behavior with Elizabeth. Kat Ashley and Thomas Parry reveal indiscretions between Elizabeth and Thomas, but nothing is said that indicates Elizabeth intended to marry him or indicates Elizabeth has been pregnant. They agree on a story before they give their depositions, and this is why they seem to "sing together" as Lord Tyrwhit put it. Sir Thomas Smith records the depositions of Kat Ashley and Thomas Parry so nothing truly damaging to the princess is recorded for posterity. It is not until Elizabeth tries to clear her name that the idea of a pregnancy is broached by anyone. Elizabeth does not know how much Kat Ashley and Thomas Parry have revealed, and she may be trying to ascertain if the Lord Protector knows or is suspicious of her, or to deny the truth in advance. After two incriminating letters, she never mentions the issue again.

In addition, the interrogations of Elizabeth, Thomas Parry, or Katherine Ashley may not have been as intensive as the history books record them as being. Lord Tyrwhit and Sir Thomas Smith may have reported to the Lord Protector through William Cecil. This would have given Cecil the power to edit the historical record of any comments that were too damaging to Elizabeth. The most damaging comments of the whole affair came not from the interrogations, but rather from the pen of Elizabeth. Only Elizabeth mentioned the possibility of a child.

Did Edward Seymour, the Lord Protector, know of Elizabeth's pregnancy? On one hand, one could argue that William Cecil would keep a foot in all political camps and inform Edward Seymour (Lord Protector) of any private information revealed to him by Queen Katherine Parr. Then again, it may have been that William Cecil orchestrated the entire deception, and that is why Elizabeth is so grateful. In either case, it is unlikely that either William Cecil or Edward Seymour would inform the father, Thomas Seymour, that Elizabeth had given birth to his child. The historical record gives no indication that he was aware of such an event and, given his explosive personality, he probably would have done something about Elizabeth if he had known. The child, even though illegitimate, would have had some claim to the throne, especially if he was a male. This would have been an unthinkable position—Thomas Seymour running amuck as father of a royal child—for Edward Seymour or

---

<sup>d</sup> A likely date and time for Oxford's birth is July 21, 1548 at one in the morning.

William Cecil. Therefore, it is realistic to think that Thomas Seymour never knew of the pregnancy of Elizabeth or the birth of his own child.

Was there a child by Elizabeth in the summer of 1548? The evidence is not conclusive nor beyond a reasonable doubt, but there are definitely grounds for suspicions. If there was a birth, what happened to that child? Was it destroyed as reported? This appears doubtful because it was a child of royal blood and had a claim on the throne. Elizabeth was the only other strong Protestant with a solid claim on the throne in a time when death by disease was often sudden. Even though she had been made a bastard at one time by act of Parliament in 1544, Henry VIII had confirmed the line of succession as Edward, Mary, and then Elizabeth. If the child king Edward VI died unexpectedly, the next in line to the throne would be the Catholic Mary, then Elizabeth. If Elizabeth was to die or was executed by her sister, there would be no legitimate Protestant heir. The Protestant faction would logically safeguard any Protestant heir to the throne, legitimate or illegitimate. Therefore, it seems extremely unlikely that the last part of this rumor, that the child was destroyed, would be true.

In the introduction to this book, four criteria were mentioned for determining if a child might have been born to Elizabeth. The first criterion was if there were suspicious circumstances or rumors of a child; the second criterion is a window of opportunity to give birth to such a child.

1. the first criterion is fulfilled by Elizabeth writing about the rumors of her bearing a child. These statements of Elizabeth are supported by the interrogations of her servants that indicate improprieties in the relationship between Elizabeth and her stepfather, Thomas Seymour. The later comments of the Duchess of Feria further corroborate the existence of rumors of Elizabeth having a child. The detailed account of the midwife's going to the house blindfolded further lends credence to the account by painting a detailed picture of a birth. The conclusion that the child was destroyed contains little detailed description, in contrast to the birth, which makes it less convincing.
2. additionally, there is the disappearance of Mary Seymour, another child of high status, whose last known whereabouts was connected to someone who became one of Elizabeth's most trusted councilors. This gives a *modus operandi* to how an unwanted child might have been made to disappear. Cecil then emerged out of nowhere and for some inexplicable reason became the "friend" of the princess forevermore.

3. the second criterion is more than fulfilled by Elizabeth being in seclusion for four months. This is even more striking because it occurred at a time when Elizabeth should have been present at the lying-in of her stepmother, Queen Katherine Parr. While there are claims that Elizabeth was sick during this period, she was not visited by any doctor, nor is there any account of what her illness might have been.

In conclusion, there is the known disappearance of one child and there are grave suspicions of the birth of a second child to Princess Elizabeth.

The question now arises, "Where were the babies hidden?"