

## **“The King's Daughter” by Sandra Worth**

### **Reader Questions**

Courtesy of Luan Gaines

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1. Elizabeth of York's story begins with the Kingmaker's rebellion against her father, King Edward IV, during the War of the Roses. What is the cause of the long enmity between the House of Lancaster and the House of York, and the division of York against itself? How might Elizabeth of York's marriage to Henry Tudor change the kingdom for the better? Does it?
2. Edward IV is haunted by a prophecy that his sons will never attain the throne. Does the prophecy come true? How does the question of Edward's marriage to Bess Woodville affect the legitimacy of his son's succession?
3. There is great enmity between Richard of Gloucester and Bess Woodville, who attempts to claim the Regency of her son, Edward V, after Edward's death. Is it reasonable to question Richard's later forgiveness of Bess? How does Bess reward Richard's generosity?
4. Elizabeth falls deeply in love with Richard III. On her deathbed, his queen, Anne Neville, encourages the girl to comfort Richard when she is gone. How do you feel about Elizabeth's love for her uncle Richard, and Anne's unusual request? Is it shocking? Is it possible to remain faithful to the memory of love?
5. Confinement is a recurring theme in Elizabeth of York's life. On two occasions she experiences sanctuary with her mother, Bess Woodville. Anne Neville's long journey towards death serves as yet another burden on her young shoulders, and also as a form of confinement. This is followed by years of virtual imprisonment by Henry and Margaret Beaufort. How do such restrictions define Elizabeth's world and the choices she makes?
6. When Richard III is killed at Bosworth Field, the Age of Chivalry dies with him; the victorious Henry Tudor, crowned Henry VII, initiates a reign of terror, impoverishment and war. As Henry's wife, Elizabeth is powerless against a vindictive husband and a mother-in-law who controls her every move. How does Elizabeth adapt to her changed circumstances?
7. From her youth, Elizabeth of York displays an extraordinary generosity of spirit, buoyed by the affection of her father, Edward IV, and her uncle, Richard III. As the wife of Henry Tudor, do these earlier relationships afford Elizabeth the courage to face a difficult future or blind her to the devious natures of those who dominate the Tudor court?
8. Elizabeth of York is a pawn to her mother's ambition, and Bess's consummate greed is rivaled only by Henry Tudor's mother, the overweening Margaret Beaufort. Discuss the relationships of these three women. Why is Elizabeth so unlike her mother and mother-in-law?

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9. In Henry VII’s revisionist history, Richard III is a hunchback, “two years in the womb”, a monster. From the vantage point of Elizabeth’s perspective, do you have a different opinion of Richard? Would such a man be capable of murdering the princes in the Tower?
10. The royal daughter of Edward IV, Elizabeth is loved by her subjects for relieving their suffering as much as she can. How does Elizabeth of York’s popularity contrast with the country’s hatred of Henry VII and his mother? Why does Margaret Beaufort replicate Elizabeth’s gowns, shadowing the queen’s every move?
11. After the devastation of the War of the Roses, Elizabeth hopes to unite the kingdom through her marriage to Henry Tudor. But after the death of Perkin Warbeck and Elizabeth’s cousin Edward, it becomes clear that Henry will use his power to destroy any perceived threat to his throne, real or otherwise. Given the consequences of her union with Henry, has Elizabeth made a terrible mistake in thinking she alone can change the course of history? Why/ why not?
12. As a witness to Henry’s every heinous act, Elizabeth later regrets her lack of assertiveness: “All my life I had avoided confrontation so much that I rarely voiced thoughts when they were unpleasant.” Is Elizabeth’s penchant for peacemaking a flaw, or a gift? Explain.
13. Because of her enduring love of Richard III, Elizabeth has a profound empathy for Catherine Gordon, widow of Perkin Warbeck, who may be Elizabeth’s brother Dickon, the younger of the two princes in the Tower. Which suffers the most despair, Catherine, who publicly grieves, or Elizabeth, who must hide her feelings? Do the memories of her brother, Dickon, sustain Elizabeth, or bring her more pain?
14. One of Elizabeth’s great conflicts is her feelings toward her sons. She adores Arthur, a noble heir to the throne, and is frightened by the arrogant Harry, who flaunts his cruelty (“He’s a Tudor, and Arthur was a Plantagenet.”). Why does Elizabeth find it so easy to love her eldest son, and so difficult to feel the same way about his brother? What might she have done differently with Harry?
15. Reflecting on Anne Neville’s unabated grief, which contributes to Richard’s despair, Elizabeth endures her sorrows without complaint and outward display of emotion. After many losses, she declares, “Death has grown over fond of me and refuses to release its embrace.” Discuss Elizabeth’s belief in God’s will and her reliance on prayer to survive the most difficult of circumstances.
16. The fate of the princes in the Tower remains history’s great mystery. After reading *The King’s Daughter*, what do you believe might have been the fate of these boys? Who was responsible for their deaths? Was Perkin Warbeck really Elizabeth of York’s brother, Richard, Duke of York?
17. How do you feel about Elizabeth of York’s life: the short years of Richard’s devotion, the marriage to Henry Tudor that fails to fulfill its promise, the heartbreaking irony of Arthur’s death and young Harry’s frightening pragmatism—the boy who will become terrifying Henry VIII? Daughter of a king, sister of a king, wed to a king and mother of a king, what is Elizabeth’s legacy?