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The Elizabethan Era

During Elizabethan times things were very different for women. They were treated unfairly and not given the same opportunities as men by far. But, surprisingly there were still two classes of Elizabethan women: Upper and Lower. Upper of course, being the noble families and Lower--everyone else. Women in the Upper class had slightly more opportunities in life specifically in education but were subject to arranged marriages in order to form alliances with other families. Lower class women had no education opportunities and were looked down upon if not married. They were viewed as witches and the community would be very suspicious of them.

Women's Suffrage was mere child's play compared to what they had to endure during Elizabethan times. Women were always seen as second rate to men--never above and never equal. They were expected to serve them at all times and never speak up or defy against them. If they did they would be beaten until they complied. This punishment reached its most severe level with an icon of the Elizabethan age: Lady Jane.

Lady Jane was a 17 year old girl that was part of one of the many arranged marriages of the times. At first she was told to marry Lord Edward of Hertford but then there was a change of plans. She was then told to marry Guilford Dudley and this was what she objected to. At first she was only sentenced to the common punishment being the whipping stool. But after being forced to take the throne she was later subjected to a much more fatal punishment--beheading. As i stated earlier, this all happened at the age of 17. Lady Jane was not even a full grown woman yet

As far as recreational activities women were met with adversity here as well. Especially when it came to theatrical productions. Women were not allowed to act in these at all--of course

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resulting in men playing both female and male roles. Personally I believe this must have made productions such as Romeo and Juliet and The Taming of the Shrew quite.....for a lack of a better word; interesting. But of course, people still continued to attend them.

Men's roles during Elizabethan were the complete opposite of women's. They were the highest ranking members of society and ran everything--literally. They also made all the rules coincidentally putting themselves above most of them. Women were expected to submit to their requests and desires without question. In society itself men had many more chances than women. This applied to not only jobs but education as well. men could essentially go after any job they wanted and get the proper knowledge needed for it as well. Although many men often tutored women they never left the position of pupil.

Men in Elizabethan times had very few things to worry about. With the women waiting on them hand and foot they really didn't have to do much for themselves. They took advantage of this position though and were very unhappy when their wives would not obey. She could expect to be punished without hesitation if he was not satisfied.

During Elizabethan times love had seldom to do with marriage. Arranged marriages were quite common and usually only for political reasons. These types of marriages would form alliances among families and this helped during war time. Even though they were arranged marriage ceremonies were still done at a grand scale. members of society from all around would come to see and of course the entire family of both the bride and groom. Live entertainment was a common in addition to large food quantities and spaces for the reception and ceremony itself.

Once married divorce was completely out of the question. This of course would end the alliance between families and could jeopardize not only their pride but village itself as well. if

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the woman was not satisfied with her husband she could not do anything about it. She was stuck in the role of wife to him and would be met with severe consequences if she tried to remove herself from this position. The only women that may have been somewhat satisfied with this would be women married to noblemen or of course royalty itself. Women in these positions were tended to just as the king was with servants, fine clothing, live entertainment and so on. But, yet, still remained as the lowest ranking members of society when it came to decision making. Women in this role were often tutored by scholars but, could truly use the information they learned to benefit them.

The effect of marriage on the surrounding members of the couple was actually very impactful especially with family and friends. Friends of the bride would often comfort her when she was unhappy with her soon to be husband and reassure her it would be for the good of the family. Whereas the actual family members had quite the opposite response. The female members would usually forcefully convince the bride to go through with the wedding. As would the male members being only worried about maintaining the family name/reputation. They also were concerned about having allies during wartime or political unrest. On the other hand, the servants were always there to be a listening ear for both sides. They offered comfort especially to the wives and helped them cope as best they could. They also could not do anything to change the situation at all which was a bigger burden on them.

In conclusion The Elizabethan Times were very different from day times. Not only should women be thankful but all of society. Without the change the Women's Suffrage Movement may have never even occurred. The discoveries and inventions created by women would have never come into existence. Or, they may have come much later and maybe even less

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effective. Women truly have come along way and society as a whole has as well. Marriage has come along way too as both advances are equal to each other in their impact level. We are truly fortunate to live in modern times.