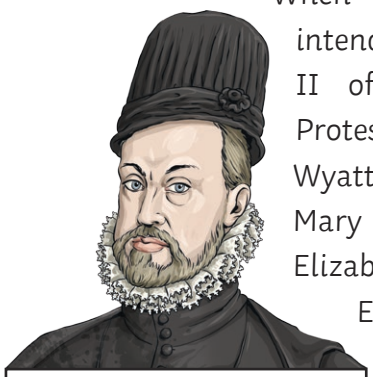
Accession of Elizabeth I **In Detail**

Mary I

Mary I's relationship with Elizabeth was complicated. Mary hated Elizabeth's mother Anne Boleyn for taking the place of her mother, Catherine of Aragon. Boleyn insisted that Mary was to be treated poorly and elevated her own daughter, Elizabeth. After the execution of her mother, Elizabeth found herself in an equally subordinated position. It took the interventions of Jane Seymour and Catherine Parr to reconcile both daughters to their father. Henry VIII restored all of his children to the line of accession before his death.

In addition, both sisters were divided along religious lines; Mary was a devout Catholic while her sister had been raised a Protestant, as was their brother Edward VI. During Mary's reign, Elizabeth had to outwardly conform as her sister was determined to make England Catholic again.



King Phillip II of Spain

When Mary announced she intended to marry King Phillip II of Spain, a prominent Protestant named Sir Thomas Wyatt conspired to overthrow Mary and replace her with Elizabeth. Letters he sent to Elizabeth to make her aware of his intentions were intercepted; Wyatt's rebellion erupted in April 1554 but was put down.

Elizabeth was taken to Whitehall, where she was questioned and interrogated, before being moved to the Tower of London. Wyatt did not implicate Elizabeth during his interrogation.

There were some in Mary I's inner political circle who called for Elizabeth to be executed to prevent any future rebellions rallying around her to overthrow Mary I.

It was King Phillip, her soon to be brother-in-law, who persuaded Mary that killing Elizabeth would be counterproductive. He was astute and realised that the English would be wary of him. If anything happened to Elizabeth, it would be blamed on him rather than Mary.

Instead, Elizabeth was released from the Tower of London and sent to live at a royal manor in Woodstock, where she was effectively a prisoner. She was monitored and watched, and while she was allowed some personal servants, they were not all of her own choosing. Some visitors were allowed but were vetted.

In 1555, Phillip persuaded Mary to reconcile with her sister. It is clear that Mary did not trust Elizabeth but at least she no longer saw her as a threat.

Mary did not have any children and when she fell gravely ill in 1558, she accepted that Elizabeth would be her successor. She officially recognised Elizabeth as her heir on the 6th November, 1558. Mary I died on 17th November and Elizabeth succeeded her to the throne.

Elizabeth I