

Devin-Thinking Sideways is not supported by a desert native in hip waders. Instead it's supported by the generous donations of our listeners on Patreon. Visit patreon dot com slash thinking sideways to learn more. And thanks.

[Intro]

Joe-Hi there. Welcome to another episode of Thinking Sideways. I'm Joe, joined as always by...

Steve-Steve.

J-This week, we're going to be talking about the disappearance of Devin. What happened to Devin from Thinking Sideways? She was supposed to be at the recording studio at 7 pm. It's 7:05, and she's not here. All right, theories. She ran away to start a new life. (Knocking in background.) Uh, can you get that?

S-Yeah.

D-Sorry guys. Sorry I'm late.

J-Oh...

D-I was Tweeting.

J-Oh.

D-Sorry, ok, sorry. Ok, ok.

J-(sighs) Well, time to find a new mystery. Hang on a second while I go through the Google. Uh, please enjoy this really restful elevator music. (Music plays). Hi there, welcome to another episode of Thinking Sideways. I'm Joe, joined as always by...

D-Devin.

J-And...

S-Steve.

J-Yeah. This week we're going to talk about a few mysteries surrounding Queen Elizabeth the First of England. Some of you guys may have heard of her.

S-Once or twice.

J-Yeah.

D-I guess.

J-And these are a couple of different mysteries that have been suggested to us by so many people that I'm not going to give you guys a shout out except to say thanks for the suggestions.

S-Well, there's a lot of mysteries around her.

D-Yeah.

J-There are some mysteries around her. One of the first mysteries that she was involved in was the misplaced colony of Roanoke.

D-Misplaced (laughing).

J-Also known as a colony we can't seem to put our hands on at the moment (S and D laughing). Yeah.

S-That's the best name ever.

D-The colony of "Nothing to see here."

J-Yeah, exactly.

D-"Please move along."

J-Uh huh. Yeah.

D-Uh huh, uh huh.

J-Don't mind the alien burn marks in the ground.

D-Uh huh. Uh huh.

J-Any of that stuff. Yeah, she was involved in that because she wanted to get England a toe-hold in the new world. All the Europeans were doing that. It was all the rage back in those days.

S-Still is.

J-Yeah.

D-Yeah.

J-She granted a charter to Sir Walter Raleigh to found a settlement in what would become Virginia, which was named after Elizabeth, because she was the Virgin Queen, yeah.

D-The Virgin Queen, yeah.

S-She was, apparently.

J-Yeah. Other nicknames, yeah, Good Queen Bess, and I think she had one or two other nicknames.

S-She had a lot of them.

J-Yeah she did. And here's the, but another mystery about her is people have been wondering for a long, long time, they still are today, is did she ever have a child?

S-That is one of them.

D-Yeah.

J-It's a big one, yeah.

D-Yeah. And I, I'm just going to jump in here real quick and say that historic mysteries like this, it will probably not surprise any of our listeners, bother me a little bit. I am not super stoked on the idea of the public fascination of "Was this woman a virgin? Was she not? Did she have a child? Did she not?" Though I understand in this one circumstance that it is of historic significance, and totally worth an episode. So if I seem a little cranky, that's why. Sorry, guys.

J-Hm, yeah. Yeah, well the...

S-Soap box away.

J-Yeah.

D-Bye (S and D laughing).

J-Yeah, expect a little crankiness there. But, you know, it is kind of something to ponder because she said she was.

S-Uh huh.

J-She said she was going to remain unmarried and a virgin, yada yada yada.

D-Yeah.

S-She made a big deal out of it.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah. The royal courts back in those days were kind of libidinous places.

D-Yeah. Oh yeah.

J-There were a lot, there was a lot of hanky panky going on.

D-Yeah, absolutely.

J-So how'd she manage to pull that one off?

D-Yeah.

S-I got to be honest, with the stuff I've read about the things that went on in court, and all of the political dealings, I know I've probably said this before, and I'll probably say it again, I don't even understand how the royalty managed to exist with all of the games they were playing.

D-Oh yeah.

S-But then again, I don't understand how the political system in our own country, which is pretty similar...

D-Yeah.

S-...has managed to get along as long as it has.

J-Yeah.

D-So luckily the mystery that we're talking about is did Elizabeth have a kid, not was she a virgin? Which is one that people have suggested, and I have outright refused every single time (Steve laughing).

J-Uh huh.

D-Cause I just, I don't care to talk about that. But we are going to talk about today, right, did she have a kid or not?

J-We're going to talk about whether she had a kid or not.

D-So let's get to it.

J-Let's solve this, yeah. Before I get into the mystery thing, I think I should give everybody a little background on Elizabeth the First.

D-Yeah, in case you haven't heard of her.

J-Yeah. Just a little history lesson here, it'll be brief, don't worry. Don't go away.

D-Well, I watched "The Tudors" so I know all of this.

J-Oh, ok. Elizabeth was born...

S-This is the same as "Game of Thrones," right?

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, pretty much.

D-Real history. Documentaries.

J-Yeah, with real dragons.

S-Yeah. Well, I mean, England always had that giant ice wall, right?

D-Yeah.

J-Oh yeah.

S-Sweet. Go ahead, Joe.

J-Ok, so she was born 1533. The daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, who was his second wife.

S-(Singing) Henry the Eighth I am, I am.

J-Yeah. And I'm sure you guys have all heard of Henry VIII and his six wives, but if you haven't, here's a quick run down. Henry was the second monarch in the Tudor line, and he and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, had a daughter who would later become Queen Mary I. And then Henry got impatient with Catherine because she had actually six children, but only one of them survived. Three of them were still born and two of them died shortly after child birth.

D-Uh huh.

J-And so she hadn't given him a son. And he wanted a royal son.

S-Which was really, really, strangely valued.

J-It was very much at the time, yeah. So he decided to move on. So he found this new girl, Anne Boleyn, and married her. There's one hitch though. He needed to persuade the Pope to annul his marriage to Catherine, and the Pope said no.

S-Understandably. The Church does not condone...

D-The Catholic Church, yeah.

S-...does not condone divorce.

J-Yeah.

D-Well, they're a little more lenient on it these days.

S-Well.

D-But at that time...

S-Not at that time.

D-...they were like, "Nah." Yeah.

J-It was seriously, seriously a rule.

D-I just, I love the fact that the Church of England was created because a king was, like, "You know what? I don't really like my wife anymore."

J-I know. That's the whole reason for it.

D-"I really want to bang this more attractive, younger chick."

J-Uh huh.

D-I mean, Steve is laughing, he's about to fall out of his chair over here. But no, I mean, like, that's basically what Henry said, was "I'm not interested in my wife anymore. I'm interested in someone else now, so..." He created an entire new Church and religion basically, because he wanted to do something else.

J-Yeah.

S-There's been quite a few figures in history who have done very similar things, though.

D-I know. It's pretty interesting.

J-Uh huh, anyway (Devin laughing). That's the story. Yeah, after marrying Anne Boleyn, she gave birth to Elizabeth. And then two and a half years after Elizabeth was born, apparently Henry was getting a little bored and was ready to move on again.

D-He wanted somebody younger.

J-Yeah, or maybe Anne was just too naggy or something, but uh...

S-Yeah, I'm sure that's what it was (laughing).

D-Uh huh.

J-Yeah, Henry accused her of adultery and had her put to death. Another character I should mention here is Kat Ashley. Katherine Ashley. She was appointed as Elizabeth's governess when she was four years old. And that's when...

S-When Elizabeth was four.

J-When Elizabeth was four, yeah.

D-Yeah. And that was, that was a prestigious title, right?

J-Oh yeah.

D-Like, we should be clear it was...

S-Of a princess, yeah.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, it's a serious thing. I mean, yeah. And she was well educated, Kat was. And she taught, taught Elizabeth astronomy, geography, history, mathematics, French, Italian, Spanish, Flemish.

S-I was, I was actually really surprised when I was reading, I never realized that Elizabeth I had such a

knack for languages.

D-Uh huh.

J-Yeah.

S-She evidently was really, really good at it.

J-Uh huh.

D-Yeah.

S-Which I don't know why that caught me so off guard, but it did.

D-Well, when you start learning languages at four.

S-That's a very good point, I hadn't thought about that.

J-It makes a big difference, I think.

D-You know, I've mentioned this before, but I have a fair number of friends who are very fluent in multiple languages, and all of them, even if they started learning the languages that they are now fluent in later in life, they all ended, they all had, you know, bilingual parents basically. So they were raised with that knack and I think it's something that a lot of kids learn early on.

J-Yeah.

D-So, if she started learning other languages at four, she was going to be good at them (Steve laughing).

J-Uh huh. Yeah. Elizabeth was pretty smart, yeah.

D-Yes. She was really smart.

S-But, but Kat was important.

J-Yeah, Kat was a very important...

D-Yeah. Well, the person who raises you is really important.

J-Yeah, she was essentially her mother.

D-Absolutely, yeah.

J-Because, as you know Henry, her step-mothers came and went.

D-Uh huh.

J-Fairly rapidly (All laughing).

S-Quite a few of them.

D-As it turns out, yeah.

J-Yeah.

D-Well I mean, but frankly, even if, you know, step-mothers managed to stay for even 10, 15 years, it doesn't really matter, because the queen at that time isn't...nobility isn't really that involved in raising their kid.

J-Uh huh, no.

D-That's just how it was then.

J-Not really that much, yeah. So anyway, the reason I brought up Kat is just that she plays a role in some of these stories.

S-Yeah, she does.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah. Back to Henry VIII for a little bit. His next wife, Jane Seymour, finally produced a male heir, Edward, who became King Edward VI after Henry died. He was nine. He immediately decreed that all candy in England belonged to him (Steve laughing).

D-I would do the same thing.

J-Hell yeah!

D-Yeah. Even now maybe, I might be like, "You know what? English candy's pretty good."

J-Yeah.

D-Yeah. You know?

J-Yeah, they do it pretty well. Unfortunately for Edward, he only ruled until he was 16, when he died. Of diabetes (S and J laughing).

D-Did he actually die of diabetes?

S-No.

J-No, no.

D-What did he die of?

J-You know, I don't remember.

S-He did not decree that all candy was his (laughing).

J-No, no, actually he didn't.

S-No, he was, he was always very sickly.

J-Yeah.

S-And he was, he had something with his lungs, it was like pneumonia. He seemed to take on things like that, or get that all the time. He had breathing issues. He had a lot of fluid in his lungs, cause it, I remember he got sick and it was winter time, and then he started getting better. And then he started getting ill again in the summer when it should have been warm and his lungs should have dried out. And I don't, you know, it may be determined at this point exactly what, what it was that he suffered from, but I don't remember what it was. But I know it was basically pneumonia.

J-Uh huh, probably. That or his half-sister Mary poisoned him.

D-Well, yeah.

J-Because, well guess who got the throne next?

S-Mary.

D-Mary.

J-Mary, Mary I, yeah.

D-Not, not Mary Queen of Scots.

S-Well, not directly. Not immediately.

J-Not Queen of Scots, no.

S-Mary didn't get it immediately.

J-There was, there was a little interim period there.

S-Of nine days.

J-Yeah, there was a little interim period. There was some contention. Well, first of all, there was a little contention about Mary I, whether she was legitimate or not, because the marriage had been annulled...

S-Uh huh.

J-...to her mother and all that stuff. But eventually it was all sorted out, and Mary got the, got the throne in 1553. And she ruled for five years until 1558 when she died. And during this time there was some plots against Mary that may or may not have involved Elizabeth. I know that these plots wanted to topple her and put Elizabeth on the throne, but whether Elizabeth actually participated in these is kind of an open question. It's thought that probably not.

S-Mary wasn't popular.

J-No, Mary wasn't that popular.

S-Pretty much nobody seemed to have really liked her.

D-Like her, yeah.

J-Yeah, no. Elizabeth was younger and prettier and people just seemed to like her better, you know.

D-Uh huh. It's, I mean, frankly it did seem that people didn't like Mary's mother very much.

J-Uh huh.

D-The people seemed to kind of like, at least in my reading, you know, I'm not British so I don't know, but...

S-I'm definitely not fully versed in this, this time frame.

J-No, me neither.

D-But it did seem to me that people, like Anne Boleyn was the people's wife of Henry.

S-The people's choice.

D-You know, people really liked her.

J-Like Princess Di.

D-For whatever reason or not. Yeah, kind of.

J-Yeah.

D-And so they liked Elizabeth more than they really liked any of the other kids. That's what it seemed like to me at least.

J-Yeah, that's fair. Back to the, back to the plots against Mary. Elizabeth spent some time in the Tower of London, I think around a year. And there was actually a question at the time of whether she might get executed or not for her maybe participation in these plots. But again, as I said, there really wasn't much evidence that she was actually involved in any of them, and I'm thinking that Mary probably was reluctant to execute Elizabeth, because they'd actually been kind of close in childhood.

D-Yeah.

J-Even though they were only half-sisters. There was kind of a schism between them when she went to the throne.

D-Uh huh.

J-But they sort of got a lot colder towards one another.

D-Yeah. Well, I mean, they were sisters, and...

J-Yeah, yeah.

D-...you know, half-sisters, they were raised together.

S-And power...

D-How old were they at that point, too? I mean...

J-Mary was quite a bit older, she was like...

S-Ten, seven?

J-At least seven years older. Maybe ten.

S-Yeah.

D-But how old was Elizabeth? She wasn't that much older, was she?

J-Or younger you mean?

D-No, I'm sorry, than Edward.

J-Yeah, she was, I think about the time that Mary took the throne, I think Elizabeth was 19 or 20.

D-Yeah. Ok, yeah.

J-Yeah, so not that much older.

D-Maybe five, four or five years.

J-Yeah, at the most.

D-Ok.

J-Yeah, ok. One last little bit of history, when Elizabeth ascended to the throne, many English Catholics didn't accept her as legitimate.

D-Right.

J-Right. Because Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn...

D-Was illegitimate.

J-...was illegitimate in their eyes. And so...

S-She'd have been a bastard.

J-She was, yeah, she was a bastard, and therefore not a legitimate heir to the throne.

D-Uh huh.

J-At this time it's believed that Henry VIII had numerous flings and affairs and he actually had...

D-What?!

J-Yeah, he actually had male children.

S-He did.

J-But they couldn't take the throne.

D-Right, because they were illegitimate.

J-Yeah.

S-He seemed to really hold to the standard of "I can only bring into the fold and give power to the ones who are officially recognized by marriage."

J-Uh huh.

S-Like, he knew, everybody knew he had these kids. It wasn't a secret. But he also didn't...

D-He was the Robert Baratheon of...

S-But he did not try to also force them in and say, "I have a boy. This is my boy. This is going to be the king."

J-Uh huh.

S-"Accept the boy. He is the king." Like, he didn't do that at all.

J-No.

S-The tenants were in place.

J-Even Henry, Henry pushed the rules and he redefined them in a lot of ways, but he knew there was only so far he could go.

S-Yeah.

D-Right.

J-Yeah.

D-And I think it's hard to say, you know, "Oh, I slept with this woman who sleeps with a lot of people one time, and now she suddenly has a son, and he's totally going to be the next king of England. I have

no way to know if he's actually my son or not, but hey.”

J-That's another good point. You want to make absolutely sure he actually is your son.

D-Yeah.

S-Yeah.

D-Which although, with, yeah.

S-Not that easy at that time.

J-Yeah.

D-No.

J-Back to Elizabeth though.

S-We keep steering you off course. Sorry.

J-Yeah. You guys totally are, but you mentioned Mary, Queen of Scots.

D-Uh huh.

J-Mary, Queen of Scots felt that she did have a better claim to the throne than Elizabeth.

D-Right, because it was legitimate though distant, right?

J-Yeah, a more distant relation to Henry VIII, but all legitimate and everything. But she never got any traction on that claim, and eventually she was overthrown in Scotland, and wound up taking refuge in England. Threw herself on Elizabeth's mercy. But couldn't refrain from mucking around in a few little plots against Elizabeth, and so in February of 1587, Elizabeth had her beheaded.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah. Although she said at the time that she didn't really mean for her to be beheaded (S and J laughing).

S-What?

J-Yeah.

S-Ok, explain, how does this go down?

J-She, she had signed Mary's death warrant, but she told her secretary not to send it off.

D-Hm.

J-But apparently certain other important persons either misunderstood the meaning of at least one word

in that order, or something (Steve laughing). No actually, a Privy Council was called, you know, without Elizabeth knowing about it, and they decided that, well, we've got the death warrant, let's carry it out, and they did.

S-Got it.

J-Yeah, Elizabeth was upset about that. Or at least she pretended to be. There's some thought, some people thought that perhaps she wasn't upset about it at all.

D-That she actually was the reason that it happened.

J-Yeah, and that she just wanted a little plausible deniability.

D-Right.

S-Yeah, well, Mary would have been a serious threat to have floating around.

J-Yeah.

D-And Mary was quite popular with a lot of people.

J-With some people she was, but, and at the same time I think Elizabeth did not want, even though she wanted Mary out of the way permanently...

D-Uh huh.

J-...she didn't like the idea of killing royalty.

D-She wasn't, I think she just wasn't really, she wasn't a killer at heart. I mean, though...

J-Well, she had a number of people put to death.

D-She did, but I also...

S-Yeah, she wasn't afraid to...

D-I don't have the sense that she necessarily was in cold blood, you know, thinking "Wow, this person might vaguely want to kill me, so I'm going to have them..." You know? That doesn't seem true to her.

J-No, she wasn't Chairman Mao or anything like that. Not at all.

D-Yeah. Briefly, this is, like, one of my favorite period bubbles, periods of time, this whole, you know, nobility in this era, in England.

S-The Elizabethan Era.

D-Not the Elizabethan Era as a whole. I mean, yes, that is very interesting to me from a costume designers perspective (Steve laughing). Cause it's interesting clothes. But just, like, the whole little bubble of nobility in this time is, like, very fascinating to me, so I'm sorry, cause I know I'm the person

who keeps taking us off track (laughing).

J-Yeah, no, that's cool.

D-So, we're not even close to getting into the mystery. But maybe Joe will be able to do that now that I've apologized for being the person.

J-Yeah.

D-I'm sorry, guys. I'm sorry.

J-No, some of that royal scheming and that stuff is kind of, kind of fascinating.

D-It's just so interesting.

J-Yeah.

S-Well, I, I don't know. I have a hard time keeping, cause there's always a bajillion players in these stories, and it's always confusing to me.

D-And they always have the same names.

S-Thank you.

D-Right?

J-A lot of that going on.

S-But the other thing that always cracks me up about this period, is everybody romanticizes it and goes on and on and how wonderful it must have been, and I'm always like, "Are you kidding me?"

D-They painted their faces with lead paint and pooped in the streets (Joe laughing).

S-I don't want to live, yeah, I don't want to live there. We live in a gilded age now.

D-Yeah, yeah.

S-And I'm sorry, when you're in a castle where there's, you know, all kinds of vermin running around and the only reason you don't see it is because the maids are sweeping up their droppings every morning.

J-Uh huh.

S-Which, by the way, spreads a bunch of diseases, it's not a time to just be hanging out. Life sucked!

J-It did.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, I mean...

S-Even for nobility.

J-You know, really, poor people in America today are just so much better off, materially speaking, than royalty was back in those days.

D-Yeah.

S-Yeah.

D-Well, I mean, nobility almost, you know, had it almost worse off again, because you know, there was that whole, "We've got to paint our faces white," and it was lead paint.

S-Uh huh.

D-"And we've got to do all these things to make ourselves look rich," and they're just poisoning their bodies and it's horrible.

S-Yeah.

D-But it's still very fascinating to me.

J-Uh huh.

S-It is, it is.

D-Again, I'm sorry, we're super off track again.

J-We are off track.

D-Let's keep going.

J-That's ok. Speaking of all the scheming and everything like that, I mean, this is just the British royal family. But imagine what it would be like to be a member of the Saudi royal family.

D-Oh God.

J-Ibn Saud, the founder of Saudi Arabia, had 200 children.

D-That was crazy, yeah.

J-Oh my God (Steve laughing).

D-Insane, right?

J-And thousands of grandchildren.

D-What about, what about, like, what about Genghis Khan even. I mean, like, there's like a 20% chance

that any human being has his DNA (laughing).

J-Yeah.

S-Yeah, anyone...

D-Let's talk about that for a second.

S-...who's descended from mainland China, I think, it's not 20%, it's 80%.

D-It's insane.

S-It's an insane amount, yeah.

J-Uh huh.

S-Yeah. He, he populated that entire country (laughing).

D-A lot.

J-Yeah, he was even worse than Henry VIII.

S-Yeah, he was (laughing). Well, now that we've just talked about all kinds of naughty business, let's talk about a virgin queen.

J-Let's talk about her. The mystery is did she have a kid? Elizabeth was never married and there's been a lot of speculation about why. And I'm not so surprised personally, because her mother and her step-mother, Katherine Howard, were both beheaded by Henry VIII.

D-Yeah. Did not have great stereotypes, stereotypes? No, no.

S-Idyllic? Idyllic marriages?

D-No. Didn't have really good prototypes for marriage.

J-It was, yeah, I mean, what she saw of marriage just wasn't good.

D-No.

J-Yeah. Her friend Robert Dudley who we'll be talking about in a little bit, they knew each other since the age of 8, and they were very close all throughout their lives. He said that, much later, that after the execution of Katherine, Katherine Howard that is, Elizabeth told him that she would never marry.

D-Uh huh.

J-And you can see where she might be a little cynical about the while marriage thing.

D-Yeah.

J-Plus also marriage meant having kids, which was dangerous back in those days. And as I said, Catherine of Aragon had six kids, three of who were still born and two of whom died right after birth.

D-Yeah.

S-Yeah.

J-And that's a lot to, that was not uncommon at all back in those days.

D and S-Yeah.

J-That's a lot of suffering to go through for no results.

D-It really is.

J-Yeah.

D-And there's, I mean...

S-And that, that sounds crass. I understand what you're getting at.

J-Yeah.

D-No, it doesn't sound, I mean, it's a reality of...

S-Well, but it sounds harsh, but you're right. It is a reality.

D-Absolutely. I mean, the chances of you dying in childbirth at that time is insane. Not only, you know, to give birth to a still born child or a child who dies shortly after that. The fact that you might die in childbirth was extremely high.

S-Uh huh.

J-Uh huh.

D-I also wonder if maybe there was a bit of, she was Queen, she was ruling a country, but you know, typically nobility was men...

J-Yeah.

D-...so I almost wonder if she thought, "If I marry someone, they will suddenly be in charge."

S-Uh huh.

J-Yep.

S-That's very true.

D-So that could have been part of it as well. And I know...

J-Yeah. She didn't want to share power.

D-I mean, there's a lot of reasons, right?

J-Yeah.

S-Yeah.

J-And another reason was that she had potential suitors among the royalty of Europe...

D-Yeah.

J-...one of which was King Philip of Spain, which was, Spain at that time was a lot more powerful than Britain, and it was thought that Philip might stage a hostile takeover, meaning like an invasion. And eventually, eventually the Spanish did. You remember the Spanish Armada?

D-Yeah.

S-Oh, well yeah, they were always, they were all at war with each other constantly.

J-Yeah, yeah. And so, but she kind of wanted to keep it ambiguous with Philip, you know. Like she...

D-He was, cause he was interested in marrying her.

J-He was.

S-She was keeping him in the friend zone.

D-Right.

J-Yeah. She was, yeah, and so she was just sort of keeping him put off because he was thinking, "Hey, if I marry Elizabeth, England is mine."

D-Yeah.

J-"Without having to fire a shot."

D-Yeah.

J-And so...

D-I got 99 problems, but England ain't one (S and J laughing).

J-I guess so. So Elizabeth was actually able to forestall war by doing this.

D-Right. By not marrying.

J-Yeah, yeah, but she did it for the good of England.

D-Yeah. She was able, yeah.

J-Yeah, of course, Philip did eventually get tired of waiting and war did break out, and there was that whole defeat of the Spanish Armada, which was one of Elizabeth's most spectacular successes. Of course, bad weather played a big part in that too.

D-Yeah.

S-Shh, shh. Don't say that.

J-So, a lot of the question about, a lot of people think, "Wow, it's so mysterious she didn't marry." And that figures into some other mysteries too, by the way, which we'll be talking about.

D-Yeah.

J-But, it's possible. It's understandable. Ok.

S-So, our mystery is did she have a child? So how are we going to approach this?

J-Yeah.

S-How do you want to organize this, Joe?

J-Well, I thought what I would do is I would list some of the guys that it's rumored that she had babies with.

D-Ok.

S-Ok, or a baby at least.

J-Or at least one baby, yeah. And there are several candidates for that.

S-Ok.

J-And then we'll just talk about how plausible it is that something happened.

D-Yeah. And then maybe we'll talk about who might be children of Queen Elizabeth?

J-Uh huh. Let's talk about possible fathers.

S-So who's the first one here?

J-Yeah, ok, these are just the ones that people believe may be the ones.

S-Uh huh.

J-The first candidate is Thomas Seymour. After the death of Henry VIII, his widow at that time, that was his last wife, Katherine Parr, waited about six months and remarried (Steve laughing).

S-She waited.

J-Yeah, yeah, and so she married Thomas Seymour.

D-And that's a different Thomas Seymour than might be related to Jane Seymour?

J-Jane Seymour, that gave birth to James the Sixth [sic].

D-They're not related, right?

J-I thought that, that they were distantly related, like cousins or something like that.

D-Oh, ok.

S-Again, why I get so confused when we talk about these stories.

D-It's hard. Again, they all have the same name.

J-Yeah, I...

S-I wish, you know what we need to do to this studio, is we need to just paint that wall with a chalkboard material, and then we can, you can just draw on it...

D-It just needs to be glass and we'll use dry erase.

J-That's a good, that's a good idea.

S-Yeah.

J-But yeah, it got to the point where this is so convoluted I stopped trying to, like, you know...

S-Figure out who was who.

J-Figure out exactly what the relationship between all these people was.

D-Yeah.

S-I know, I know you did a bunch of leg work with it, but it is, it gets out of hand very quickly.

D-Yeah.

J-Oh, yeah, yeah.

S-So, Seymour.

J-So Thomas Seymour, so she remarried and then Elizabeth came to live with Katherine Parr and Thomas Seymour for a while. I think about ten months.

S-And she was 13, 14 at that time?

J-She was, yeah, I think.

D-A blooming woman.

J-Yeah.

S-Possibly.

J-Yeah. Well anyway, apparently Thomas took a big interest in her and had a habit of showing up in Elizabeth's bedroom, you know, like early in the morning and stuff like that.

S-Ugh.

J-And frolicking with her and tickling her, and stuff like that.

D-For, quote unquote, "tickling sessions."

J-Yeah.

D-Ugh.

J-So I don't know how Elizabeth felt about this. She might have been flattered by the attention, or maybe she was annoyed, or maybe a little creeped out. Maybe she was really into it. And this is why he's put...

S-It could potentially be the first man who has shown any attention to her, so that would be the argument for maybe she actually wasn't put off by it.

D-Or, you know, he was in a position of power in her life, and she didn't feel like she was in a place to deny what he was doing.

J-Yeah. That was, she might have maybe felt a little bit dependent on him, yeah.

D-Uh huh. I mean, they had opened their home to her.

J-She was an orphan.

D-She was an orphan, and she was living in a style that maybe she was not necessarily accustomed to, you know, and they were being kind to her.

J-Uh huh.

D-And so she thought, "Well, they're being nice to me, so I can't say no."

J-But that's what the situation was. Katherine Parr was apparently undisturbed by this behavior at first, but apparently Kat Ashley was not cool with it at all.

D-Hm.

S-Well, yeah, Katherine had participated a time or two.

J-She had participated a few times in these tickling sessions.

D-I can only imagine that Katherine didn't so much like Elizabeth.

J-Uh huh.

D-If only because she was an earlier child of her past husband's, right?

J-Uh huh.

D-So.

J-Yeah, I don't know. Maybe she didn't. But she liked her enough to take her in, so that was nice of her.

D-Yeah.

J-But apparently she decided that it would be best for Elizabeth to live elsewhere, so apparently she decided for some reason or another she wasn't cool with Elizabeth and her husband being under the same roof. So I don't know that anything ever actually happened, and...

D-But we also don't know that nothing happened.

J-We also don't know that either. Elizabeth left the household in May 1548 at age 14, so there was that ten month period is which something could have happened.

D-Yeah. And, and what's the time line after that? Is there kind of some unaccounted for time in Elizabeth's time line after that?

J-Well, no, there was never any period where she was, like, out of sight or anything like that, where she could have just been invisible.

D-Uh huh.

J-But just the, obviously in this period of her life, she was...

S-A minor player.

J-Yeah, she was a lot less in the public eye.

D-Uh huh.

J-And so it's conceivable she could have gone off somewhere and had a baby somewhere.

D-Uh huh. Especially at 13 or 14, it's not as though...

J-It's not unusual in those days.

D-Yeah.

J-Not even unusual in these days, actually.

D-Hmm, yeah.

J-Yeah. But, and then off course, the offspring of this liaison was, according to these theories, none other than William Shakespeare. I'm not sure if it's the same William Shakespeare, because Seymour died in 1549, and Shakespeare, as far as I know, was born in 1564.

D-But you don't know who Shakespeare was.

J-It's hard to say, and I'm not sure exactly what year he was born, because nobody has his actual date of birth.

D-Nobody actually knows who Shakespeare was.

J-Yeah. He was born in, he was not born, he was baptized in 1564.

D-As William Shakespeare?

J-I believe so, yeah.

D-Ok. Well, and you know, in those days, even a hundred years ago, that whole baptism thing, the whole birth record thing, was kind of just whenever you felt like it.

J-Uh huh.

D-You know? I have family just a generation ago, that they say, "Oh yeah, this is my birth date, because that's when Mom wrote it in the bible." My grandfather, in fact, found out when he enlisted in the Army, that he was a year older than he thought he was (D and S laughing).

J-Oh really?

D-Yeah.

S-Jeez.

D-Yeah. So I mean, it happens, pretty recently, so in those days, it could have totally happened.

J-Uh huh, oh yeah.

S-So, but ok, so, but here's my thing with this Thomas Dudley [sic] bit.

D-Oh, I guess I should...

S-Or Thomas Seymour bit.

D-Yeah. And I want to add I also agree it's not good (laughing).

S-Ok.

D-No.

S-Ok, so the thing is, we haven't said, by the way, he was 40 years old at this time.

J-Yeah, he was a bit older than her.

S-39 or 40, depending on when exactly when everything went down. But, my problem with the whole she was pregnant with his child, is today it's possible for girls to get pregnant as early as 12 or 13, but there's, there's the stuff about, the sexual maturity is coming earlier based on diet. Have you ever read any of this stuff?

D-Have I ever? Yes (laughing).

S-Ok, well you were looking at me like I was crazy for a second (laughing).

D-No. The reason I'm looking at you like you're crazy is because it's not unreasonable to think that in that time a girl who was 13 or 14 would be pregnant.

S-See, but I don't, the way I interpreted things, I took it as actually the norm for reproductive age was more in line with 16 or 17.

D-But that's not to say that it's not possible at...what we're talking...

S-The rabbit test is possible as well if we're going to say whatever is in the realm of possible...

D-Sure. We're talking about modern days, like, puberty coming very early for girls, we're talking, like, 9 and 10, not, like, 13 and 14. That's a normal time for people to be hitting puberty.

J-That's what I thought too.

D-Yeah. So even in those days, 13 and 14 totally normal for somebody to be getting pregnant. We're talking, like, these days...

S-Ok, maybe, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I'm misunderstanding what I read, but the stuff I'm reading...

D-You're probably reading on average.

S-Well yeah, and that's the thing. I'm looking at the average. I'm not calling her an exception to the norm.

D-Sure.

S-I'm saying on average, that's a pretty tall order.

D-14 to 16. Give them two years.

J-Yeah.

D-But no, I totally hear what you're saying.

J-But yeah, she was 14 when she left, so I think she was old enough, I really do.

S-Yeah, I shake my head at this because I don't...

D-"Romeo and Juliet" is the one I go to. But I mean, it was written by William Shakespeare. Maybe it was inspired by his mother who got pregnant at 16, or 13. Who knows.(Steve laughing).

J-Yeah, it's a possibility.

S-Oh Lord.

J-That's a whole other mystery which we'll, I don't know if we'll tackle or not.

S-Shakespeare?

J-Who was Shakespeare?

D-Who is Shakespeare?

S-Yeah, I don't know.

D-I don't know.

J-Yeah. But it does seem like Shakespeare is involved in this quite a bit.

D-Yeah.

J-In this whole Elizabeth thing.

D-Weird. Yeah.

S-Well, the other thing that I was going to say is that Seymour, like all of this stuff with him mucking about with Elizabeth...

D-Yeah. It feels wrong, right?

S-Well, it feels wrong.

J-A little tacky, yeah.

S-He, he exhibited some really questionable behavior. He got his head cut off the next year.

J-He eventually did, yeah.

S-Because he, he was in some plot, and he was sneaking into the King's residence, and he set off one of the dogs. And rather than, like a normal person, just running away, he shot the dog and made a big to-do, and then got out. Like, the guy had really bad judgment all the way around.

J-Yeah.

S-So, like, I question whether he was just, had several screws loose and that's why he was messing with her? Or if it was really some weirdo power play?

J-Uh huh, I don't know.

S-I mean, the whole thing just, just smells really off to me

J-It, it was a little off.

D-And it feels really convenient.

J-Yeah.

S-Uh, yes.

D-Right?

J-Yeah.

D-Some of these feel like, ok maybe, maybe that's a legit theory, but a lot of them feel like well, that's very convenient that that would have happened at that time.

J-Yeah. So yeah. Let's rule him out, although I've got to say that this is the period that I consider the most likely because it was before she ascended to the throne.

S-Uh huh.

D-Yeah. So she would have been out of the public eye and it would have been easy for her to just kind of, in nine months...

J-Yeah. It would have been easier. I still think it would have been pretty much impossible to keep it secret.

S-Well, there is a way that it could have been kept secret.

J-Oh, you kill everybody who knows about it.

S-No.

J-What's that?

S-No. She never brought the child to term. Though it was illegal and highly frowned upon, abortions did happen.

J-That's true.

S-So it is possible that she aborted the child.

J-Uh huh.

S-And it's also possible, based on practices of it at the time, that that could have rendered her sterile, which is why she then never had a kid again.

J-Uh huh. And maybe why she chose not to have sex again.

S-Yeah. "This, this was not awesome. Don't really like that."

J-Yeah (laughing).

S-"Thanks, no, not doing that again."

J-Yeah. And it might be, it might be if she was truly molested by, by Thomas Seymour, then maybe that kind of turned her off on the whole sex thing.

S-Yeah. Exactly.

J-Yeah.

S-So there's a very plausible, though again I consider Seymour, you know, not a good, valid candidate.

J-Yeah, yeah.

S-There are a lot of possible reasons afterwards.

J-Uh huh, yeah. One reason I don't really buy into him as a father is that after she left Katherine Parr's household, they still maintained a very friendly correspondence, which I think would be kind of, don't you think that would be unlikely if Katherine, if her husband had impregnated Elizabeth, do you think she would not be feeling all that friendly towards her?

S-I would say that that would kind of chill the relationship, yeah.

D-Absolutely, yeah.

J-You would think, yeah. And they apparently had a good relationship, so probably not Thomas. Next on our list, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. And for those of you who are not British, this is spelled "Lie-chester."

D-"Lie-chester."

J-But it's pronounced "Lester."

S-I really, we, we gotta start a campaign...

J-Yeah.

S...to either start adding vowels and consonants to town names in general, just to repeat this pattern, or lobby all of England to change the spelling of their towns to the way they sound.

D-Well, obviously since I'm going to marry Prince Harry when I'm queen, I'll lobby for that.

S-Oh, is he not married yet?

J-Ok.

D-No, cause he's waiting for me (Steve laughing).

J-Yeah.

S-Ok. We were talking about Robert Dudley (Devin laughing).

J-One of my favorite English town names is Dull, and it's actually spelled the way it's pronounced, d-u-l-l.

D-Uh huh.

J-And they are the one's who have the sister city relationship with the town of Boring, Oregon.

D-Yeah (all laughing). Like, of course they do, right?

J-I love it. And these two towns really do exist.

D-They do.

J-Ok. We'll do an episode about that.

D-Ok, but Robert Dudley.

J-Robert Dudley and Elizabeth had known each other since they were eight years old, and as I said, they were the best of friends. And a lot of people suspected at the time that they were lovers because they were so close, and Elizabeth showered...

S-Well, they were childhood friends.

J-Oh yeah. And so, and so especially when you're royalty and people are always trying to stab you in the back there's probably not all that many people that you can really trust, so that's got to have something to do with it.

D-You would think a friend since you were eight you probably could trust.

S-Yeah.

J-Yeah. Somebody who's never, who's never, you know, done you wrong or anything like that.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah. And I think he was trustworthy, and she showered lots and lots of favors on him, and...

S-And that of course made everybody think that they were lovers.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, it did, yeah. And there was lots of other, I won't get into every little detail, but there was lots of reasons, but she, he benefited quite a bit by his relationship with Elizabeth, financially and otherwise. And of course, Elizabeth was certainly, was intensely grief-stricken when he died. The kind of grief that you would show, display when you've lost somebody really close to you.

S-Uh huh.

D-Yeah.

J-Maybe a lover.

D-Yeah, but maybe a friend. I mean...

J-Well, it could be that too.

D-You know, if you have a true intense friend since you're eight, that person's your family.

J-Uh huh.

D-And...

J-Oh yeah, definitely. And especially when the actual members of your family are either, like, dead or off, like...

D-Or awful.

J-...marrying a new step-mother or they're awful, yeah (laughing).

D-Yeah (laughing).

S-Courting your cousin.

D-Yeah.

J-He was probably more family, like you say.

D-Uh huh.

J-And there was talk that they might potentially get married, but there was one hitch, because Dudley was married himself. He married a woman named Amy Robsart, I hope I'm pronouncing that correctly, in 1550. And then she fell down some stairs in her home in 1560, and broke her neck, which did clear the way for Elizabeth and Robert Dudley to marry, which is handy.

S-Yeah, but people considered it to be an assassination (laughing).

J-Uh, yeah, there was a lot of speculation that, that Robert Dudley had her, had had her murdered just so he could marry Elizabeth. And so he was very unpopular in England for a time. Actually for quite a long time because of that. Although personally, I don't think he did it. That's yet another mystery, and you'll read the occasional article in Britain about it. You know, the unsolved mystery of her death, and all that stuff. But the fact of that matter is, is she had, like, advanced cancer at the time she died.

S-Uh huh. She did, yeah.

J-So there was no reason for him to murder her, at all.

S-Yeah, it was a matter of time.

J-Yeah. So ok, we'll put that mystery down. But even without being married to Robert Dudley, it doesn't mean they couldn't have, you know, done the deed and had kids.

D-Right. Yeah.

J-Or at least a kid. Some of the proposed offspring were Francis Bacon.

D-France is bacon (Steve laughing).

J-France is bacon, yes, I know. France is bacon. How do you like that, French? (D and S laughing). Yeah. Actually you could be worse things.

D-Yeah, absolutely. Bacon's pretty well liked.

J-Bacon is pretty awesome, yeah.

D-Yeah.

J-But anyway, Francis Bacon, of course, many people believe, was really William Shakespeare.

D-Yeah.

J-He rears his ugly head again in here. So at this time Elizabeth would have been 28. She would have been on the throne for three years. So, I don't know.

S-Again, we're, we're coming, I know where Joe is going with this, which is the hard part of hiding it.

J-Yeah, exactly.

D-Ok.

S-Hiding a pregnancy.

D-Yeah.

J-Well, we'll talk about that in a second, though.

D-Yeah, we can talk, yeah, let's talk about that in a second.

J-I know we'll talk about, let me just toss a few more out there.

D-Yeah, yeah.

J-Robert Devereux, the 2nd Earl of Essex. When Devereux came onto the scene, he and Elizabeth became besties, and they were really close, and some have even said, some people have speculated that they were actually lovers. Like, even though he was quite a bit younger than her.

S-Significantly, yes.

J-Significantly younger, yeah. But other people have said that they had more like a mother-son relationship and they were really close. So, if it had been Devereux, then she would have been 32 years old when he was born. Some of the reasons I think people suspect him of this is that he, he was kind of a bad actor sometimes. I mean, they had a good relationship, but he was kind of a loose canon, and...

S-Didn't he get himself killed?

J-Well, by Elizabeth, yes.

S-Yeah.

J-Yeah, she executed him, finally. Yeah.

S-Yeah, cause he kept doing stupid stuff.

J-Yeah, exactly. And so eventually she felt she had no choice, and I suppose it's possible that a mother would have her son executed.

S-Yeah.

J-But...

D-Seems unlikely though.

J-...it seems kind of unlikely.

S-Well, but he, he did some real, I mean...

J-Oh, he did.

S-...she kept giving him military commissions, and he kept no-showing them (laughing). Which is a huge no-no. Like, just show up and stay in the tent, for God's sake.

J-Yeah. Or just, you know, and in the end he got involved in a plot against her.

S-Yeah.

J-You know, again, which, you know, against your own mother?

D-Don't do that.

J-Don't do that. Of course, maybe he didn't know that he was actually her son.

S-Uh...

J-But I still find it hard to believe that she would do that rather than just, like, have him locked up permanently in the Tower or something like that.

D-Hit him across the face a couple of times, yeah.

J-Yeah.

S-Give him a good spanking.

J-Yeah. Let's talk about another candidate, who is Arthur Dudley. Dudley showed up in the court of Philip of Spain in 1587 and claimed to be the son of Robert Dudley and Elizabeth. He said that he was raised unaware of this by a guy named Robert Southern, who told him on his death bed who he really was. And Dudley fled the country, he said, because he was afraid Elizabeth's agents would murder him to keep the secret that he now knew.

S-Which makes no sense.

J-Yeah, no.

S-I mean, if they were going to kill you, they'd have killed you a long time ago.

J-Well, yeah.

S-They have no idea when you were told the truth.

J-Well, the only guy, the only guy who knew was the guy who told him who died immediately afterwards.

S-Right.

D-Uh huh.

J-Robert Southern, so if he just kept his mouth shut, he was perfectly safe.

S-Yeah.

J-Yeah. So I'm not sure how much of that makes sense. Arthur Dudley did actually exist. There's strong evidence at least that he did. There's mention of him even in the records of Elizabeth's court, that they were aware that he'd showed up at Philip's court in Spain.

D-Uh huh.

S-Uh huh. The thing that, though he showed up in the court, it's really suspected that he wasn't really who he said he was, and by that I mean he wasn't, he may not have actually been Arthur Dudley.

J-Yeah.

S-Cause there was spies everywhere.

J-Uh huh.

S-And it seems, there's some research that indicates that he was a spy who really stuck to his story...

J-That's...

S-...and would not let it go.

J-That is what a lot of people believed at the time, yeah.

D-Yeah.

J-And so, it's, I don't know too many people that take this guy seriously. I mean, he was, he was around. He did make these claims, but he was probably just an impostor.

S-And when do we know, when would he, how old was he? When would he have been born?

J-He would have been born, well it, depending, I've heard various estimates, but based on his age, it was estimated that he was about 25, I think. And that he would have been born, maybe, in 1561.

S-Ok.

J-And so in Summer 1561 there was one significant thing, which was that Elizabeth was ill. She got, she had this spell where she came down with edema, which is swelling of the tissues...

D-It was called dropsy at the time, right?

J-Exactly. And maybe she could have been pregnant, you know? She was bed-ridden and all that, so. This is also around the time...

D-And how old, sorry. How old would she have been?

J-She would have been 28.

D-Yeah, I mean, ok.

S-Ok.

J-Ok.

D-I mean, yeah. At that...as someone who is currently 28 years old, at that time, it seems like it would be late to be pregnant.

S-In that day and age?

D-Yeah. In that day and age, that's seems like a late pregnancy.

J-Yeah.

D-We're talking, you know, people are getting pregnant at 15, 16, 17, maybe as early as 13, 14.

S-Maybe.

D-You know, to carry a baby to term and have it be healthy and survive.

J-Uh huh.

D-It's not unheard of, certainly it's not unheard of, but it seems...

J-Yeah.

S-The older you get, the harder it is.

D-Oh yeah, absolutely.

S-I mean, I understand that.

D-Yeah, and with modern medicine, it's, like, fine, but in those times, when we were like, "Hey, oh yeah, leeches. That'll solve your problem, no problem."

J-Yeah (laughing).

S-Or, what was it they were given? They would give mothers during or after childbirth, ergot. Did you guys know that? I just heard this recently.

J-Yeah.

D-Yeah. "Here's some mold for you."

S-It would thicken the blood.

D-"Yeah, no problem. Yeah, you're going to be good. It's some mold, it's fine. Just eat it."

J-Yeah.

S-"Just chew on this."

D-"I know your body thinks that that's poison, but just eat it anyway." (Steve laughing).

J-Yeah, I know. That's why a lot of that stuff was, like, alcohol for example, makes you feel better. Makes you feel good.

D-Yeah.

J-It's really kind of poison, but, and so, things like blood-letting and stuff.

D-Yeah.

J-What would happen, the blood pressure drop would make you high, it would make you light-headed and it would make you feel better.

D-And you would think that's fine.

J-And they concluded, "Hey, this must be beneficial, because they report feeling better."

D-Yeah.

J-And so, ok...

D-But yeah, 28, eh.

J-Uh, 28, it's possible.

D-It's possible. It's totally possible.

J-Yeah, it's totally possible.

D-And the fact that she was sick with dropsy, which, you know, bed-ridden for a couple months.

J-Bed-ridden, kind of swollen.

D-Swollen, yeah.

J-Uh huh.

D-I hear it, yeah.

J-Yeah. Maybe she was pregnant, I don't know. Let's go on to our next suspect...

D-Well like...I'm sorry, just quickly, wasn't that about the same time that Francis Bacon was...

J-Uh huh, yeah, it was.

D-...born too?

J-Yeah.

D-Just want to make sure.

J-So it was either Francis Bacon, aka Shakespeare, or it was Arthur Dudley, or neither one.

D-Or neither, yeah.

J-Yeah.

D-Or she actually just had edema.

J-It, probably it's what it was. I mean, I can't imagine, I mean, I know edema causes swelling, but that would be a lot of swelling, you know, to be actual pregnancy-sized.

D-I, uh...I mean, every woman carries a pregnancy different, and, you know, I've seen pictures of people who I, like, didn't believe are pregnant who were, like, nine months pregnant. And I've also seen pictures of people who are nine months pregnant that I think, like, you're just obese (all laughing). It's hard to tell.

J-Yeah.

D-It's just hard to tell. Everybody carries a pregnancy differently and if you've got all these corsets and you're kind of bed-ridden and people are thinking, "Oh, you're sick," it's possible. I don't know.

J-Uh huh. I don't know either.

D-I'm not willing to discount it.

J-Yeah, ok. Well, let's go on to our next suspect, who was Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, who of course was also rumored to be William Shakespeare (all laughing).

D-Of course.

J-I know, I know. I'm not, I don't know, I mean, there's a whole, huge community out there of people who are arguing back and forth on if this guy was Shakespeare, or this guy was Shakespeare, and they have all kinds of theories and evidence and everything.

D-Yeah. And again, that may be an episode in our future.

J-You never know, I don't know. I mean, we're going to have to get some serious, scholarly work done if we're going to do that.

S-Yeah.

J-I mean, these guys, these guys are hardcore. I mean, these guys aren't just guys on Reddit or anything like that. They're writing books about this.

D-Hey! (Steve laughing).

J-Yeah.

S-Redditors write books.

J-Not that I'm slamming Reddit, but yeah, this is a little more scholarly. But anyway, back to our thing.

The offspring of Oxford and Elizabeth would have been a guy names Henry Wriothesley, who was born in 1573. And I don't know what ever went on to happen to Henry, but there's not much out there on him. But at this time Elizabeth would have had to have been about 40, which causes me a little bit of doubt. At 40, seriously, at that age...

D-Yeah, there's no way. I mean, even now, 40...

J-Even now it's tough to get pregnant at 40.

S-Yeah.

J-Yeah. So, the problem I have with all these theories is that, is that again, this all took place after she ascended to the throne...

S-Except for the first one.

J-Yeah, except for the first one with Thomas. So it's, like, imagining it would have been a little easier than if say Princess Diana going about her everyday business pregnant and not having the paparazzi not notice it.

D-Yeah.

J-But still there's a lot of people around. There would have had to have been people attending to her childbirth and stuff like that, so somebody, you would think, would have talked.

D-Uh huh.

J-You think?

D-After, yeah. At least after the fact.

J-Yeah.

D-You would think.

J-Yeah.

S-You would imagine so.

D-You can understand maybe while she was alive, you know, you're keeping somebody rich. There's no reason to talk. But...

J-Uh huh. There's good reasons not to make the Queen mad by running your mouth.

D-Yeah, absolutely.

J-But, at the same time, a lot of people would have written it down in their memoirs or their diaries or journals. There would have been mention of it. I wanted to talk about one more suspect for a father, which was a guy named Miles Stafford, and he has very recently been put forward by a guy named

Seth Margolis, who published a novel called “The Semper Sonnet.” I don't think it's too much of a spoiler to reveal this, but Elizabeth does have a child very early in the book. And again, which I want to clarify, is a work of fiction...

S-But Seth did a ton of research.

J-He did a lot of research for this book.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, and so, let me give you a quick run down of the plot. Our protagonist is a woman named Lee Nichols [sic]. She's discovered a previously unknown sonnet by William Shakespeare. When she goes public with it, all hell breaks loose (Steve laughing). And she finds out some people really, really want that sonnet for a reason she'll discover if you read the book. So anyway, it's a fun read. It, uh, Seth, we actually were able to get a hold of him. He was kind enough to actually answer some questions about Elizabeth and his research and his book. And so let's talk to Seth here for a sec. So Seth, thanks for talking to us. We really appreciate it, and I guess my first question for you is that you have found a new potential father for a child that Elizabeth might have had, named Miles Stafford. So, did Miles really exist?

Seth-No, I'm sorry to say.

J-It's ok (laughing).

Seth-I found it much more interesting to invent him and then dispatch him quickly. You never really hear from him other than he had this rare genetic disorder that passed on this tendency to “shivering,” as someone calls it in the book.

J-Uh huh.

Seth-Which I thought was an interesting sort of way to keep his sort of lineage alive was, you know, not in a particularly positive way. It also made it, you know, when you're writing a thriller, it made it interesting because, you know, when the, Lee Nicholson, the 21st Century heroine of the book, would come across various locations where the Filer family lived, she would see, for instance, two fireplaces in one room, and realize, you know, that became an indication that these people who lived there had a real obsession with staying warm (laughing).

J-Uh huh.

Seth-So that's the one thing that I had my fictional father of the, of the Elizabethan offspring pass on to his, to his descendents. And of course the name Filer, you know, cause you read the book, it's full of word play and the, you know, the word Filer is an adaptation of the French word *fil*s for son and “e-r” for Elizabeth Rex. And French was the main language spoken at the time, or a version of it, in the Elizabethan court, so it was interesting, or likely that she would have had, if she had a child, might have given him that name just as a sort of sly reference to who his, at least his mother was.

J-So in real life, one candidate for a child of Elizabeth that's really popular with people is Robert Devereux. What do you think about him as a suspect?

Seth-Right. He was one of several people that she sort of showered her royal pleasures on in ways that mystified people at the time, you know. Why him? And so there were always rumors. And she did have a very close relationship with his father, Robert Dudley, also known as Leicester. And, you know, I think she had his bedroom moved next to hers and, you know, there's all sorts of...so you know, if there was going to be an offspring, it would have been most likely with him. And there was actually, there was someone named Arthur Dudley who surfaced at one point, who claimed to be the offspring of the two of them.

J-Oh yeah, showed up at Philip of Spain's place.

Seth-Yeah, because the Catholics never, never saw her as a legitimate, well, as legitimate period, but as a legitimate monarch of England. So if they could find any sort of scandal that would, you know, add further illegitimacy to her, it would work to their ends. And in fact, in my book, that's one of the reasons that she disguises the fact that she had a child, is that it would imperil her, her claim to the throne. And of course in "The Semper Sonnet," she has the child before she becomes queen. Most of the rumors about, or the theories about her having a child have her having the child while she was queen. And as I said, there's so many of them. Either she, at one point she took to her bed. She had some sort of mysterious illness, which I think they called at the time dropsy, but today we would call it edema, which is a swelling in the midsection, so of course if you, and I think that's pretty much historical fact, that she had, that she was taken to her bed with dropsy, or edema, and that she had a swollen abdomen. So if you're inclined to think that she had a child, this might have been a good time for that child to have been carried, because she had, you know, she could have used that as an excuse to disguise her pregnancy.

J-Our last question, you've done a lot more research on this really than we have, and so I guess I'd like to know, do you really think Elizabeth had a child?

Seth-You know, I don't know. I would suspect not. I tend to be a discounter of conspiracy theories.

J-Yeah.

Seth-And so, you know, it was a really intriguing idea for a novel, and there are bits and pieces of her life and the circumstances around it that might lead you to think she had a child, but I, I tend to think she didn't. But you know, I think it's sort of like, you know, if you think about the Kennedy Assassination, again I'm not a conspiracy theorist in general, so I think Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone, but a lot of people just feel that it's, it's unthinkable that this great man who was so beloved at the time and maybe even more so in retrospect, could be brought down by one lunatic with good aim. It, you want it to be a conspiracy because it seems unfitting that such a great person could be eliminated by such a nobody. With Elizabeth, there's a similar frustration that, you know, arguably the greatest, certainly the greatest monarch in English history, and maybe one of the great leaders in world history, just ended, you know? Her line ended with her death, and the Tudors were no more. Her genes were no more. How could that be? It just, it doesn't seem fitting somehow. So people constantly want her to, to have left something behind. And in a way that's, I think that's part of the fascination with her in general, and it's certainly the reason that a lot of these theories continue to flourish, and it's really the reason that I wrote the book.

J-All right, Seth, I tend to think you're probably right. I think that it's unlikely...like you say, people just can't accept it, and people love to speculate about royalty. It's just a major sport here in America and Europe.

D-We don't have royalty here.

J-Yeah, well we do. It's British royalty. A lot of people seem to worship those people. Anyway, thanks again to Seth for talking to us. His book, if you care to pick it up and read it, is called "The Semper Sonnet."

S-It's out now.

J-It's out now.

S-It's a fun little book.

J-Oh yeah, it's a fun read. Now, back to our mystery for a second here. There's one other permutation of this, which is that she didn't have a child because she couldn't have a child, because she was actually a guy.

S-Oh God (laughing).

J-Yeah.

S-Ok, I'm going to let you run with this one because I, I want to have a heyday with it. I just want to let you tell the story, cause this one is so outlandish to me.

J-It is, it is.

S-It's crazy. It's funny to me, cause it's so crazy.

J-This story actually has a pretty good pedigree though.

S-It does (laughing).

J-You know? It's sometimes called the Bisley Boy, and it begins with Bram Stoker, who you may have heard of. If you haven't heard of him, he's the guy who wrote "Dracula."

D-Dun dun dun!

J-Yeah.

S-Which is a toothy book.

J-Yeah, it is (Devin laughing). Actually, a pretty influential book when you think about it.

S-It's got some bite.

J-Stoker claimed the story is actually not something he made up, it actually originated in the village of Bisley, in Gloucestershire, which is where he heard the original story from the locals. And he wrote about it in a book called "Famous Impostors," which he published in 1910. So according to Stoker's story, Elizabeth was sent to Bisley in 1543 or 1544, dates are a little vague, due to a plague outbreak in London. And I checked, and there was some plague loose in London at that time, although it was not

the Great Plague, which was the one that really slaughtered a lot of people. But ironically in Bisley she got sick and died anyway, and her governess, Kat Ashley, you remember her?

S-Yep.

J-Learned that Henry VIII was one his way for a visit. So what to do? This is actually kind of like a sitcom, you know, where you've been taking care of your friend's cat, and the cat gets killed.

S-Yeah (laughing).

D-Yeah.

J-And you've got to go find a duplicate.

S-Wasn't there, didn't Kramer pull that once or something on Seinfeld? Yeah.

J-It's a well-recycled plot line.

S-Yes.

J-Yeah, it is. So Kat combed the village for a little girl who looked similar to Elizabeth and couldn't find anybody. And by the way, you know, isn't that weird, some people coming around looking at your kid saying, "Uh, can we borrow your kid for, like, a couple of decades?"

S-"For the royalty?" (Joe laughing).

J-Yeah. That would have been tricky.

D-Yeah.

J-But then she had an idea. There was this little boy who lived nearby and Elizabeth had actually been playing with him somewhat, and he was thin and pale and about the same size and had reddish hair like Liz, and so she had this idea that well, we'll swap, we'll swap the little boy in. We'll dress him in girl's clothes and Henry will be totally fooled. And so...

D-Cause Henry's an idiot (Joe laughing).

J-Yeah. And of course, he was fooled.

S-Cause he's an idiot.

D-Right.

J-Yeah. And the other question...

S-He didn't notice the hair dye.

J-Yeah. What I'm curious about is, Bram Stoker, I'll take his word for it that he honestly was told this story, but how would they have kept this for centuries? He said that they were so isolated that the story

just never got out. That's what he actually wrote. I read that, I read part of his, his "Famous Impostors" book.

S-It doesn't make any sense to me, but ok, I mean, go ahead.

J-Yeah, yeah. Well, anyway, here are Bram Stoker's reasons why it probably is true. Number one, Elizabeth was very secretive. She seemed to have a big secret some people said. Number two, she was very close to her inner circle, just several people. She treated them all favorably, kept them all close. That was probably her way of...

D-Are we, I'm sorry, are we debunking this now or we just...?

J-No.

S-Not yet, not yet.

D-Ok, great.

S-Hold on.

J-She refused to marry. There were rumors she couldn't bear children. There was apparently, he says, I have no way of checking this, I didn't...there was that correspondence between Elizabeth and Katherine Parr, and apparently the style of the letters changed after this, after this swap.

S-Uh huh.

J-One of her teachers felt she was way too smart and clear thinking to be a woman (S and J laughing).

D-Insert Devin's coughing here.

S-I'm laughing at the absurdity of that.

D-I'm just, I'm like actually offended by that (laughing). This is, like, thousands of years later, and I am offended.

S-"Thousands."

D-Thousands.

J-Yeah, take it up with Bram.

D-It's thousands, ok?

S-Keep going, ignore her, just keep going (laughing).

D-I am obviously not a man.

J-Yeah (Steve laughing).

D-So I am not as smart and clear-thinking as Queen Elizabeth was.

J-Devin, can I point something out?

D-It's hundreds.

J-Steve and I always solve our mysteries.

D-You do, and I don't.

J-You never do.

D-I know (S and J laughing). Yeah, it's true.

S-Actually Joe, can I point something out?

J-Yeah.

S-Only you ever solve the mystery (laughing).

J-Yeah.

D-Wait, wait, wait, can I point something out?

J-Hm?

D-Joe's a liar. He never solves our mysteries (Steve laughing).

J-All right, fine. Let's get back to...

S-What else do we have here?

J-Oh, let's see. She had a large wig collection.

D-Yeah.

J-Which obviously she was probably using to cover up male pattern baldness.

S-Male pattern baldness.

D-Obviously.

J-Yeah, exactly.

S-That's why I have them.

J-Yeah, she had only a few regular doctors and she refused to ever see any other doctors, because they're going to find out that guess what? She's got something going on down there.

S-Uh huh (laughing).

J-And she also insisted that no autopsy be done after her death.

S-Uh huh.

J-So, ok, all those good reasons.

S-Great.

J-Yeah. But on the other hand, it's still hard to believe Henry VIII was such an idiot that he wouldn't notice that it was a little boy.

S-Uh, yeah. While the royalty didn't spend all day, every day with their child.

J-Uh huh.

S-They would know what their child looked like.

J-Uh huh.

S-So, yeah, that's a difficult one.

J-Yeah. And frankly, you know, it's a really big gamble, cause you've got to hope you've not only found yourself a little boy who sort of resembles Elizabeth, but who actually has some acting skills.

D-Yeah.

J-And knows something about Elizabeth's life. And so that was a big chance that Kat was taking there. The other reason, the wigs, Elizabeth, there were people who actually saw her without her wigs on.

D-Uh huh.

J-And she wasn't bald. She had a full head of hair. It was gray...

S-No she didn't. She didn't have a full head of hair.

J-Yeah.

S-She had smallpox scars.

J-Uh huh.

S-Cause she got smallpox at one point.

J-Oh that's right, she did have smallpox, and luckily for her she survived it.

S-And she had pretty severe scarring from it.

J-Uh huh.

S-And that was one of the reasons that I've seen listed, that she had, she got, she had more wigs after that, was to cover the bald spots that were caused by the scars.

J-Yeah, but it wasn't male pattern baldness.

S-No, it wasn't...it wasn't my hairline.

J-Uh huh.

D-No.

S-Which is a very shallow hairline, by the way.

D-I would...

S-Close to my ears.

J-It's way back there.

D-I would also suspect that, like, a symptom of lead poisoning (Steve laughing).

J-There's always that. You know, a lot of dishware in those days was made of lead. They found out that lead was so malleable you could hammer it in all kinds of nice shapes...

D-I know, but I keep bringing that up because the white face paint they used was literally lead based.

J-Oh yeah.

D-So the white face paint that Elizabeth would have been slathering all over her face and putting on her lips...

J-Uh huh.

D-...every day, was lead.

J-Uh huh.

D-It was like so much lead.

J-Uh huh.

D-Yeah.

J-I know.

D-But I guess also, like, lead leads to infertility.

S-It does.

J-Yeah.

D-Lead poisoning does lead to infertility, so that's a problem too.

J-Uh huh.

S-It leads to a lot of organ issues.

D-A lot of stuff, yeah. But, I mean, those are...

J-Yeah, lead was...

D-I keep bringing that up because she smeared it all over her face all the time.

J-Oh yeah, but again, there was a lot of lead in everything.

D-Oh yeah, absolutely.

S-Yeah, they were ingesting it all the time, too.

D-Yeah, constantly.

S-But, yeah.

J-Yeah, not good for you, but yeah.

S-No, it does very bad things.

J-Uh huh, yeah. Back to, back to our "she was a guy" thing. Apparently Elizabeth did have periods, cause Philip of Spain, as you know, was interested in knowing whether she could bear children, because he still thought there was a chance that he was going to get to marry her, and of course he wanted an heir. But his spies bribed the Queen's launderers for details of whether she was menstruating.

S-Oh yeah, did she have her cycle, yeah.

J-Yeah, yeah. And the answer came back, well yeah, she is menstruating.

D-Obligatory just because you get your period doesn't mean that you're fertile statement.

J-Uh huh. Eh, yeah, I guess that's true.

S-Noted.

J-Yeah. What's the other thing? She often wore dresses with low necklines.

D-Have you met a drag queen ever, though?

S-Uh yeah, I was going to ask, what the hell does that mean?

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, I don't know how...

S-Are you saying that she couldn't have been because she would have had a hairy chest if she was a dude?

D-None of her portraits seem to have her be particularly busty.

J-Uh huh, that's true. She could have been a guy with a push-up bra kind of thing going on.

D-Yeah. I mean, she wore those really tight corsets, so.

S-And the other thing that I was thinking of, ok, so holy hell, I'm actually going to defend this for a second.

D-There you go.

J-Yeah.

S-Is that to have the, the voice of a woman and to have some of the, the lighter build, there's an easy way to have a boy do that.

J-Castration.

S-Castration.

J-Yeah, I know (laughing).

S-Which is to make them a eunuch, and then the testosterone doesn't kick in, and all that pesky hair doesn't show up.

J-That's a good point.

D-Well, and actually, frankly, looking at pictures, you know, portraits of Elizabeth now, and they're all, like, very flat-chested.

S-Uh huh.

D-And she also had the neck ruffle that she loved to wear, that would also cover up the...

S-Right.

D-...you know, difference between her neck and...but they are very flat-chested. That's what was in style at that point, I know.

S-Yeah, corsets were rather tight.

D-Well, they were tight, but also that was in style, was to have no boobs at that time.

S-Uh huh.

D-So.

S-No cleavage, no nothing.

D-You know? I don't know, maybe?

J-Yeah. I can't imagine that ever being in style, but ok (all laughing).

S-What else should we talk about here?

J-Not much else, I mean, it's hard to believe they could have castrated the kid, because if somebody said, "Hey, you know, just to make this whole Liz charade work out, we're going to have to castrate you," I think I would be, like, slipping out the back door and heading on home.

D-Do you think even if somebody was like, literally, you will be the richest person in this country and you will rule it?

J-That's true. But still.

S-I watched, I watched "Amadeus," and that kid was kind of down with it.

J-Yeah.

S-I can see this being ok.

J-Well, ok, all right. Ok, we'll go with that then. Yeah. Ok, so, Liz got castrated (Steve laughing).

S-I'm sorry, thank you. That caught me off guard. Keep going.

J-Ok, actually, over at, I don't know if you looked at "The Elizabeth Files?"

S-Oh Lord, how could I not?

J-Yeah.

S-It is a huge trove of information.

D-Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

J-Yeah, it is amazing. Actually we'll post a link to "The Elizabeth Files." If you're really interested in learning more about Elizabeth, it's pretty cool.

S-The...

J-It's well written, well organized.

S-It is well organized. It is, it is one of those sites, I've said this about sites before, is I feel like there is so much information on them that it's overwhelming. I read two or three or four articles, I don't remember how many I read on there. And then they would keep coming up in searches, and I just stopped going there because there was so much detail. It's quite well done.

D-Yeah, totally.

J-Oh no, it is. It's well researched. It's definitely authoritative. But I got this little tidbit from "The Elizabeth Files," which was that at some point during marriage negotiations with the various monarchs around Europe, a panel of doctors examined Elizabeth.

S-What! (Laughing).

J-Yeah. To see if she could still bear children. I mean, this is a real big deal back in those days.

S-Oh boy. Ok.

J-Yeah. And yeah, they came to the conclusion that she could. Well, I'm not sure how they could have examined her that closely to determine she could have children without noticing that she had a little something extra down there, you know? You think?

D-Uh huh. Yeah. You would probably, yeah. You would notice if Elizabeth was actually a dude.

J-Uh huh.

D-Let's be fair.

J-Yeah, I think you would.

D-Although, again, in fairness, just examining somebody doesn't mean you're going to be able to tell if they can have a kid.

J-Yeah, I don't know how you tell that either.

D-I don't know.

J-Ok, well so, to answer our question, did she send the Roanoke colonists off to their death deliberately? (Steve laughing).

D-Yes.

J-Absolutely.

D-Yeah.

J-Absolutely she did. Yeah. She actually, like, when they opened up their food supplies they found there was nothing but lead make-up in there. Yeah (S and J laughing).

D-Yeah, I'm pretty sure. Lead make-up and neck ruffles. Yeah.

J-Yeah (laughing).

D-I'm pretty sure.

J-Along with a note that said, "Ha ha ha."

S-"Keep warm with this!"

J-"Sucks to be you." Anyway, the next question, did she have a child? I'm kind of doubting it. Maybe, but I really kind of doubt it. I think we would have heard something.

S-I, I don't know. Because I have a hard time with, unless it was, even if it was somebody like Seymour or somebody after the fact, there were ways for contraception, and there were practices post-copulation, you know, for making sure that a pregnancy didn't come to full term.

D-Yeah.

J-Uh huh.

S-These things happened. And those things, like I had mentioned earlier, I saw stuff in the reading that that can have a permanent effect on a woman's ability...

D-Oh yeah.

J-Well, sure.

S-...to be able to bear children. So I, I could see how that, that's where I lean. I don't think that she was actually the Virgin Queen.

D-Oh God, no.

S-I don't think that she abstained for her entire life.

D-No, no!

S-So that's why I lean to that direction.

D-Yeah, no. I think if she was pregnant, it had to have happened before she ascended to the throne, if she ever had a child, it would have had to have happened before she was the queen.

J-That makes sense, yeah.

D-You know? But I do agree, it seems unlikely, but it's possible. But I also totally disagree with the whole idea that obviously William Shakespeare has to be the child of Elizabeth. That's silly to me.

S-Oh, that's just fun times.

J-Yeah.

D-That's just silly to me.

J-Yeah.

D-But I don't think she probably had a child, but if she did, it was very early in her life, and that person would have been raised totally separate from her. And likely probably not of her own consent, right? I mean, that baby would have been taken away from her early in life.

J-Oh absolutely. Yeah, it would have been, like, you know, you're not even going to know who your kid is probably.

D-Yeah. That would be my guess.

S-Which would be a disincentive to ever do it again.

D-Exactly.

J-Uh huh. Yeah, it would be.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, ok, last question, was she a guy? I believe it (laughing).

S and D-No!

J-Ok. All right, fine. Well, I guess that's it for this week. If you have any thoughts about this, if you're descended from Elizabeth, of course we would love to hear from you.

D-Especially if your name is Prince Harry.

J-Yeah. (Steve laughing). So write us at thinking sideways podcast...

S-He's not going to email you, Devin.

J-So write us at thinking sideways podcast at gmail dot com. There's also our website, of course. Thinking sideways podcast dot com. You can listen to the episodes. You can check the links that we put up for further information, and we will put up a link to "The Elizabeth Files."

S-Yeah.

J-And there's a ton of stuff out there, you'll enjoy it. We're on iTunes, so subscribe, leave us a review and a rating. We love those really good ratings especially. As for streaming, you can stream us all over the place, so you know, we don't have any recommendations there really. We're on Facebook, Thinking Sideways Podcast, right?

S-Yeah.

J-On Facebook of course, we have our page and also the group. You can join the group.

S-Yep.

J-And you, like, you know, there's all kinds of...

S-Be a groupie.

J-Yeah, you can be a groupie. There's lots of good commentary and just conversation out there. We're on Twitter. We're thinkin sideways. And of course, we've got a subreddit, which has got some stuff going on every now and again, at least.

D-Yeah.

J-And last of all we're on Patreon, so if you want to support the show, totally optional, but if you want to, you can go out and you can pledge a certain amount of money per episode, so be aware of that. If you decide you want to get real generous and give us fifty bucks, just remember that's fifty bucks every episode, so, you know, be careful.

S-Which is why we have things like the Paypal button if you want to do a one time, and that's more conducive to your budget, then that's why that's there.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah, you can do that too.

S-We got the merch, too.

J-Oh, we got merch.

D-Yeah, buy a sticker.

J-We got merch. We got, like, t-shirts and mugs and stickers and all kinds of stuff.

S-New shirts.

D-Oh yeah.

S-Yeah, somebody bought the Mary Celeste the other day. That's pretty awesome.

J-Oh yeah, I saw that, yeah. That's really cool. I have not actually yet seen the Mary Celeste t-shirt. I've got to go out and look at it.

S-What is your deal?

J-I know.

D-Something. It's lots of things.

S-Yeah, that's true.

J-Yeah. No, I'm probably going to have to get one for myself.

S-I thought about buying you one.

J-Yeah?

S-And then I decided I didn't want to.

J-That's fair.

D-I'm going to get a bumper sticker for my car.

J-Oh really?

S-Well, there you go.

D-Yeah.

J-Yeah. Actually, buy bumper stickers by the gross and put them on all kinds of people's cars.

D-Yeah (Joe laughing).

S-I'm not endorsing that.

J-No, probably not.

D-Legally, no. Emotionally, yes.

J-Yeah. I like it. So that's patreon dot com slash thinking sideways.

D-Or the website for merch.

J-Yeah, for merch. Yeah. All right, well that's it for Elizabeth. Another great historic mystery solved. So, yeah, you British people, please don't be offended by all this. Yeah, I don't think she had a kid. Yeah. You guys?

D-I know.

S-I'm not posh enough.

J-Yeah, me neither. All right, bye everybody.

D-Bye guys.