



# Maid of the King's Court by Lucy Worsley



## Discussion Questions

1. Were there any details about the Tudor period or life at court that surprised you?
2. Imagine if Eliza had sneaked out of bed and met the viscount on the roof today. How might everyone have reacted differently? What does this reveal about how expectations for women and young girls have changed?
3. When Eliza is sent to Trumpton Hall, she is around girls of her own age for the first time. How does her character change in response to living with a group of her peers?
4. Consider yourself, your family, and your friends. What kind of role in Tudor society would you most like to have? And where do you think you would actually fit?
5. How is Eliza's experience with Master Manham and the music closet at Trumpton predictive of her future with Katherine at court?
6. What do Eliza and Katherine reveal in each other about their inner natures?
7. Eliza and Ned's connection is instant and natural, but because of a sense of duty to her family, it takes Eliza years to pursue a relationship. What do you think about Eliza's reasons for denying her feelings for Ned? What do you think you would have done in her place?
8. About the royal court, Ned says to Eliza, "This place plays tricks on your mind. It all seems so wonderful, but it isn't real. Don't get drawn in too deeply, that's my advice. Do you know what they say? They say you can never escape" (page 148). How true do his words ring for Eliza's time at court?
9. Despite Aunt Margaret and the teachers at Trumpton stressing the virtue of subservience in a maid of honor, how does Eliza's temperament and outspokenness set her apart?
10. What does King Henry's reaction to Anne of Cleves reveal about him?
11. Despite Eliza's belief that she would have become the king's mistress at a signal from him during his marriage to Anne of Cleves, how do you think she truly felt when Katherine married King Henry?
12. What do you think the safest positions were at court? Which were the most treacherous? Why?
13. Katherine is an interesting mix of ambition and recklessness, pride and secrecy. How is her fate at once predictable and surprising?
14. In what ways does Eliza try to protect herself at court, and how do some of her self-preservation attempts end up hurting her?
15. Ned and Eliza aren't a smart match in the eyes of the court or her family, but how do they make sense together?
16. The novel raises all kinds of questions about King Henry's fertility, legitimate heirs, and preserving the royal bloodline. Does it make you look at the history of England's monarchy any differently?
17. The events of this novel occurred about fifteen to twenty years before Mary I and then Elizabeth I reigned as queens of England. How would Eliza's life have changed under their rule? How much do you think life for women changed between Henry's rule and Elizabeth's?

