

Philip II of Spain

Nationality: Spanish

Religion: Catholic

Other useful information:

- The Spanish Empire was huge. Philip was also the Duke of Milan and, from 1555, he controlled the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands.
- Philip had advisors but he was an absolute ruler in Spain and he was also a strong believer in the Divine Right of Kings (the belief that he was chosen to be King by God).
- He considered himself to be the defender of the Catholic faith in Europe.
- Philip was previously married to Elizabeth's half-sister Mary and he was very keen to regain the power that he had once had.
- During his time as King of England he had been very unpopular as the English had feared that they would become a colony of Spain. This led to the Wyatt rebellion in 1554 in which approximately 4,000 men from Kent marched on London.
- Philip loved music, dancing and art. He enjoyed the study of history and politics and he collected rare books for his palace. However, he was not good at languages.
- He had been described as 'slight of stature and round-faced, with pale blue eyes, a prominent lip, and pink skin, but his overall appearance was attractive'.
- As a young boy he had had martial training. He was also given lessons in warfare by the Duke of Alba.



Francis, Duke of Alençon

Nationality: French

Religion: Catholic

Other useful information:

- He was the youngest son of Henry II of France.
- He was born in 1554 and so was much younger than Elizabeth.
- He was a leader of the moderate Roman Catholic faction called the 'Politiques', a group of men who believed that national unity was more important than religious division and so called for tolerance of religion.
- Following the death of his brother Charles IX of France, in 1574, and the accession of his other brother Henry III to the throne, he became the heir to the French throne.
- Elizabeth appeared to be fond of him and was seen to act favourably towards him in court. However, this could have been because he was surely to be one of the last of her suitors.
- He would be a good ally against Philip of Spain.
- He put himself forward as a protector of the Huguenots (French Protestants) and a potential leader of the Protestant Dutch.



Prince Eric of Sweden

Nationality: Swedish

Religion: Protestant

Other useful information:

- He was seen as a popular choice in England. When rumours were spread that they were engaged, medals were made in London with a picture of the two united on it.
- He was not a wealthy monarch.
- He was very successful in foreign languages and Mathematics.
- He was also ruler of Estonia after it had been conquered in 1560.
- He had first proposed to Elizabeth before she was Queen.
- His father did not agree with his desire to marry Elizabeth.
- He was seen as being intelligent and artistic, as well as politically ambitious. However, during his early reign he also showed signs of mental instability.
- From 1563, it became increasingly clear that he suffered with insanity. He became highly suspicious of other leading nobles. In 1567 he was responsible for the murders of the Sture family, personally stabbing one of the sons.



Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester

Nationality: English

Religion: Protestant

Other useful information:

- He was a childhood friend of Elizabeth's.
- It is believed that Elizabeth loved Robert as she believed that he cared for her for herself, rather than for the power she held as Queen.
- Marrying an English nobleman would have removed the fear of a foreigner having some control over the English throne. However, it would also cause problems as it would increase competition between the other nobles in England, and possibly lead others to remove their allegiance to the Queen.
- This would not be a marriage of equality.
- He had already been married to Amy Robsart and many believed that he planned to annul this marriage in order to marry Elizabeth, However, his wife died after falling down a flight of stairs in 1560. The circumstances of this have often been seen as suspicious.
- During the reign of Mary I he was arrested and sent to the Tower of London, along with his father the Duke of Northumberland, for his role in encouraging Lady Jane Grey to the throne.
- Elizabeth made him a member of her Privy Council in October 1562 and appointed him Baron of Denbigh on 28 September and Earl of Leicester 29 September 1564.

