AWESOME stories

THE GOLDEN AGE



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Guy Hendrix Dyas, a BAFTA-winning production designer, created this image of “Visit to the Tiger, Sir Walter Raleigh’s Ship” for the film “Elizabeth: The Golden Age.” Copyright, Guy Hendrix Dyas, all rights reserved. Image online via Junsui Films and provided here to acquaint new viewers with both the work of the artist and the production company. Click on the image for a wonderful view.

When Elizabeth died - in 1603 - her country was a different place than it was when she took the throne. Smart enough to know that she should not take extreme positions, the Queen created an atmosphere in which Britain prospered.

As England flourished, so did the arts. Will Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe were just two of the great writers who created masterpieces during the Elizabethan era.

As Her Majesty's navy grew more powerful, so did the country. Explorers like Francis Drake, John Hawkins (who engaged in the slave trade) and Richard Grenville are just a few examples of people who contributed to the great wealth of the Golden Age.

By 1603, Elizabeth Tudor was nearly seventy years old. Historians tell us the queen was growing tired. She had outlived most of her trusted advisors and was feeling increasingly alone.

Two years before, one of her favorites - Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex - had betrayed her and was executed on the Tower Green. Scholars believe she never got over that loss.

By March of her final year, Elizabeth seemed depressed. She refused to allow her physicians to examine her and spent her final days (this is a PDF link) at Richmond Palace.

She quietly stood - for hours on end - as though she were deep in thought. Sometimes she would sit in a chair, but she refused to spend her days in bed. After her ladies-in-waiting spread cushions around the floor, she

rested there - for four, mostly silent days.

Then, too weak to argue, she allowed her servants to help her to bed. Still, the Queen had not named her successor. As her councilors gathered around her, that important topic was raised. So was the name of James I, her second-cousin and current King of Scotland. She made a sign which Robert Cecil, her secretary, interpreted as an agreement: James I of Scotland would also become James VI of England.

Archbishop Whitgift was summoned to offer prayers. The Queen fell asleep. She never woke up. On the 24th of March, 1603, she was dead.

Although historians have speculated on her cause of death - including blood poisoning - no one can be sure since there was no post mortem. Whether the Queen directed it - or her ladies-in-waiting decided on her behalf - her body was not embalmed. She was so revered by her people that her date of accession was a national holiday for the next 200 years.

Rulers, like kings and queens, make all kinds of pronouncements while they are alive. But when they are gone, decisions are made by others. When it came time to decide where Elizabeth I would be buried, those in charge of such things made an interesting judgment call. They determined her remains would be placed next to the woman who had disliked her in life and had imprisoned her in the Tower of London: Mary I, her half-sister.

There was one final twist to Elizabeth's final resting place at Westminster Abbey. Her tomb is not far from that of Mary, Queen of Scots. Although Elizabeth refused to ever meet her cousin in life, their bodies are near each other in death.

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Media Stream



Robert Devereux
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Elizabeth I - Burial Site
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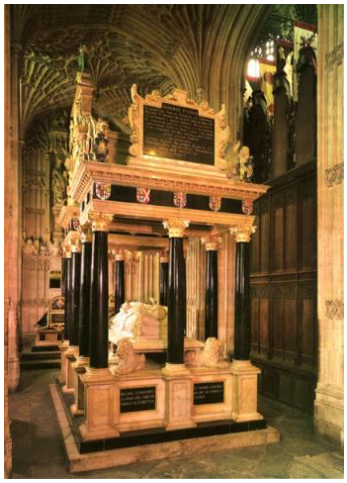


Elizabeth I and Mary I - Together at Westminster Abbey
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Mary I

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Elizabeth I - Final Resting Place

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Mary, Queen of Scots - Tomb

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Trailer - Elizabeth I: The Golden Age

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