

Mary Stuart and Elizabeth Tudor: The Role of Childhood Experience in Later Politics

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## INTRODUCTION

Mary Stuart and Elizabeth Tudor, though both regnant queens in the mid-sixteenth century, lived lives that developed along two very different trajectories. Mary Stuart, the daughter of the powerful Scottish King James V Stuart (r.1513-1542), became queen at six days old on 14 December 1542, the day of her father's death. Betrothed at age four, Mary's childhood was spent in the extravagant court of King Henry Valois II (r.1547-1559) of France, where she was educated as a French princess alongside the Valois children to prepare for her marriage with Henry's heir, the Dauphin Francis II, in 1558. Elizabeth Tudor, on the other hand, experienced a tumultuous childhood. On 19 May 1536, when she was just two years old, her mother, Anne Boleyn (r. 1533-1536) was executed following a trial and conviction on charges of treason arising from acts of adultery. It is unclear, however, whether Anne Boleyn was guilty of such charges.<sup>1</sup> Rather, Greg Walker asserts that most historians agree that Anne Boleyn was innocent of the accusations made against her.<sup>2</sup> Following Anne's execution, Thomas Cranmer pronounced Henry's and Anne's marriage canonically invalid on 14 May 1536, after which Henry VIII caused Parliament to pass the Second Act of Succession (8 June 1536) that designated Elizabeth's birth to have been illegitimate. Between the death of her mother in 1536 and the death of Mary Tudor in 1558, Elizabeth Tudor was forced to gain a great political astuteness as she navigated a court life peopled by nobles wishing to advance their status at the young Elizabeth's expense.

This thesis aims to argue that, as a consequence of Elizabeth and Mary's differing early years, the two queens adopted dissimilar political practices, with Mary Stuart prioritizing interpersonal relationships far more than did Elizabeth. This point is particularly evidenced by the correspondence they exchanged throughout their lives.

Mary Stuart, I shall argue, relied heavily on charm and the forming of emotional bonds, as evidenced in her correspondence with Elizabeth Tudor that is marked by overtly emotional language. Elizabeth Tudor, however, applied a contrasting political technique to that of her

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<sup>1</sup> For a more comprehensive understanding of Anne Boleyn's trial see: G.W Bernard, "The Fall of Anne Boleyn," *The English Historical Review* 106, no. 420 (1991).

<sup>2</sup> Greg Walker, "Rethinking the Fall of Anne Boleyn," *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 1 (2002), 5. Greg Walker provides an interpretation of Anne Boleyn's trial that differs from that written by G.W Bernard, which evidences the variety of ways in which historians understand Anne Boleyn's conviction.

cousin Mary Stuart, by which she sought the advice of independent thinkers rather than those of close friends and relatives. Elizabeth's character was also notably different from Mary's as is made plain by their correspondence. Although Elizabeth Tudor initially reciprocated Mary Stuart's emotional appeals, early letters between the two show Elizabeth offering Mary political advice and gently berating her cousin for impulsive behaviour, acting as if she were a loving older sister. This sense of shared sisterhood changed only after 1568 when Mary fled to England.

My thesis will open with an examination of Mary Stuart's childhood. Mary enjoyed a luxurious adolescence in France, which informed her sense of entitlement to the crowns of Scotland, France, and England. Mary's French upbringing conditioned her to neglect, first, briefly as Queen of France, and then as Queen of Scotland, the will of her subject peoples, as French monarchs traditionally distanced themselves from their subjects.

A second chapter will analyze Elizabeth's turbulent upbringing which seems to have taught her the importance of connecting with the English people, who could otherwise revolt and destabilize her rule should she ever become queen.

The final chapter will examine Mary's and Elizabeth's exchange of personal letters between 1567 and 1570.<sup>3</sup> These years have been chosen for close analysis because the number of letters sent between the two queens drastically increased in this four-year period. Due to the sheer number of letters, particularly those sent by Mary, and the prevailing similarities that distinguish the letters of this period, only a representative portion of the letters extant will be analyzed. Early correspondence between the cousin queens had an amicable nature, although Mary's letters strike a far more emotional tone than did Elizabeth's letters. These letters, while expressing tenderness towards Mary and referring to her political rival as her dearest friend, reflect Elizabeth's trademark political restraint. Later, after Mary had been compelled to abdicate the Scottish throne in July 1567 and was imprisoned in England, where she had sought refuge, the letters she wrote to Elizabeth continue to stress their shared relationship and use emotional appeals in an attempt to convince Elizabeth to release her. Elizabeth's letters, however, suggest a

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<sup>3</sup> The scholarship is unclear as to which letters were dictated and which letters the queens wrote in their own hand. It is fair to assume that most of Elizabeth's letters to Mary were dictated. It is also likely that the letters Mary wrote to Elizabeth while she was a regnant queen were dictated, once imprisoned in Scotland and England, however, Mary probably wrote her own letters.

drastic change in her opinion of Mary. No longer referring to Mary in affectionate terms, these letters accuse Mary of ignoring Elizabeth's goodwill.

Before turning to consideration of Mary's and Elizabeth's childhood experiences, however, it is important to examine the political and religious climate in which Mary and Elizabeth lived and reigned. This context is essential to understanding the actions and correspondence of each queen.

### **Historical Context: Birth Rights**

One of the prevailing themes of Mary's and Elizabeth's careers and relationship is that of birth right: both queens possessed a strong claim to the English throne. Although Elizabeth Tudor was crowned on 15 January 1559, many Catholics throughout Europe asserted that Mary Stuart was the true heir to the throne. Mary Stuart was the granddaughter of Henry VIII's sister, Margaret Tudor, whereas Elizabeth's legitimacy — both as Henry VIII's successor and as his daughter — was perpetually in question in the aftermath of the charges of infidelity that had led to her mother's execution.

The legitimacy of Elizabeth's birth was first discussed in the Second Act of Succession, which was passed by parliament at the insistence of Henry VIII in 1536. This act removed Elizabeth Tudor from the line of succession, stating that she was ““illegitimate...excluded and banned to claim, challenge or demand any inheritance as lawful heir... to the king by lineal descent.”<sup>4</sup> In June 1543, however, Henry's parliament restored Elizabeth and her sister, Mary Tudor, to the English succession behind their half-brother Edward VI via the Third Act of Succession.<sup>5</sup> This act did not, however, rescue Elizabeth from her bastard status.

Claims to the English throne were inextricably tied to religious affairs. Matters of religion were especially tumultuous in Europe during the mid-sixteenth century as Protestantism continued to spread, and Catholic realms such as Spain and France attempted to squash Protestantism in their countries and, in the case of Spain, the territories it controlled in what is modern Belgium and Netherlands. Moreover, Henry VIII had separated the English church from

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<sup>4</sup> Henry VIII Tudor, *The Second Act of Succession* (1536), in *Tudor Constitutional Documents, A.D. 1485-1603*, ed. Joseph Robson Tanner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), 389-391.

<sup>5</sup> For full text see: J.R. Tanner, 397.

Rome through a series of parliamentary acts in the early 1530s, after which England's monasteries were dissolved, their moveable wealth confiscated by the crown, and their properties sold to raise revenues for the royal treasury. In so doing, however, Henry VIII stirred up grievances in the people of his once Catholic country and created diplomatic problems that were inherited by his successors.<sup>6</sup>

Elizabeth Tudor, born at the outset of Henry VIII's break from the Catholic church, was raised a devout Protestant. Elizabeth's Protestant faith was well known, enabling her to draw much of her initial support as heir from those of the Protestant faith. After facing years of persecution under the rule of the devoutly Catholic Mary Tudor, Protestants believed that Elizabeth would restore England to what they perceived to be the proper faith. John Foxe represents this perspective in his 1563 book, *Acts and Monuments of Matters happening to the Church*, commonly known as *The Book of Martyrs*, in which he writes that the "preservation of the princess Elizabeth may be reckoned a remarkable instance of the watchful eye which Christ had over his church."<sup>7</sup>

Mary Stuart's claim to the throne, contrarily, was supported by Catholics in England and on the continent. Catholics did not recognize the legitimacy of Henry VIII's 1533 dissolution of his marriage with Katherine of Aragon and so considered Henry's subsequent marriage to Anne Boleyn unlawful and Elizabeth Tudor's birth illegitimate. Mary's most devoted champion was her father-in-law, King Henry II of France, who wished to claim the crowns of Scotland, England and Ireland for himself and his country. Upon Elizabeth Tudor's accession to the throne, Henry II, according to Frank Arthur Mumby, "did his best to induce the Pope to excommunicate her."<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Henry II staked his claim to England by adorning<sup>9</sup> Mary Stuart with the English royal arms, and arranging for her to be proclaimed the Queen of England, Scotland and Ireland at Paris following Mary Tudor's death on 17 November 1558.<sup>10</sup> The Duke of Saxony, in a 1559

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<sup>6</sup> For a more comprehensive understanding of the English Restoration see: A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (1964; 2e University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> John Fox, *Acts and Monuments* (Philadelphia: E. Claxton and Company, 1881), 308.

<sup>8</sup> Frank Arthur Mumby, *History in Contemporary Letters: Elizabeth and Mary Stuart* (London: Constable and Company, 1914), 2.

<sup>9</sup> The English Royal Arms were added to Mary's dresses, emblazoned on her carriage and placed around her household.

<sup>10</sup> Mumby, 2. For a more detailed explanation see Mumby, 162.

letter addressed to Queen Elizabeth's chief advisor, William Cecil, adeptly writes of the succession debate that England was like "a bone thrown between two dogs."<sup>11</sup>

### **Historical Context: Affairs of Nations**

Understanding the political events that shaped each queen's early reign is essential to comprehending the trajectories of their reigns. Mary Stuart was only six days old when she became queen, but the decisions made by Mary of Guise and the principle nobles of Scotland greatly affected Scottish foreign policy and Mary Stuart's life.

In 1541 Henry VIII set his sights to the north of England in hopes that he could fulfill his desire to bring Scotland under English control.<sup>12</sup> Thomas Cromwell, in a speech prepared for a session of Parliament in 1523, provides a sense of England's political desires. Cromwell writes that Henry "by goddess help, shall overthrow and subdue also the Skottes, whome the Frenche men have so custuously intertayned and of so long tyme mayntayned against vs."<sup>13</sup> Here, Cromwell refers to the 'auld' alliance, an alliance made between France and Scotland in the late thirteenth century for the purpose of protecting one another against English invasions.<sup>14</sup>

On 1 July 1543, a year after the English defeated the Scottish at Solway Moss, Henry VIII believed his ambitions to be achieved as the Scottish signed the Treaties of Greenwich. The Treaties of Greenwich served two functions; the first document was a peace treaty between England and Scotland, concluding that peace should be "preserved between the two kingdoms

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<sup>11</sup> Duke of Saxony to William Cecil, 1 October 1559, in *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the reign of Elizabeth, 1559-1560*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (London: Longman, Green, Logman, Roberts, and Green: 1865), 3.

<sup>12</sup> For more information regarding Henry VIII's Rough Wooing, refer to the following article: Elizabeth A. Bonner, "The Genesis of Henry VIII's 'Rough Wooing' of the Scots," *Northern History* 33 no. 1 (1997).

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Cromwell, *Speech to Parliament, 1523*, in *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, ed. Roger Bigelow Merriman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 34. There is no proof that this speech was delivered before Parliament. Cromwell's ideas, however, can still be used as a representation of popular political thought in England in 1523.

<sup>14</sup> The 'Auld Alliance' treaty was signed at Paris on 23 October 1295. To read more about this treaty, consult Elizabeth Bonner, "Scotland's 'Auld Alliance with France, 1295-1560,'" *The Historical Association* 84 no. 273 (1999), 5-30.

until a year after the death of one or other of the parties.<sup>15</sup> The second treaty was a marriage agreement between Henry VIII's heir, Edward VI and the young Mary Stuart, who were to be wed "upon the completion of her tenth year."<sup>16</sup>

A few months later, however, in December 1543, the Scottish Parliament repudiated the treaty, and fighting between England and Scotland resumed. This renewed period of fighting is referred to as the Rough Wooing of Mary Stuart. Henry VIII, angered, sent the Earl of Hertford into Scotland during the Spring of 1544 under orders to "lay waste to the country and seize Edinburgh."<sup>17</sup> In the following three years the Earl of Hertford captured Leith and Edinburgh and destroyed several market towns and nearly 250 villages. After Hertford defeated Scottish forces at the battle of Pinkie on 10 September 1547, the Scottish began to fear for the safety of their young queen. Mary was removed to one of the Scottish Isles for her protection, and Scottish nobles appealed to Henry II in France for military aid. In return for provision of soldiers, assurance of Scotland's independence, monetary support, and allocation of weapons, Henry II asked for a marriage treaty between Mary Stuart and his heir, the future Francis II. The Scottish Estates accepted this proposal, and plans were made to send Mary to France for her education and to provide her more secure protection against English violence.

The decision, on behalf of the Scottish nobility, to send Mary Stuart to France for her protection shaped the queen's childhood and her education. It is important to understand this context so as to comprehend the manner in which she ruled, as well as her opinions towards England.

Elizabeth, on the other hand, was twenty-five when, after the death of her half-sister, Mary Tudor on 17 November 1558, she was crowned queen on 15 January 1559. Elizabeth inherited a kingdom that was in chaos; the people were in a state of religious turmoil following Mary Tudor's bloody reign during which over 300 Protestants had been burned for heresy. Moreover, Mary Tudor and her husband Philip II of Spain (r.1556-1598) had engaged in a war with France that had ended in defeat and the loss of English control of Calais in January 1558.

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<sup>15</sup> Jane T. Stoddart, *The Girlhood of Mary Queen of Scots from her Landing in France in August 1548 to her Departure from France in August 1561* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), xxxvi. In this instance one of the parties was Henry VIII of England, and the other was James Hamilton, the Earl of Arran, who was acting for Mary as regent.

<sup>16</sup> Stoddart, xxxvi.

<sup>17</sup> Stoddart, xxxvii-xxxviii.

Consequently, after Mary's death, Elizabeth found that England's treasury was empty and the country owed a debt of more than £266,000.

England also faced many diplomatic dangers at the dawn of Elizabeth's reign. Great fear existed among the queen's English advisors that the Catholic nations of France and Spain might combine forces to defeat what each considered the heretical Elizabethan regime — this was a fear that lasted the extent of Elizabeth's reign and informed many of her foreign policies.

This alliance was formed, despite the fact that the French and Spanish had engaged in war against one another as recently as 1557-58, because each were in conflict with England. Philip II was disappointed that Elizabeth had refused his proposal of marriage. Philip, who had acted as King-consort during Queen Mary's reign, wishing to keep England among his territorial possessions after Mary's death, had offered to marry his deceased wife's half-sister, promising continued aid in the fight against France for possession of Calais if Elizabeth accepted his proposal. Elizabeth, however, refused to accept Philip's proposal because it was made on condition that England must remain a Catholic State. Upon Elizabeth's rejection, Philip signed a marriage alliance with Elisabeth Valois, the eldest daughter of Henry II in France. This marriage united France and Spain, but left Philip disappointed to "have lost a kingdom body and soul."<sup>18</sup>

Spanish and French relations, however, did not grow more amicable as a result of this marriage. Rather, each country feared that the other was plotting to conquer England to expand its own empire. Gómez Suárez de Figueroa y Córdoba, Count De Feria, the Spanish ambassador in England, wrote a letter to Philip II on 11 April, 1559 that reveals the urgency with which he thought Spain must act. The count writes that it is a necessity to prevent "The King of France from dominating the kingdom [England], for which object he has two circumstances so favourable to him, namely the just claims of the Queen of Scots, and the great ease with which he could take possession owing to the miserable state in which the country is."<sup>19</sup> The Spanish also believed that the French King was using his influence in Rome to persuade the pope to excommunicate Elizabeth. Tensions were increased, then, when Pope Paul IV, r.1555-1559) issued the bull *Cum ex apostalatus*,<sup>20</sup> on 16 February 1559. This bull declares that rulers who

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<sup>18</sup> Mumby, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Mumby, 3.

<sup>20</sup> For full text see: Robert C. Jenkins, eds, *The Bull of Pope Paul IV against Heretics "Cum ex apostalatus officio"* (1887).

support heresy in their realms, or are heretics themselves will be deposed.<sup>21</sup> Following the publication of this bull, Scottish officials and Philip II believed that the French were preparing to crusade against England, as is conveyed by the Count, who writes the following to King Philip II:

Whenever the King of France finds means in Rome to get this woman declared a heretic, together with her bastardy, and advances his own claim, your Majesty will be more perplexed what to do than at present, because I do not see how your Majesty could in such case go against God and justice, and against the Catholics, who will doubtless join him [Henry II] if he comes with the voice of the Church behind him.<sup>22</sup>

In response, Spanish officials began to hatch their own plots against Elizabeth Tudor, selecting Lady Katherine Grey<sup>23</sup>, another legitimate heir to the English throne, as their candidate and planning to marry her to Philip so as to strengthen the Spanish claim to the English throne.<sup>24</sup> This plan, however, was uncovered by William Cecil's spies and effectually derailed.<sup>25</sup>

Elizabeth differed from Mary Stuart in that she was of age to make her own policy decisions upon ascending the throne of England. Each, however, became queen while her country was in a period of significant distress. The history of conflict among England, France, and Spain greatly influenced the actions and foreign policies of both Mary Stuart and Elizabeth Tudor.

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<sup>21</sup> F.W. Maitland, "Elizabethan Gleanings (Continued)," *The English Historical Review* 15, no. 58 (1900), 327.

<sup>22</sup> Mumby, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Lady Katherine Grey (1540-1568) was the younger sister of Lady Jane Grey, who had been queen of England for nine days before Mary Tudor (r. 1553-1558) ascended the throne. Katherine Grey's claim to the throne was through the Suffolk line: she was the great-granddaughter of Henry VII through his youngest daughter, Mary Tudor (1496-1533)

<sup>24</sup> Mumby, 45. Sir Thomas Chaloner writes to Queen Elizabeth about the Spanish plot: "The Spaniards meant to have stolen the Lady Catherine Grey, whom they meant either to marry to the Prince of Spain, or some other of less degree, if less depended on her." It may be assumed that Chaloner is referring to Carlos, the Prince of Asturias (1545-1568) as he was Philip II's only child when the letter was written.

<sup>25</sup> Mumby, 44.

## CHAPTER ONE: Mary Stuart's Childhood

Mary Stuart and Elizabeth Tudor experienced notably different childhoods. These differing early years affected the manner by which the two women ruled their respective kingdoms. The purpose of this and the following chapter is to describe the girlhood of each monarch. Quotations drawn from the writings of contemporaries such as tutors, governesses and, in Mary's case, her Guise relations, will illuminate significant experiences of each girl's youth. This will facilitate a side-by-side comparison of the childhood experiences of each ruler. The content examined in these chapters will provide a deeper understanding than would be possible otherwise of each queen's correspondence that the final chapter of this thesis will examine in depth.

Mary Stuart was six days old when, on 13 December 1542, her father James V (r. 1513-1542) died and she ascended the Scottish throne. Although a crowned queen, the first six years of Mary's life were full of danger as Scotland endured England's Rough Wooing.<sup>1</sup> In 29 July 1548, when she was only six years old, the Scottish Estates agreed to send Mary to France to protect her from the English. Mary would be raised as a princess of the French court, growing up in the nursery alongside the French royal children and training to become the Queen-consort of France at Francis II's accession to the throne.<sup>2</sup>

Mary was an essential pawn in the diplomatic designs of the French King Henry II (r. 1547-1559), who wished to use the young queen's claim to the English throne to attempt to acquire for himself and for France influence, even control, over the English kingdom. Consequently, upon Mary's landing at the French port of Roscoff in Brittany on 14 August 1568,<sup>3</sup> she was treated with the attention afforded to the future bride of the French Dauphin, Francis II (1544-1560). In preparation for Mary's arrival, Henry II had given orders to ensure

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Stuart was queen by right in Scotland, but held the rank of Queen-consort in France after Francis ascended the throne on 10 July 1559. Upon Francis' death on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1560, Catherine de' Medici assumed the regency in the name of her son Charles IX.

<sup>3</sup> Some dissent exists among scholars as to where Mary Stuart landed in France. Many historians including J.J. Foster, and Alexandre Dumas believed that Mary landed in Brest. Others, such as Antonia Fraser and Jane T. Stoddart indicate that Mary arrived in Roscoff. Stoddart makes a compelling argument when she observes that a chapel was erected in Roscoff shortly after Mary's arrival to commemorate the event. A landing at Roscoff seems the more probable.

“that all the towns and villages near his palace at St. Germain be carefully checked to make sure that none of the stonemasons had been in contact with plague [to protect the health and life of the young Queen-dauphiness in prospect].”<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, as Mary’s ship had approached the French coast, outriders were sent to both Mary’s grandparents, the Duke Claude of Guise and Antoinette of Bourbon who were likely at their chateau at Joinville, and across the Alps to Turin where Henry II was “visiting his northern Italian garrisons.”<sup>5</sup> Upon her arrival in France on 14 August 1568 Henry II sent word of her safety to the Scottish Estates in a letter that detailed the arrangements made for Mary’s arrival:

We have provided and given orders that she shall be received, treated, and honoured in all our towns and other places through which she may pass as if she were our dearly loved consort the Queen in person, having power and right to grant pardons and to set prisoners free. We have omitted nothing, we believe, of all the honour that should be paid to her, for we hold and esteem her for what she is, our daughter.<sup>6</sup>

That the King of France took pains to ensure that the young Mary was received honorably speaks to her status as Queen-dauphiness in prospect. As this chapter will demonstrate, Mary’s royal titles, both in Scotland and in France, were essential to her perception of herself from an extremely young age.

Mary of Guise had left her daughter under the guardianship of her mother, Antoinette of Bourbon, the Duchess of Guise.<sup>7</sup> Antoinette of Bourbon had arranged to meet her niece at Tours as the girl was transported from chateau to chateau in order to accompany her to the royal château at Saint-Germain, where she arrived in October 1548. Upon meeting Mary Stuart on 3 September 1548, Antoinette wrote a letter to her daughter, Marie of Guise, that demonstrates the nature of care the young queen was to receive. Antoinette writes:

I will take care that our little Queen shall be treated as well as you can desire for her. I am starting this week, God willing, to meet her and conduct her to St. Germain, with the Dauphin. I shall stay with her there for a few days to arrange her little affairs, and until she grows somewhat used to the Dauphin and his sisters. Lady Fleming will, if the King allows it, remain with the child, as she knows her ways; and the Mademoiselle Curel will take charge of her French education. Two gentlemen and other attendants are to be

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<sup>4</sup> John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), 42.

<sup>5</sup> Guy, 42.

<sup>6</sup> Stoddart, 18.

<sup>7</sup> Stoddart, 18.

appointed to wait upon the little Queen, and her dress and appointments shall be fitting for her rank.<sup>8</sup>

Antoinette and Mary's other Guise relations provide a great source of information on Mary's childhood and her progress at French Court because they were constantly sending communications to Mary of Guise in Scotland regarding her daughter.

Mary enjoyed an exceptionally luxurious life at the French court. As Jane Dunn observes, Mary was growing up at the very heart of the most glamorous and decadent court in Europe, reminded every waking minute of her destiny as a queen."<sup>9</sup> Mary was further reminded of her status when Henry II decreed a pre-eminent status for his future daughter-in-law. In August 1548 a few months before Mary was to arrive at Saint-Germain, Henry II sent notice to Sieur Jean d'Humiers, the Dauphin's governor, notifying him of his protocol regarding Mary's position at court:

In answer to your question as to the rank which I wish my daughter the Queen of Scotland to occupy, I have to inform you that it is my desire that she should take precedence of my daughters. For not only is the marriage between my son and her fixed and settled, but she is a crowned Queen, and as such it is my wish that she should be honoured and served.<sup>10</sup>

Henry II decided that Mary was to grow up in the same nursery as his royal children. Furthermore, because Mary was engaged to the future King of France, she was to precede the French princesses on any formal occasion. Therefore, Mary was granted an elite status, even among the most elite of the French court.<sup>11</sup> Mary's status was, however, cemented by the special relationship she enjoyed with Henry II. When Henry met Mary for the first time, on 9 December

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Hume, *The Love Affairs of Mary Queen of Scots* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1903), 39.

<sup>9</sup> Jane Dunn, *Elizabeth and Mary: Cousins, Rivals, Queens* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 103.

<sup>10</sup> Stoddart, 20.

<sup>11</sup> Dunn, 86.

1548<sup>12</sup>, he wrote to Anne, Baron of Montmorency, the Constable of France, that “she is the most perfect child that I have ever seen” and that he regarded her as “his very own daughter.”<sup>13</sup>

A few months after Mary had arrived at the French Court, the Duchess of Guise wrote another letter to her daughter in Scotland. Antoinette wrote:

It is impossible for her to be more honoured than she is. She and the King’s eldest daughter Elizabeth, live together, and I think it is a great good thing, for they are thus brought up to love each other as sisters.<sup>14</sup>

Antoinette perfectly describes the atmosphere in the French Royal Nursery. Mary instantaneously was surrounded by a family of brothers and sisters. Alongside the Dauphin and Elizabeth of Valois, Mary was raised with the young princess Claude of Valois and her three younger brothers.<sup>15</sup> Mary’s relationship with Elizabeth was perhaps one of the most important friendships she made during her time in France. The deep sisterhood bond that had formed is evidenced by the letter Mary wrote to the King of Spain when Elizabeth of Valois left France to live with her husband Philip II on 25 November 1559. Mary entrusted Elizabeth with the task of handing the letter to her husband upon her arrival in Spain. In this letter Mary writes that she is “the person who loves her [Elizabeth] the most in this world.”<sup>16</sup> This letter provides an early example of the emotional nature of Mary’s writing that is particularly evident in the queen’s later correspondence with Elizabeth Tudor.

Mary’s pampered childhood continued during her tenure in the Royal Nursery. The royal children were particularly doted upon because Catherine de’ Medici had spent a decade attempting to conceive children, and had been thought to be incapable of bearing children. Consequently, the royal children were perceived as miracles. As Jane Dunn writes:

No minutiae of their health and well-being were too trivial for her concern. They were fussed over and indulged, the darlings of their parents and the court. Due to this odd

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<sup>12</sup> Henry II wrote letters to Jean d’Humiers, the Dauphin’s governor regarding the manner in which Mary Stuart should be received at St. Germain- specifically, that she should be raised among the French royal children. He also received notice when Mary’s ship arrived in France. The King and Catherine de’ Medici, the Queen-Consort, however, did not meet Mary Stuart until early December when they returned from Burgundy.

<sup>13</sup> Guy, 45.

<sup>14</sup> Hume, 41.

<sup>15</sup> Dunn, 91.

<sup>16</sup> Antonia Fraser, *Mary Queen of Scots* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), 91.

conjugation of circumstance, Mary was introduced into, what was for the time, an unusually child-centered world, in which she was the star.<sup>17</sup>

Antonia Fraser examines the bills accumulated by the French Court as it invested in lavish activities for the children of the Royal Nursery. Fraser observes that the French court employed servants whose only duty was to ensure that the children lived as great a life of luxury as possible.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Fraser writes the following about life in the royal nursery:

Their daily trappings were equally exotic. They were for example, surrounded with pets—in 1551 there were four big dogs and twenty-two lap dogs, as well as falcons and pet birds. Horses there were in abundance... horses also frequently formed the subject for presents... At one point the royal nursery was even sent two bears by the Marshal de Saint-Andre... The children were shown wolves and boars, wild animals from Africa. There were also two-legged amusements- troops of travelling actors and Italian acrobats were stopped on their route by the royal governor to entertain his charges... There were bills also for choirs of singers, and players of tabourins. There were bills for materials for the royal children to make the sweets of which they were particularly fond.<sup>19</sup>

This luxurious atmosphere cushioned Mary from the treacherous realities of court life and enabled her to live in ignorance of politics that affected both Scotland and France.

Mary occupied a position of pre-eminence, even among the royal children. It was believed, therefore, that her attire should mirror her status, and that her possessions should be more fabulous than those of the French princesses. Antonia Fraser writes:

Her accounts reveal both the abundance and the formality of a royal child's wardrobe... There are bills for leather gloves of dog-skin and deer skin, The accessories are in keeping with the rest: a black velvet purse to keep the combs of the queen of Scots in, a crystal mirror covered with velvet and silk ribbons, gold and silver paillettes to be sewn on to her clothes, endless chains, collars and gold belts, as well as three brass chests to hold her jewels, which included a chain of pearls and green enamel, a gold ring with a ruby in it, and jewelled buttons of many different colours and shapes.<sup>20</sup>

Mary's awareness of her elite status was reinforced by her extravagant wardrobe. John Guy notes that in 1551 when Mary was nine-years- old, the three brass chests about which Fraser writes,

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<sup>17</sup> Dunn, 87.

<sup>18</sup> Fraser, 45

<sup>19</sup> Fraser, 47.

<sup>20</sup> Fraser, 48

were already employed to house Mary's growing jewelry collection.<sup>21</sup> The nature of Mary's collection of adornments suggests that she had begun fully to embrace the glamour and pageantry that was more characteristic of French court than of her native Scotland. This would present some difficulties for her when she returned to Scotland in 1561 following the death of her first husband and struggled to connect with the culture she had left behind when she had been sent to France in 1548.

In March 1553, Henry II gifted the Dauphin with his own household.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, Mary's Guise relations began to push for their protégé to have a household of her own. It fit the station of a ten-year-old queen, the Guises argued, for Mary to run her own household. In a letter sent to Marie of Guise in Scotland on 25 February 1553, Charles of Guise,<sup>23</sup> Mary's uncle, noted that, if Mary were not permitted her own household, she might have to sleep in Catherine de' Medici's rooms while the court was at the palace of Saint Germain. Charles asserted that this arrangement was embarrassing for a queen of Mary's stature.<sup>24</sup> Although Henry II agreed that Mary was capable of running her own household, he asserted that France would not help fund such an endeavour, due the amount of money the country was already pouring in Mary's education and providing military aid in Scotland.<sup>25</sup>

Charles of Guise then took it upon himself to write a series of letters to his sister, Marie of Guise, who had recently been named regent of Scotland, requesting the financial assistance required to fit Mary with a household of her own. Nine months of debates between Charles of Guise and his sister in Scotland ensued. Near the close of 1553, Charles of Guise sent a letter that illustrates Mary's developing sense of her status. Charles wrote that Mary was:

a queen already possessed of a high and noble spirit that lets her annoyance be very plainly seen if she is unworthily treated. Her grandeur had to be respected. She wished to be grown up and to exercise her independent authority.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Guy, 53.

<sup>22</sup> Guy, 56.

<sup>23</sup> Charles of Guise was the Archbishop of Reims, known also from 1547, after appointment as Cardinal-priest of the church of Santa Cecilia at Rome, as "Cardinal Lorraine." Charles was Marie of Guise's brother and so Mary Stuart's uncle.

<sup>24</sup> Guy, 57.

<sup>25</sup> Guy, 59.

<sup>26</sup> Guy, 59.

Charles' letter indicates that by the age of ten Mary possessed a sense of how she ought to be treated, and reacted negatively if people did not act according to her standards. Furthermore, it is telling that at such a young age Mary indicated her desire to exercise authority over a household of her own. This attitude is characteristic of Mary's understanding of herself as a queen, an understanding that was nurtured by the indulgent lifestyle provided for her by the French court.

Charles of Guise estimated that Mary would need a budget of around "24,000 livres tournois, or between 50,000 and 60,000 francs, a year to maintain her state."<sup>27</sup> Mary was granted a household of her own on 1 January 1554, a luxury afforded then only to her and her fiancé, the Dauphin. Even Elizabeth of Valois, Henri II's eldest daughter, remained among the rest of the royal children at this time.<sup>28</sup> Within the first year of Mary's rule over her own household, however, it became apparent that Charles of Guise had greatly underestimated the amount of money Mary required. Mary's newfound independence continued to expand her perception of herself as a monarch. Martin Hume insightfully notes that this self-perception soon became fixed: "it is evident that at the age of about thirteen or fourteen the result of Mary's training as a child-monarch had been to stamp indelibly upon her character the impression of her sovereign privileges and exalted destiny."<sup>29</sup>

The training that Mary Stuart received during her time at the French court also seems to have affected the queen's rulership style. Although she received training in classical scholarship, significant emphasis was placed upon preparing Mary to be a Queen-consort of France. Instruction in dancing, singing, embroidery and music-making, and not in the arts of ruling, therefore, were the staples of Mary's early education. Jane Dunn summarizes this notion eloquently, writing: "she was educated to be an accomplished consort to a great nation's king, rather than to be a ruler in her own right..."<sup>30</sup> Mary had become a French princess and was intended to become a French queen and had been so far removed from Scottish politics that that country became for her more a dowry than a kingdom for which she might become politically responsible.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Guy, 59-60

<sup>28</sup> Hume, 47.

<sup>29</sup> Hume, 51.

<sup>30</sup> Dunn, 69.

<sup>31</sup> Dunn, 69.

Mary's scholarship was dedicated towards obtaining an understanding of European languages. Mary arrived in France with knowledge only of the Scots tongue. Consequently, her education in the French language began immediately under the charge of Mademoiselle Curel. Such education appears to have been extremely successful as evidenced by the writings of George Cone, known as Conaeus, one of Mary's first biographers. Conaeus writes that Mary's French was "so graceful... that the judgement of the most learned men recognised her command of the language."<sup>32</sup> Mary also was learned in Spanish, Italian, ancient Greek, and Latin, but, Conaeus writes that her education aimed for a working knowledge in these languages rather than for fluency.

She was taught Latin by Claude Millot and Antoine Fouquelin. While little is known about Millot, Fouquelin is celebrated for a popular treatise entitled *La rhétorique Française*, that was published in Paris in 1557 with a dedicatory text that praised Mary's scholastic abilities.<sup>33</sup> That Mary's praises were published in a celebrated text would have likely fostered an unwarranted sense of her own capabilities that would not have been contested due to her elite status as Queen of Scotland and Dauphiness of France. This false sense of security likely enabled Mary to rule with unwavering confidence, an attitude that would eventually prove fatal.

Mary's understanding of Greek and Latin were derived from reading the texts of important Greek and Roman authors. Some of the works the young queen studied included: Aristotle's *Politics* and *Rhetoric*, Quintilian's *Training of an Orator*, Plato's *Laws*, Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, and Cicero's *On Duties*.<sup>34</sup> These works provided Mary with what was considered a rudimentary knowledge of Greek and Latin, thus she was deemed eligible to join the Dauphin for advanced lessons in these languages and their literatures. Jacques Amyot, who was chosen to teach Latin to Henry II's sons and Pierre Danès, who was chosen to teach Greek to the princes, served as Mary's ancient language instructors.<sup>35</sup> Henry II's decision to educate Mary alongside the royal men of the court holds great significance. Mary likely perceived herself worthy of such attention when in actuality her mastery of Greek and Latin seems to have been modest and

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<sup>32</sup> Robert Rait. *Mary Queen of Scots* (London: David Nutt, 1900), 3.

<sup>33</sup> Guy, 69.

<sup>34</sup> Guy, 68.

<sup>35</sup> Guy, 69.

unremarkable. Antonia Fraser states that Mary was more a great student than a prodigy. Fraser writes that she:

neither had nor was trained to have the brain of the calibre of, for example, Elizabeth Tudor. She was, however, by nature bright and quick, with a pliant turn of mind which her governess praised, because it made her eager to learn.<sup>36</sup>

Mary's status as a great student rather than a prodigy is reflected in the work she produced. When she was eleven and twelve years old, Mary wrote a series of sixty-four Latin essays.<sup>37</sup> John Guy asserts that the essays are disappointing as they reflect more the opinions of Mary's tutors than her own ideas. Moreover, Guy notes that many of the essays seem to be "her own translations of existing model answers."<sup>38</sup> Jane Dunn also comments on this collection of essays, observing "they are not competent enough to claim her as an exceptional scholar."<sup>39</sup>

Notably, when she was nearly thirteen, Mary was responsible for delivering a Latin oration in the Louvre.<sup>40</sup> Guy observes that her declamation was competent, but reflected no deep understanding of the language. John Guy asserts that she was coached and spoke on a topic about which she had already composed fifteen essays.<sup>41</sup> The protected nature of Mary's childhood in France meant that the queen was surrounded by praise so that her status as a pre-eminent figure in court was never challenged. Mary, therefore, seems to have taken her responsibilities and perceived capabilities for granted.

Training Mary to act in the manner expected of a French dauphiness was the most essential element of the queen's education. P.C. Headley accurately describes the importance of these lessons for a French princess:

In the education of a royal personage, mental cultivation, however highly valued, was of subordinate importance to the acquisition of those external accomplishments, essentially necessary to that public exhibition which is unavoidably imposed on the station of a sovereign. For those who live exposed to the public gaze, alternatively the objects of criticism and admiration, to be wanting in a dignified carriage, or gracious demeanor; to be untasteful in dress, of ungraceful speech, or shy, repulsive manners, has ever been an

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<sup>36</sup> Fraser, 50.

<sup>37</sup> Stoddart, 92.

<sup>38</sup> Guy, 70.

<sup>39</sup> Dunn, 95.

<sup>40</sup> Mary's speech defended the education of women in Europe.

<sup>41</sup> Guy, 71.

irreparable effect, for which neither moral nor intellectual qualities could compensate to their possessor.<sup>42</sup>

It was necessary for Mary to learn how to carry herself and to dress virtuously and in the fashion of the court. It was also of great significance that Mary learn how to address foreign ambassadors properly and to listen to long speeches made by visitors that were no doubt often beyond the comprehension of a young child.<sup>43</sup>

Carefully educated in courtly accomplishments, Mary received many complements from those who witnessed her skills. Giovanni Capello, the Venetian ambassador to France from 1547 until 1551 wrote the following about Mary Stuart:

She is most beautiful and so accomplished that she inspires with astonishment everyone who witnesses her acquirements. The Dauphin, too, is very fond of her, and finds great pleasure in her company and conversation.<sup>44</sup>

Those who wrote about the young queen's accomplishments seem to have emphasized her ability to conduct a good conversation. Charles of Guise also complemented Mary's conversational skills in a letter to his sister in Scotland dated 25 February 1553. He writes:

The Lady, your daughter, has so grown and is growing every day in stature, goodness, beauty, wisdom, and virtues that she is as perfect and as accomplished in all things honest and virtuous as it is possible for her to be. There is no one like her to be found in this kingdom, either among noble ladies or others whether of low degree or middle station. I must tell you, Madame, that the King has taken such a liking to her that he amuses himself in chatting with her for an hour at a time, and she is as well able to entertain him with good and sensible talk as if she were a woman of five-and- twenty.<sup>45</sup>

Mary Stuart would have been aware that people were complimenting her beauty and virtue. In fact, she likely would have received such praises in person from her Guise relatives, who believed their niece to be the most accomplished young woman in all of France. These laudations would likely have strengthened Mary's belief that she possessed talents and abilities in excess of those she was to demonstrate when confronted by the challenges she faced as Queen of Scotland.

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<sup>42</sup> P.C. Headley, *The Life of Mary Queen of Scots* (Boston, Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1853), 24-25.

<sup>43</sup> Hume, 42.

<sup>44</sup> Dunn, 95.

<sup>45</sup> Dunn, 94.

Mary particularly excelled in lessons that enhanced her ability to sing, play musical instruments, dance, and create beautiful works of embroidery. The poet Brantome wrote that “Mary sang very well, attuning her voice to the lute, which she played very prettily with that fair white hand of hers, and those well-shaped fingers, which were lovely as the fingers of Aurora.”<sup>46</sup> Conaenus too, praised Mary’s musical abilities, he wrote:

in the excellence of her singing, she profited greatly by a certain natural- not acquired- modulation of her voice. She played well on the cittern, the harp and the harpsichord as they call it.<sup>47</sup>

The ability to play musical instruments, and sing were considered becoming in a woman of noble birth. Dancing was also an essential skill that Mary cultivated during her time in the French Court. Henry II noted Mary’s natural talent for dance and immediately hired an Italian dance master to teach her the fashionable dances of the day.<sup>48</sup> Mary too, loved to dance and spent hours practicing with the Dauphin in preparation for the festivities that followed their wedding ceremony. Conaenus writes that Mary “danced excellently to music on account of her wonderful agility of body, but yet gracefully and becomingly, for by quiet and gentle motion of her limbs she could express any harmony of the strings.”<sup>49</sup> Mary also loved embroidery, a task that was perceived as an aristocratic woman’s pastime. Mary came so to love this exercise that she engaged in it for pleasure for the duration of her life. When she was nine years old, Henry II ordered “two pounds of twisted woolen yarn” and placed Mary’s training in the art under the watchful eye of Pierre Danjou, who was the King’s personal embroiderer.<sup>50</sup> Thus, Mary received much praise for her accomplishments in these matters of court conduct. Consequently, Mary may have perceived herself an extremely competent queen who was loved by all.

Her training in the French court also sought to instill a sense of the sacredness of sovereignty in Mary and to teach her that a monarch should maintain a distance from her people. As Jane Dunn writes, Mary did not learn to respect the power of her people:

As a prospective queen of France, she did not need to [connect with her people]. The French monarchy was so rich and self-confident that it sought to remove itself still further

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<sup>46</sup> Stoddart, 91.

<sup>47</sup> Stoddart, 92.

<sup>48</sup> Guy, 74.

<sup>49</sup> Stoddart, 92.

<sup>50</sup> Guy, 75.

from its subjects and advertise to all, particularly its competitor monarchs abroad, the extent of unassailable wealth and power of the crown.<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, because Mary was being trained as a French Queen-consort rather than a ruler in her own right, Mary was not taught how to navigate affairs of state or the complexities of European politics. Jane Dunn phrases this sentiment best in observing that Mary:

was never to see at first hand the extent of the strategic planning, responsibility and diplomacy of government. Indulged within the hothouse of the royal nursery, flattered and celebrated more than was good for her outside it, Mary was given little chance to see any of the day-to-day workings of the French monarchy. In fact her Guise uncles encouraged the Dauphin and their niece in their pursuit of pleasure, mostly in the form of the daily chase, rather than acquiring the arts of kingship.<sup>52</sup>

The Guise family were extremely ambitious and benefitted from Mary's lack of political knowledge. Due to her cushioned upbringing, Mary Stuart was exceedingly trusting of any advice she received, particularly from her relatives. The Guises took advantage of this and used their niece as a pawn to gain more power for themselves within the French Court. Mary, for example, was prohibited from sending or receiving any correspondence before first showing hers letters to her uncle Charles of Guise for his approval. Moreover, Charles of Guise advised Mary about protocol, telling her to whom her letters should be sent and the matters she should discuss.<sup>53</sup> This is to say that even when Mary became Queen-consort of France on 10 July 1559, she was not involved directly and personally in politics because her decisions were shaped largely by her Guise relations.

Mary Stuart's wedding to the Dauphin on 24 April 1558 provides an explicit example of the grandeur and decadence enjoyed by the Scottish queen during her time in France. The accounts written of the wedding by contemporaries demonstrate the excessive flattery to which

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<sup>51</sup> Dunn, 10.

<sup>52</sup> Dunn, 94.

<sup>53</sup> Guy, 55.

Mary was subject. John Leslie<sup>54</sup>, for example, wrote the following about the handfasting ceremony,<sup>55</sup> which took place on 19 April 1558, in his *History of Scotland*:

The handfasting, was made with great triumph, by the Cardinal of Lorraine, between the excellent young Prince Francis, eldest son to the most valiant, courageous, and victorious prince, Henry, King of France, and Mary, Queen, inheritor of the realm of Scotland, one of the fairest, most civil and virtuous princesses of the whole world, with great solemnity, triumph, and banqueting...<sup>56</sup>

It would be difficult for a fifteen-year-old girl to avoid arrogant pretension after having been recipient of so much admiration and luxury. Moreover, the wedding between Francis II and Mary Stuart was an enormous spectacle of royal power in which Mary was the center of attention. It had been over two hundred years since a Dauphin had been married in France,<sup>57</sup> and the King wished “that the marriage should be the most famous ever celebrated.”<sup>58</sup> Henry II was successful in this endeavour. Hume writes that Mary Stuart’s marriage with Francis II was more magnificent than any of those thrown by Francis I, who was recognized in Europe for his elaborate festivals.<sup>59</sup>

The festivities celebrating the marriage were as lavish as the wedding ceremony itself.

John Guy writes of the decorations that adorned Paris on the day of the wedding:

A temporary gallery or covered walkway, twelve feet high, connected the starting point of the grand procession, the nearby palace of the Archbishop of Paris, to Notre-Dame itself. The gallery, in the shape of an arch, was decorated in the antique classical style and led to an open pavilion on a stage across the west front of the cathedral, surmounted by a canopy of azure silk embossed with gold fleurs-de-lis. It continued into the church along

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<sup>54</sup> John Leslie was a Scottish Roman Catholic Bishop, and a historian. It is not known John Leslie was a guest at the handfasting ceremony is unknown. It is clear, however, that he was close to Mary Stuart and acted as a close advisor to the queen near the end of her life. His relationship with Mary is evidenced through a book he wrote in 1569 to be sent to Elizabeth Tudor, who had imprisoned Mary in England. The work was titled *A Defence of the Honor of Marie, Queene of Scotland*.

<sup>55</sup> A handfasting ceremony represents the public recognition of a betrothal. Often a member of the church, in this instance, Mary Stuart’s uncle, the Cardinal of Lorraine, performs the ceremony. During this event Mary and Francis signed their wedding contract, in which they agreed to wed on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1558.

<sup>56</sup> John Leslie, *History of Scotland* (Rome, 1578), 264-265, quoted in Robert Rait. *Mary Queen of Scots* (London: David Nutt, 1900), 4-6.

<sup>57</sup> Hume, 61.

<sup>58</sup> Stoddart, 143-144.

<sup>59</sup> Hume, 60

the nave of the chancel, ending in the royal closet where the bride and bridegroom were to hear mass.<sup>60</sup>

Hume writes that in the weeks before the wedding ceremony all the shops of Paris were busy preparing for the ceremonies, observing that the only sounds to be heard were of the construction of theatres and stands for the festivals that were to be utilized as part of the wedding festivities.<sup>61</sup> The young and impressionable Mary would have been aware that her wedding was occupying the thoughts of everyone in France and that all of the workers in Paris were contributing to the lavishness of her ceremony.

The wedding procession began outside the Bishop's palace, near the Cathedral of Notre Dame, where the royal party had stayed the preceding night.<sup>62</sup> Leading the procession were musicians playing "trumpets, bugles, oboes, flutes, viols, violins and more."<sup>63</sup> Next, marched one hundred men from the king's household, followed by princes of the blood, eighteen bishops and abbots, and six cardinals including the papal legate, Cardinal Trivulzio.<sup>64</sup> Finally, at the end of the procession came the royal party. Francis II walked alongside his younger brothers Charles and Henry as well as Antoine of Bourbon, the King of Navarre and the father of the future French King Henry IV. Mary Stuart followed, flanked by Henry II and her uncle, Charles of Guise, Archbishop of Reims and Cardinal Lorraine. Following the bride and groom were Catherine de Medici, Louis, Prince of Conde, and a dozen princesses, duchesses, ladies, and maids of honor.<sup>65</sup> The magnitude of this procession demonstrates the importance of Mary's wedding. Mary Stuart and her claim to rule the Scottish kingdom was of such great significance that the pope arranged for his personal representative and legate, the aforementioned Cardinal Trivulzio, as well as many senior members of the church to be in attendance. The grandeur provided by the attendance of so many powerful figures of the kingdom and the church cannot have been lost on Mary and would have enhanced her sense of entitlement.

Mary defied French conventions by choosing to wear a white dress on her wedding day. In sixteenth-century France, white was the colour of mourning and was perceived as a sign of

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<sup>60</sup> Guy, 82.

<sup>61</sup> Hume, 60-61

<sup>62</sup> Stoddart, 143-144

<sup>63</sup> Guy, 83

<sup>64</sup> Stoddart, 145.

<sup>65</sup> Guy, 83.

bad luck when worn as the dominant color of wedding attire.<sup>66</sup> John Guy notes that Mary wished to wear white because “she knew that white suited her delicate skin and auburn hair, and insisted on it.”<sup>67</sup> Mary’s insistence on wearing a colour that the French associated with mourning demonstrates her willful personality and her belief that her title exempted her from restrictions dictated by French conventions. Mary’s dress was covered with jewels, and the train was of such length that two maids of honor were employed to carry it. A pendent named “Great Harry”, engraved with her initials, that was a gift from Henry II, hung around her neck. Upon her head was a gold crown adorned with pearls, diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds and a center gemstone that was valued at around half a million crowns.<sup>68</sup> Pierre of Brantome a French historian (1539-1614) wrote of the day:

We saw this queen appear more beauteous than a goddess from the skies...the voice of all as one man resounded and proclaimed throughout the Court and the great city that happy a hundredfold was he, the prince, thus joined to such a princess; and even if Scotland were a thing of price its queen out-valued it; for had she neither crown nor sceptre, her person and her glorious beauty were worth a kingdom; therefore, being a queen, she brought to France and her husband a double fortune. This is what the world went saying of her; and for this reason she was called queen-dauphine...<sup>69</sup>

The extravagance of Mary’s attire and her jewellery exemplified France’s wealth and the riches provided to Mary as the future queen of the nation. Moreover, Brantome’s observations indicate that the French public praised Mary more so than they did the Dauphin himself. This is particularly evident when Brantome writes that any prince who married Mary was lucky. Such an act validated Mary’s image of herself as an extraordinarily powerful figure.

The banquet following Mary’s and Francis’ wedding ceremony was a spectacle of wealth and engineering, designed to impress ambassadors who had travelled to France for the occasion. After the guests had been seated, seven persons costumed as planets entered the Golden Chamber, covered with ducat gold, chosen as the appropriate venue because “this great marriage was to be represented to the people as a pageant gazed upon by unearthly spectators.”<sup>70</sup> The

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<sup>66</sup> Guy, 83.

<sup>67</sup> Guy, 83.

<sup>68</sup> Stoddart, 145

<sup>69</sup> Pierre of Brantome, *The Book of The Ladies*, trans, Katharine Prescott Wormelet (New York: Brentano’s Publishers, 1899), 93

<sup>70</sup> Stoddart, 148.

costumes worn by players representing the three planets most easily visible in the night-sky were intended to invoke well-known characterizations by poets<sup>71</sup>: Mercury was adorned with a golden girdle, wings and a caduceus; Mars wore an expensive suit of armour; and Venus wore rich draperies.<sup>72</sup> Next, twenty-five wicker horses ornamented with gold and silver harnesses were led in by servants.<sup>73</sup> Atop each horse was a young prince in golden clothes, and among the riders rode Charles, Henry and the young children of the Duke of Guise.<sup>74</sup> To complete the performance, six mechanical ships were sent into the banquet hall.<sup>75</sup> John Guy describes the elegance of the scene:

as no fête was complete without exotic floats of clockwork devices, six mechanical ships had been constructed. They were decked with cloth of gold and crimson velvet, with silver masts and sails of silver gauze that billowed in an artificial wind created by hidden bellows. The ships rocked from side to side and moved backwards and forward. Painted canvas had been laid on the floor of the great hall to imitate waves, which undulated gently to complete the effect.<sup>76</sup>

On the deck of each ship were two seats, one was occupied by a male member of the royal family, with the other left unoccupied. After completing several circuits of the hall, each ship stopped beside a lady, chosen by the captain, who was then lifted into the previously empty seat on deck. Henry II chose to lift Mary Stuart into his ship; Francis II was accompanied by his mother Catherine de Medici; and Anne d'Este, wife of Francis, Duke of Guise, was selected to occupy the seat next to the Prince of Conde. The Queen of Navarre, Jeanne III, Madame Elizabeth of Valois and Madame Claude of Valois were chosen to sit in the remaining seats.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Descriptions only of Mercury, Mars and Venus exist in the literature

<sup>72</sup> Stoddart, 148.

<sup>73</sup> Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of Scotland and English Princesses connected with the Regal Succession of Great Britain* Vol. III (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1541), 88. It is difficult to find a source that mentions how these horses moved. Agnes Strickland offers the most insight, relaying that skill was required to move these devices.

<sup>74</sup> Stoddart, 148.

<sup>75</sup> Bernard Clarke Weber, *The Youth of Mary Queen of Scots* (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company Publishers, 1941), 42. It is unclear how the ships moved throughout the hall. Bernard Clark Weber describes the ships as being “propelled by an ingenious mechanism” in his book.

<sup>76</sup> Guy, 85.

<sup>77</sup> Weber, 43. Scholars offer varying accounts of who was hoisted into each boat. Clarke, for example, notes that Madame Elizabeth of Valois occupied one of the seats, but does not mention the Queen of Navarre at all. Stoddart and Strickland write otherwise, noting that King

This pageantry highlighted the importance of this royal marriage as an event that was watched by heavenly beings. The event was meant to celebrate the health of France's future monarchs and consequently the wealth of the nation itself. Mary Stuart was thus lauded as necessary for the continuation of the Valois royal lineage.

Mary's significance as the Dauphiness of France and as the crowned Queen of Scotland is best exemplified by Henry II's asking two knights, Monsieur de Saint-Sever and Monsieur de Saint-Crespin to hold Mary's heavy jewel-laden crown above her head for the duration of the wedding dinner.<sup>78</sup> This was prompted when she complained that the weight of the crown was causing a headache. The crown, however, was an important symbol of regal status that Henry II evidently wished to display. Watching him display his power in this manner may well have helped to shape Mary's later understanding and conduct of rulership and monarchical authority.

Henry II succeeded in his goal to hold extravagant festivities that achieved his desire to impress foreign ambassadors. Giovanni Michiel, a Venetian diplomat, prepared a report for Doge Lorenzo Priuli and the Venetian Senate on 25 April, describing Mary and Francis II's marriage. Michiel writes:

These nuptials were really considered the most regal and triumphant of any that have been witnessed in this kingdom for many years, whether from the concourse of the chief personages of the realm both temporal and spiritual thus assembled, there being present and assisting at all the solemnities the Cardinal Legate, and all the other ambassadors, or from the pomp and richness of the jewels and apparel, both of the lords and ladies; or from the grandeur of the banquet and stately service of the table, or from the costly devices of the masquerades and similar revels.<sup>79</sup>

This account demonstrates that the luxurious nature of the French royal wedding caught the attention of contemporaries. The Venetian ambassador reports to his government that the wedding attracted important figures from both the spiritual and temporal realms. Furthermore, he reports that the event was quite costly, even compared with festivals hosted by other wealthy personages in Europe. Michiel also observes the rich apparel and jewelry worn by all who were involved in the ceremonies. Consequently, the source provides evidence that Mary Stuart became

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Antoine of Navarre (r.1555-1562) selected his wife, Jeanne III d'Albret, Queen of Navarre (r.1555-1572), to sit beside him, and neglect to mention Elizabeth of Valois at all.

<sup>78</sup> Stoddart, 146.

<sup>79</sup> Stoddart, 149.

accustomed to a level of grandeur that would likely have enhanced her perceived self-worth and thus affected the manner in which she conducted herself as a ruler.

In conclusion, Mary Stuart was raised in the exceptionally extravagant French Court where she grew accustomed to a luxurious wardrobe, expensive festivities celebrated for her enjoyment and reputation, such as her wedding to Francis II, and to the comfort of being surrounded by “siblings” and close relations, who made much of her. Mary was not expected to exercise many responsibilities because she was expected to act as a Queen-consort rather than as a ruler in her own right. When political decisions were to be made, her Guise relations made them for her. Consequently, Mary took her undisputed title and responsibilities for granted. Furthermore, the constant praise and flattery to which Mary was exposed meant that she likely developed an exaggerated confidence in her ability to rule. When Mary returned to Scotland in 1561 following her husband’s death, and was expected to act according to her role as Queen of Scotland, her trusting nature, her long separation from her people, and, as seems probable, that exaggerated self-confidence proved destructive of her ability to rule successfully in accordance with the political traditions of her Scottish kingdom.

## CHAPTER TWO: Elizabeth Tudor's Childhood

Elizabeth Tudor's childhood was far more tumultuous than that of her cousin, Mary Stuart. The first two years of Elizabeth's life were peaceful, as the princess' birth was celebrated. In 1536, however, the young girl's mother was accused of treason and beheaded. Elizabeth consequently lost her royal status, and following the death of her father in 1547, was vulnerable to the ambitions of political actors in the English court. This dangerous childhood seems to have taught Elizabeth to act with extreme caution, rather than to trust blindly her family and advisors. Moreover, these experiences likely taught Elizabeth the importance of forethought, a characteristic that is evident in Elizabeth's later formulation of political strategy as queen.

During the first few months of Elizabeth's life, the English Parliament, at the insistence of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief minister, passed the First Act of Succession (1534) that declared that the king's marriage to Anne Boleyn was valid. The act, therefore, stipulated that the line of succession would pass through the heirs of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn:

And also be it enacted by authority aforesaid, that all the issue had and procreated, or hereafter to be had and procreated, between your highness and your said most dear and entirely beloved wife Queen Anne, shall be your lawful decried children, and be inheritable, and inherit, according to the course of inheritance and laws of this realm, the imperial crown of the same, with all dignities, honours, pre-eminences, prerogatives, authorities, and jurisdictions to the same annexed or belonging, in as large and ample manner as your highness at this present time has the same as king of this realm; the inheritance thereof to be and remain to your said children and right heirs in manner and form as hereafter shall be declared...<sup>1</sup>

The act stated that if Anne and Henry VIII were to have a son, the crown would be passed first to him and then to the princess Elizabeth. Those who did not adhere to the provisions enacted by the First Act of Succession were to be considered high traitors and punished accordingly.<sup>2</sup>

By April 1536, when Elizabeth Tudor was merely two years and eight months of age, her father had become disillusioned with her mother. Anne Boleyn was accused of adultery, treason, and witchcraft and put on trial. On 19 May at noon, Elizabeth's mother was executed following conviction for treason arising from acts of adultery. Although unfortunate, Anne Boleyn's

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Gee and William John Hardy, *Documents illustrative of English Church History*, (London: MacMillan and Co., 1914), 37.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Gee and William John Hardy, 239.

execution seemingly proved a lesson for Elizabeth later in life. Elizabeth was acutely aware of how quickly opinions could shift in the English Court, and she spent her life trying to ensure that she upheld a spotless personal reputation.

In June 1536, a month after the execution of Anne Boleyn, Parliament, again acting in response to Cromwell's representation of Henry VIII's wishes, promulgated a Second Act of Succession. This act declared that the marriage between Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn had been unlawful and authorized the king to marry the "right noble, virtuous, and excellent Lady, Queen Jane [Seymour]."<sup>3</sup>

This act both removed Princess Elizabeth from the English succession and declared her to be illegitimate. The Second Act of Succession also proclaimed that any person who presumed Mary Tudor or Elizabeth Tudor to be a legitimate heir to the English throne was to be accused to committing high treason.

If any person or persons, by words, writing, imprinting, or any other exterior act, directly or indirectly, accept or take, judge or believe, any of the marriages had and solemnised between the King's Highness and the said Lady Katherine, or between the King's Highness and the said late Queen Anne, to be good, lawful, or of any effect; or by words, writing, printing, or any other exterior act, directly or indirectly, slander, interrupt, impeach, gainsay, or impugn the lawful judgments and sentences of the said most Reverend Father in God, Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of all England, for and concerning the divorces and separations of the said unlawful marriages or any of them; or by words, writing, print, or any other exterior act, directly or indirectly, take, accept, name, or call, by any pretence, any of the children born and procreated under any of the said unlawful marriages to be legitimate and lawful children of your Majesty... for every such offence afore declared shall be adjudged high traitors, And that every such offence afore specified shall be adjudged high treason.<sup>4</sup>

The Princess Elizabeth's status was tied to that of her mother. Upon the declaration in the Second Act of Succession that the marriage between Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII had been illegal, the legal finding of the First Act of Succession that Elizabeth's birth had been legitimate was revoked. Consequently, Elizabeth was deprived of her title of princess and labelled a bastard. At such a young age, Elizabeth's status had already shifted from that of a celebrated royal princess to that of an illegitimate child.

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<sup>3</sup> J.R. Tanner, 390.

<sup>4</sup> J.R. Tanner, 394-395.

Following Henry's new marriage, Elizabeth was "left for awhile neglected, and almost forgotten, while her father went to his new love and bridal."<sup>5</sup> There survives evidence that may suggest that Elizabeth was aware of her shifting status. Lady Margaret Bryan, who was Elizabeth's governess, records that in the spring of 1537 the young girl asked: "'How haps it Governor, yesterday my Lady Princess, and today but my Lady Elizabeth?'"<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth had noticed that people were addressing her as Lady Elizabeth rather than "Lady Princess," and was wondering what had prompted such a change.

In June 1543 Parliament restored Elizabeth and Mary to the English succession in the Third Act of Succession. The act states:

Recognising and knowledging also that it is the only pleasure and will of Almighty God how long his Highness or his said entirely beloved son Prince Edward shall live, and whether the said Prince shall have heirs of his body lawfully be-gotten or not... that in case it shall happen to the King's Majesty and the said excellent Prince his yet only son . . . and heir apparent to decease without heir of either of their bodies law-fully begotten (as God defend), so that there be no such heir male or female of any of their two bodies to have and inherit the said imperial Crown and other his dominions according and in such manner and form as in the foresaid Act and now in this is declared. That then the said imperial Crown and all other the premises shall be to the Lady Mary the King's Highness's daughter and to the heirs of the body of the same Lady Mary lawfully begotten...and for default of such issue the said imperial Crown and other premises shall be to the Lady Elizabeth the King's second daughter and to the heirs of the body of the said Lady Elizabeth lawfully begotten...<sup>7</sup>

This act passed the crown first to Prince Edward VI (r. 1547-1553) and his legitimate children. Should Edward not have any children, Henry VIII arranged the title to be conferred to Mary Tudor (r. 1553-1558) and her heirs. Only upon the death of Mary Tudor and her heirs would Elizabeth Tudor succeed to the throne of England. Anne Boleyn's legacy was to haunt Elizabeth throughout her life. Many English Catholics did not acknowledge the legality of the dissolution of Katherine of Aragon's marriage to Henry VIII and, thus, refused to accept the prospect of Elizabeth succeeding to the English throne, even though she was reintroduced into the English succession in the Third Act of Succession (1543). It is worthy of note that the language of the

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<sup>5</sup> Virginia Frances Townsend, *Elizabeth Tudor: The Queen and The Woman* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1874), 23.

<sup>6</sup> Lady Margaret Bryan, source unknown, quoted in Dunn, 53-54.

<sup>7</sup> J.R. Tanner, 398.

Third Act of Succession omitted to restore Elizabeth or Mary Tudor's legitimacy. This oversight left Henry's daughters vulnerable to counterclaims to the throne, particularly by those who supported Mary Stuart. The constantly shifting status of Elizabeth's title throughout the early years of the princess' life doubtless caused her to be sensitive to attempts to discredit the legality of her claim to the English throne when she became queen of England in 1558.

Lacking a title, Elizabeth spent the majority of her childhood living away from the English Court. Many of Elizabeth's biographers refer to these years as an exile. Virginia Townsend writes that the girl was "born to such high estate and thrown so early on her own discretion."<sup>8</sup> Jane Dunn writes that Elizabeth was on a gradual "journey towards singularity."<sup>9</sup> Dunn continues this metaphor, observing:

At first it was the loosening of familial ties which came with orphanhood, then the spiritual estrangement during her sister's reign, culminating in the physical constraint on her movements, place of residence and then the denial of her rights to safety, even to life.<sup>10</sup>

Elizabeth's precarious position became more perilous upon Henry VIII's death in 1547. The young princess could no longer seek her powerful father's protection and was, instead, exposed to the ambitions of those around her. Virginia Townsend observes that Henry VIII's death elevated Elizabeth's status. Elizabeth was then third in line of succession to the English throne with a budget of £3000 a year, making her an attractive match for any nobleman hoping to advance his social standing.<sup>11</sup>

The danger to which Elizabeth was exposed as a child is exemplified by two events: the Thomas Seymour affair and the Wyatt rebellion. Elizabeth's response to the Seymour affair will be further examined in part two of this chapter, but I shall briefly introduce the event here as an instance in which Elizabeth's status was jeopardized due to the ambitions of an ambitious courtier.

A few months after the death of Henry VIII, his surviving wife, Catherine Parr (r. 1543-1547) chose to marry Sir Thomas Seymour, the younger of Edward VI's two maternal uncles.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Townsend, 31.

<sup>9</sup> Dunn, 69.

<sup>10</sup> Dunn, 69.

<sup>11</sup> Townsend, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Wallace MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I* (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), 9.

Thomas Seymour was envious of his older brother, who had been named guardian of the young king and had been gifted the dukedom of Somerset. Thomas originally had his sights set on Princess Elizabeth, but upon realizing he would need the approval of the Privy Council to marry her, he decided instead to marry Catherine Parr.<sup>13</sup> In the summer of 1547 Elizabeth had decided to take up residence at the house of her favourite stepmother. This arrangement allowed Thomas Seymour access to Elizabeth.

Jane Dunn writes that Thomas Seymour's ambition taught the young Elizabeth "some malign lessons on the delusions of sexual desire and the snares of ruthless men who would be king."<sup>14</sup> The relationship between Thomas Seymour and Elizabeth Tudor progressed from a playful friendship into something that was alarming and gave the princess cause to feel unsettled because she was deprived of "a necessary privacy and sense of safety in her home."<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of Elizabeth's time in this household, Seymour and the princess would engage in horseplay, for which Catherine herself was always present. After Catherine became pregnant, however, the lighthearted affection turned inappropriate:

Seymour began the habit of visiting the fourteen-year old Elizabeth early in the morning before she was out of bed, exchanging pleasantries while slapping her buttocks and back.... Sometimes he appeared in nightclothes, bare-legged...<sup>16</sup>

Actions such as those described by Jane Dunn and Wallace MacCaffrey were extremely dangerous for Elizabeth. The young princess was once again in the public eye due to her renewed status as part of the English succession. She, therefore, needed to maintain an impeccable reputation to remain free from scandal.

Elizabeth quickly grew uncomfortable with Thomas Seymour's conduct. Katherine Ashley's testimony, which she gave under oath upon her arrest for her presumed assistance in Thomas Seymour's treasonous plots in January 1549 reports Elizabeth's discomfort at this behaviour:

Katherine Ashley told of occasions when Elizabeth, wishing to avoid these early morning incursions, rose earlier from her bed, so that Seymour then found her dressed and at her books rather than vulnerably half-dressed. On another occasion, Elizabeth, caught out and

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<sup>13</sup> MacCaffrey, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Dunn, 72.

<sup>15</sup> Dunn, 73.

<sup>16</sup> MacCaffrey, 9.

hearing the lock on her door open, rushed from her bed to hide with her women of the bedchamber until Seymour, having tarried a while, gave up and left the room.<sup>17</sup>

Ashley understood the importance of the princess maintaining the virtue and reputation expected of a woman of aristocratic birth. Ashley's account of Elizabeth's interactions with Thomas Seymour indicates that neither the princess nor the members of her household conspired in treasonous activities with the accused.

When Catherine Parr discovered the inappropriate manner in which her husband was acting, she became worried about Elizabeth's reputation, which was of the upmost importance for the young princess. Consequently, around Whitsuntide in the summer of 1548, long before Thomas Seymour was accused of treason, Catherine ordered that Elizabeth be sent from her manor at Chelsea to Ashridge, which was located about thirty kilometers distant in Hertfordshire.<sup>18</sup> From this ordeal Elizabeth likely would have learned that her relations did not necessarily act with her best interests in mind. In a letter sent from the princess to Catherine Parr circa June 1548, Elizabeth admitted that she felt "replete with sorrow to depart from your highness [Catherine Parr]."<sup>19</sup> Suffering such a separation from one of the only motherly figures in the princess' life may have caused Elizabeth to develop forethought, which enabled her to survive much of the danger she faced during the reigns of Edward VI and Mary Tudor.

Catherine Parr died during childbirth on 5 September 1548 and Thomas Seymour immediately "reprised his ambitions to marry her [Elizabeth], thereby dragging the young princess into a scandal which rapidly evolved into treason, with all the peril that entailed."<sup>20</sup> Seymour began a plot to undermine his brother Edward Seymour, who had been named Lord Protector of the king, an office he held from 1547-1549. Agnes Strickland writes the following about Thomas Seymour's plans:

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, the admiral [Thomas Seymour] was arrested on a charge of high treason, having boasted that he had ten thousand men at his command, and suborned

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<sup>17</sup> Dunn, 74.

<sup>18</sup> Townsend, 31.

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Tudor to Dowager Queen Catherine c. June 1548, in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 17.

<sup>20</sup> Dunn, 77.

Sharrington, the master of the mint at Bristol, to coin a large sum of false money to support him in his wild projects. He was committed to the Tower...<sup>21</sup>

Thomas Seymour was determined to overthrow his brother, by force if necessary, and establish himself as the regent of England. Seymour also wished to marry the Princess Elizabeth in hopes that he might one day become King. Princess Elizabeth and the principal persons of her household, namely Katherine Ashley and the head of her treasury, Mr. Thomas Parry, were arrested and subject to interrogations to discover if Elizabeth had helped Seymour plot against the English government.<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth herself was isolated and interrogated by Sir Robert Tyrwhit, who treated her as though “she was a prisoner of state.”<sup>23</sup> The particulars of Elizabeth’s conduct during these interrogations will be examined in depth in the second part of this chapter, for now it is sufficient to conclude that the princess was acquitted of all the charges held against her name. Elizabeth’s perceived implication in Thomas Seymour’s treasonous plot must have demonstrated to the princess how closely her actions were scrutinized by both the public and the privy council. And so it is probable that Elizabeth was beginning to understand that her presence made her a target for ambitious individuals and their treasonous plots.<sup>24</sup>

Elizabeth changed her behaviour following the Seymour plot. She remained further away from court, dressed in subdued clothing, and conducted herself in an extremely virtuous manner likely in an attempt to attract less attention to herself. Elizabeth’s tutor, Ascham wrote the following to John Sturm about the princess’ actions:

she greatly prefers a simple elegance to show and splendour, so despising the outward adorning of plaiting of the hair and wearing gold, that in the whole manner of her life she rather resembles Hippolyta than Phaedra.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England: From the Norman Conquest, Volumes 6-7* (Philadelphia: Blanchard and Lea, 1852), 29.

<sup>22</sup> Strickland, 29.

<sup>23</sup> Strickland, 29.

<sup>24</sup> Dunn, 6.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Roger Ascham, letter to John Sturm, 4 April 1550, quoted in Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England: From the Norman Conquest, Volume 3* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1884), 36. According to Greek mythology, Hippolyta was the Queen of the Amazons. In book two of the text *Bibliotheca historica*, Diodorus Siculus (c. 90- c.30BC) identifies the Amazons as a group of warrior women who dwelt along the Thermodon river in modern Turkey. In book four chapter 116 of his *Histories*, Herodotus (c.484-c.425BC) notes that the Amazons wore the same clothes as men. The mythological figure Phaedra, was the daughter King Minos and Queen Pasiphae of Crete. She was raised in a castle and dressed like a typical Greek princess. Ascham

This account of Elizabeth's distaste for an extravagant wardrobe contrasts sharply with the luxurious tastes Mary Stuart had developed during her time at French Court. Moreover, Elizabeth's retreat may demonstrate her desire to take her fate into her own hands. Elizabeth likely did not wish to give any person cause to introduce more danger into her life, and so she withdrew into the country and focussed her attention on her studies.

In November of 1553, a few years after Elizabeth's implication in the Seymour affair, Elizabeth became the focal point of another treasonous plot. Mary Tudor was then Queen and was persecuting any citizen who was of the Protestant faith. In response, a number of members of the House of Commons, acting in concert with many Protestant officials serving in Mary's government, devised a plan by which Mary was to be removed from the throne and replaced by Elizabeth.<sup>26</sup> This effort became known as the Wyatt Rebellion, after one of the rebel leaders, Sir Thomas Wyatt the Younger (1521-1554). Agnes Strickland emphasizes the peril in which Elizabeth found herself during this time:

The difficulties of Elizabeth's position at this crisis were extreme. She was distrusted by the queen, watched and calumniated by the Spanish ambassador Renard, assailed by the misjudging enthusiasm of the Protestant party with spiritual adulation, entreated to stand forth as the heroine of their cause, and tempted by the persuasions and treacherous promises of the subtle Noailles [French ambassador who encouraged the plot], it required caution and strength of mind seldom to be found in a girl of twenty, not to fall into some of the snares which so thickly beset her path.<sup>27</sup>

Simon Renard (1513-1573), acting as Charles V's ambassador in England, representing both imperial and Spanish interests distrusted Elizabeth and worked to undermine her relationship with Mary. Renard wrote extensively to Phillip II, then Regent of Spain (r.1543-1556, King 1556-1598), Emperor Charles V (r. 1519-1556), and Mary Tudor about Elizabeth's actions and about the people with whom he believed her to have been conversing, accusing her of treason whenever possible. The ambassador had scant evidence to support his claims except his knowledge that Elizabeth had been refusing to attend Catholic mass and receive the Eucharist.<sup>28</sup> Elizabeth, who had been living at court following Mary's coronation, seems to have perceived

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likely chose to compare Hippolyta and Phaedra because both were held in legend to have been wives of the Greek hero Theseus.

<sup>26</sup> Dunn, 111.

<sup>27</sup> Strickland, 48.

<sup>28</sup> David Loades, *Elizabeth I: A Life* (New York: Hambleton Continuum, 2006), 91

Mary's distrust and the danger that mistrust represented and decided to return once again to the countryside. This request was granted in December 1553, and Elizabeth moved back to Ashridge house in Hertfordshire, the residence where she had lived after Catherine Parr had removed her from Catherine's manor at Chelsea in 1548. Elizabeth's desire to move away from court suggests her vigilance. The princess seems to have been aware that her presence at court placed her in a position of prominence and thus made her susceptible to becoming a focal point for ambitious plots. Elizabeth, therefore, quickly removed herself from the public eye in an apparent attempt to ensure that she would not become entangled in any plots against Mary Tudor. This response suggests that the princess' dangerous childhood had taught her the importance of self-preservation skills.

On 25 January 1554 Sir Thomas Wyatt raised the banner of revolt in Kent. The rebels quickly gained followers, but by 7 February the rebels had been defeated by the Queen's army in Westminster.<sup>29</sup> The Privy Council had collected a few scraps of evidence that they used to demonstrate Elizabeth's possible implication in the rebellion. The most incriminating was a piece of correspondence the Council had intercepted that was sent by Wyatt to Elizabeth suggesting that the princess leave Ashridge house and move instead to her fortified house of Donnington.<sup>30</sup> Renard and Bishop Stephen Gardiner, who had expressed their suspicions of Elizabeth to the Queen with great frequency, demanded that Elizabeth be sent straight to the Tower of London.<sup>31</sup> The Privy Council, summoned Elizabeth to London instead. Elizabeth, however, had fallen quite ill and was unable to comply with the Queen's request. Consequently:

On 11 February three lords arrived at her [Elizabeth's] gates, with orders to convey her immediately to London... Their request was made more compelling by the presence in their retinue of two hundred and fifty men on horseback... The Queen had also sent two doctors and they confirmed that the journey was not life threatening... She was so unwell, however, that she came close to fainting three or four times as they got her ready to depart...<sup>32</sup>

Upon her entrance into the city crowds gathered in the street to see her. Strickland observes that some of these citizens wept for Elizabeth, others stretched their hands towards her, and some

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<sup>29</sup> MacCaffrey, 15.

<sup>30</sup> MacCaffrey, 17.

<sup>31</sup> MacCaffrey, 17.

<sup>32</sup> Dunn, 113.

raised their voices in her support, fearing her fate as she was led as a captive towards Whitehall house by one hundred guards.<sup>33</sup> In a letter dated 24 February 1554, Renard wrote to Emperor Charles V about Elizabeth's entrance into the city:

The Lady Elizabeth arrived here yesterday, dressed all in white, surrounded with a great company of the queen's people, besides her own attendants. She made them uncover the litter in which she rode, that she might be seen by the people. Her countenance was pale and stern, her mien proud, lofty, and disdainful, by which she endeavoured to conceal her trouble.<sup>34</sup>

Elizabeth must have been aware that her reputation was of the utmost importance, and so she wore a white robe as she was conducted through the streets as a declaration of her innocence. White was also the colour of mourning, thus it is possible that Elizabeth might have been demonstrating prior to her accession, the great artfulness of dress that distinguished the conduct of her later reign, by sending both a message of innocence and one of sorrowful vulnerability.

Elizabeth was imprisoned at Whitehall for three weeks. Guards were posted at the doors of the house, and the princess' pleas for an audience with her sister were ignored. On the morning of 16 March 1554, Elizabeth was informed that the Privy Council had decided to imprison her in the Tower of London. Her courage enabled her to be granted permission to write one last letter to Mary pleading her innocence. Elizabeth wrote the following letter to her sister:

Remember your last promise and my last demand: that I be not condemned without answer and due proof. Which it seems that now I am, for that, without cause proved, I am by your Council from you commanded to go unto the Tower, a place more wonted for a false traitor than a true subject. Which though I know I deserve it not, yet in the face of all this realm appears that it is proved... And at this present hour I protest afore God... that I never practiced, counseled, nor consented to anything that might be prejudicial to your person any way or dangerous to the state by any mean. And therefore I humbly beseech your majesty to let me answer afore yourself and not suffer me to trust your councillors."<sup>35</sup>

Elizabeth requests that her sister meet with her in person to receive her testimony rather than rely on her untrustworthy councillors. Moreover, Elizabeth asserts her innocence and asks that Mary remember a promise she had made to never condemn her sister without proof. That Elizabeth had

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<sup>33</sup> Strickland, 55.

<sup>34</sup> Strickland 55.

<sup>35</sup> Marcus, Mueller, and Rose 41.

the forethought to ask such a promise from her sister demonstrates the constant danger to which Elizabeth was exposed as a young girl. Furthermore, as Elizabeth realizes that her letter will not fill an entire page she begins to write in diagonal lines to prevent unwanted insertions. This indicates that Elizabeth is aware of her position as a pawn in the plots of ambitious men, and takes precautions to ensure that only the words she had written would be presented to her sister. Finally, Elizabeth signs her letter “your highness’ most faithful subject that hath been from the beginning and will be to my end, Elizabeth,” as one final plea for Mary to recognize her sister’s innocence.<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth’s ability to maintain a balanced tone and to argue for her innocence while in such a perilous situation evidences the toughened nature of Elizabeth’s character forged by her experience of Thomas Seymour’s inappropriate advances and implication in the Wyatt Rebellion.

On Palm Sunday, 18 March 1554, Elizabeth was brought to the Tower of London by barge in the pouring rain. Upon her landing at Traitor’s Gate, she once again proclaimed her innocence. She stood on the Tower stairs and said “Here lands as true a subject, being prisoner, as ever landed on these stairs. Before thee, O God, I speak it, having no friend but thee alone!”<sup>37</sup> Elizabeth’s speech demonstrates that she had a powerful sense of her autonomy, even as she was being brought to the Tower and what she believed to be her death. Elizabeth knew that her fate was in her own hands, and so she declared her innocence in front of the nobles who had brought her to the tower in hopes that they might be able to help her.

Shortly after Elizabeth was brought to the Tower she was “subjected to a most rigorous examination before a council composed of her mortal foes.”<sup>38</sup> The council asked Elizabeth about her motives for moving from Ashridge to Donnington Castle during the rebellion—remember that the council had intercepted a letter addressed from Wyatt to Elizabeth suggesting that she move to a fortified residence. Elizabeth demonstrated her quick wit and her impressive skills in rhetoric when she responded by asking the Lords why they considered such an act suspicious. Elizabeth said “Might I not, my lords, go to mine own houses at all times.”<sup>39</sup> Then Elizabeth surprised everyone by asking that God forgive them for scrutinizing her so narrowly.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Marcus, Mueller, and Rose 41.

<sup>37</sup> John Foxe, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* (New York: Charles K. Moore, 1846), 375.

<sup>38</sup> Townsend, 74.

<sup>39</sup> John Foxe, quoted in Strickland, 63

<sup>40</sup> John Foxe, quoted in Strickland, 63.

After Elizabeth's interrogation, Henry Fitzalan, the twelfth Lord of Arundel (r.1544-1580) knelt and apologized for troubling her with such trivial matters.<sup>41</sup> It must be observed, therefore, that Elizabeth "made friends of some of the most determined of her enemies"<sup>42</sup> during the hour-long interrogation, because Lord Arundel had previously been amongst those who believed the princess should be executed.<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth's thoughtful demeanor, illustrates that her tumultuous childhood experiences had taught her the ability to be calm in perilous situations. Moreover, Elizabeth seems to have learned exactly how to respond to such an interrogation as a consequence of her experience with Sir Robert Tyrwhitt during the Thomas Seymour affair of 1549.

Elizabeth Tudor was removed from the Tower of London on 19 May 1554 and sent to Woodstock, where she remained under house arrest. She was not informed where she was going, or why she had been taken from the Tower. Consequently, Elizabeth became convinced that she was to be killed. The first night of her journey was spent in Richmond. Upon her arrival, Elizabeth's servants were separated from her, an event that generated such fear that the princess begged her servants through tear-filled eyes to pray for her, because "for this night, I think I must die."<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth's deep lack of trust in the unknown attests to the danger she had faced from intrigue and conspiracies throughout her childhood. Although difficult, these perilous situations provided Elizabeth with the skills necessary to become a great Queen.

Elizabeth was kept under strict guard at the house; sixty soldiers were posted around the property, and she was only allowed brief walks in the garden under strict supervision. Famously, Elizabeth etched the following words upon the windows in the house using a diamond:

Much suspected, 'of me  
Nothing proved can be,'  
quoth Elizabeth, prisoner<sup>45</sup>

This experience, although terrifying, forged a deep bond between Elizabeth and her servants. According to Jane Dunn, Elizabeth came to recognize how essential popular support was for any monarch.<sup>46</sup> And so when Elizabeth was named Queen, she was able to relate to the struggles of

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<sup>41</sup> Foxe, 377.

<sup>42</sup> Townsend, 75.

<sup>43</sup> Strickland, 63.

<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Tudor, Source Unknown, quoted in Strickland, 72.

<sup>45</sup> Foxe, 386.

<sup>46</sup> Dunn, 122.

her people because of her past experiences. Having been raised away from the lavish English court although in comfort, Elizabeth gained insight into the lives of the gentry, whose support was to be critical to her later success as queen. Additionally, she had spent time in the Tower, an exceedingly humbling and frightening experience. Consequently, Elizabeth learned not to take her regal status for granted.

In April 1555 Elizabeth was summoned to Hampton court for an audience with her sister. According to John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*<sup>47</sup>, Elizabeth immediately kneeled at her sister's feet and "prayed for the Queen's welfare, professed her utter devotion, and asked to be believed, declaring that nothing to the contrary could be discovered."<sup>48</sup> Elizabeth was pardoned during this meeting because Mary Tudor believed her sister, who, by convincing Arundel of her innocence and making so abject a submission at Hampton Court, persuaded Mary that she no longer constituted a threat to Mary's royal authority. Mary had wed King Philip II of Spain and was confident that she was pregnant, a circumstance that would have ensured a Catholic successor to the English throne were the expected child to survive. Mary Tudor was preoccupied by her efforts to restore the Catholic religion in England, efforts that were strengthened particularly by the arrival in England in 1554 of Cardinal Reginald Pole (1500-1558), grand-nephew of both King Edward IV (r.1461-1470) and of King Richard III (r.1483-1485).<sup>49</sup> Consequently, the danger with which Elizabeth had become familiar in her childhood was quieted temporarily.

Elizabeth Tudor spent much of her childhood enduring perilous situations, Virginia Townsend eloquently writes:

It is singular that what seemed the heaviest misfortune of her childhood probably proved in the end one of her greatest blessings. Had she grown up the petted, spoiled heiress of her father's throne, amid the pomp and state which that position made inevitable, she could hardly have been fitted for the great part she was to take in worldly affairs.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> John Foxe was a Protestant. Indeed, his book was a history of those who had suffered for the Protestant cause. Consequently, his witness likely portrays Elizabeth in a more heroic light.

<sup>48</sup> MacCaffrey, 23.

<sup>49</sup> Cardinal Pole was appointed as the Papal Legate in England marking the restoration of Catholicism in the country. He was appointed archduke of Canterbury in 1556 and played a huge role in assisting with the Parliament's legislation against Protestants.

<sup>50</sup> Townsend, 23.

This is to say that it was exactly this neglect and the daunting incidents she experienced during her late teens and early twenties that enabled her to develop a tough character, taught her the importance of her reputation, developed her ability for forethought, and fostered her quick-thinking skills.

Those quick-thinking skills were fostered also by a fine education that nurtured her naturally-quick mind. Prior to 1544 Elizabeth learned from her governess Catherine Ashley. After 1544, Elizabeth enjoyed the privilege of learning from some of the greatest scholars in England, despite her fluctuating status with respect to succession. From the age of ten, two humanist scholars, first William Grindal and then the much more renowned Roger Ascham, took charge of her education. Under the supervision of Grindal and Ascham, Elizabeth was introduced to classical texts. Elizabeth adored reading the texts of authors such as Isocrates, Demosthenes, and Cicero. The princess studied these works in their original Greek and Latin and drew from them a deep understanding of literary expression and the foundation of the oratorical skills that would distinguish her public speech as Queen. The impression Elizabeth made on her tutor Roger Ascham was lasting; he wrote:

The lady Elizabeth has completed her sixteenth year, and so much solidity of understanding, such courtesy united with dignity, have never been observed at so early an age. She has the most ardent love of true religion, and the best kind of literature; the constitution of her mind is exempt from female weakness and she is endued with masculine power of application. No apprehension can be quicker than hers, no memory more retentive. French and Italian she speaks like English; Latin, with fluency, propriety, and judgement; she also spoke Greek with me, fluently, willingly, and moderately well. Nothing can be more elegant than her handwriting, whether in the Greek or Roman character. In music she is very skillful, but does not greatly delight.<sup>51</sup>

It is noteworthy that Ascham compares Elizabeth's mind to that of a man, because by this Ascham bestows an authority to her thoughts that was not attributed commonly to the thoughts of other women.

Elizabeth's scholarly talent helped her to navigate the perilous political situations that marked her young womanhood and early reign. The rhetorical skills gained through examining the texts written by classical authors prepared the princess to answer with skill difficult questions posed by interrogators in the aftermath of the Thomas Seymour affair and the Wyatt Rebellion.

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<sup>51</sup> Strickland, 36.

Her understanding of argument also enabled Elizabeth to send extremely persuasive letters to those in power, pleading her innocence. Moreover, Elizabeth learned oratorical skills that assisted her when she later delivered speeches before Parliament and her people.

Elizabeth's childhood experiences taught her that the world was dangerous. As a very young girl she learned that ambitious men were willing to use her as a focal point for their plots, and as a stepping stone to achieve their own wishes. Moreover, Elizabeth learned that rulers were fallible, because she witnessed several plots to remove Mary Tudor from the English throne, consequently, it was a ruler's duty to remain in her people's favour. This was an essential lesson to learn at a young age— and it was a lesson that her cousin, Mary Stuart never grasped.

### CHAPTER THREE: Correspondence

It is the goal of this chapter to examine Mary and Elizabeth's correspondence between 1567-1570 because during these years there was a significant increase in the number of letters sent between the cousins. After 1570 Mary and Elizabeth send letters to one another far less frequently. Additionally, I believe important developments occurred in Mary and Elizabeth's relationship during the years 1567-1570 that have not been extensively examined. Rather, much scholarly attention has been given to Mary and Elizabeth's relationship in the later 1570s and 1580s prior to Mary's execution at Fotheringhay in February 1587. Mary and Elizabeth's correspondence during 1567-1570 illustrates their contrasting political abilities. Reading the letters sent between the two queens offers particular insight into each woman's personality and provides evidence of their political interactions with one another. Mary's letters are rife with emotion, either accusing Elizabeth's men of mistreating her, after she fled Scotland in May 1568 to seek refuge in England, or pleading for Elizabeth's aid. In the available sample of letters, it is noteworthy that Mary always references her familial ties to Elizabeth, likely as an attempt to strengthen the pathos of her arguments. Unlike Mary's consistently sentimental correspondence, Elizabeth's letters transitioned from offering warm, sisterly to dispassionate advice as Mary continued to make political fumbles. Only four letters written from Elizabeth to Mary during this chosen period are available for examination.<sup>1</sup> This is partially because Elizabeth seems to have chosen not to respond to several of Mary's letters. Lack of letters from Elizabeth, however, does not present a challenge because Mary Stuart frequently referenced the contents of Elizabeth's letters in her own responses to those unavailable letters.

It is important to review briefly some of the key political developments in Scotland and England that occurred prior to 1567 so as to properly understand the context in which Mary and Elizabeth exchanged their letters between 1567 and 1570. These events had serious repercussions for both the political and the religious stability of these two nations, and

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<sup>1</sup> The lack of availability is caused by two factors: first, letters are unavailable because they have yet to be digitized by the various museums that house the correspondence. As a result I am confined to those letters that are available in published collected works. Second, Elizabeth's letters, particularly dated prior to 2 May 1568, may not survive because Mary Stuart was held captive prior to that date by rebel Scottish lords and likely would have faced repercussions if her secret correspondence with foreign monarchs were to have been discovered.

subsequently, their outcome directly informed the written discourse between Mary and Elizabeth.

### **Historical Context**

As the first chapter of this thesis has illustrated, Mary Stuart's lavish childhood in France, under the care of King Henry II (r. 1547-1559) and her ambitious Guise relations, did not equip her with the necessary skills to position favorably herself in court. As a consequence of this lack of preparation, on 19 August 1561, when Mary Stuart returned to Scotland after the death of her husband, Francis II on 5 December 1560, she struggled to rule the country whose queen she had remained, despite her long absence, since a few days after her birth on 8 December 1542.

Mary did not understand the dynamics of Scottish politics, and her naïve disposition led her to make several mistakes upon her return. To start, Mary did not send her advisors back to France upon her arrival in Scotland, angering many Scottish nobles who believed they were being excluded from court positions.<sup>2</sup> Another mistake Mary made was favouring the counsel of her Protestant half-brother, James Stewart, the first Earl of Moray (1531-1570), whom she made her chief advisor.<sup>3</sup> Unbeknownst to Mary, Stewart often dispensed advice that benefitted himself and kept the English apprised of his half-sister's actions.<sup>4</sup>

The most serious threat to Mary's reign in Scotland came from native Protestant nobles' growing dissatisfaction with her Catholic identity. A year before Mary's return, on 17 August 1560, the Scottish Parliament had passed an act to make Scotland officially Protestant. In a series of subsequent acts Parliament abolished papal jurisdiction throughout the kingdom and banned celebration of the Catholic Mass.<sup>5</sup> These acts, instead, found support in the larger Scottish population, who were troubled that Mary's arrival might call into doubt the Protestant national identity they favored.

Mary had not been trained to navigate skilfully such religiously charged issues, and on 25 August 1561 she proclaimed that Scotland should be permitted to remain Protestant and that she

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<sup>2</sup> Kate Williams, *The Betrayal of Mary, Queen of Scots* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2018), 111.

<sup>3</sup> Williams, 108.

<sup>4</sup> Williams, 108

<sup>5</sup> Stevenson, 20.

would privately attend Catholic Masses.<sup>6</sup> Mary's decision to remain openly Catholic angered many of her Scottish subjects, including John Knox (c. 1514-1572) who is credited with facilitating the Scottish Reformation. John Knox met with his followers the Sunday after Mary's announcement, 31 August, declaring "that one mass... was more fearful unto him, than if ten thousand armed enemies were landed in any part of the realm, of purpose to suppress the holy religion."<sup>7</sup> On 4 September 1561 Mary met with Knox to dispute his harsh accusations.<sup>8</sup> Fraser notes that Knox spoke to Mary with a level of hostility that she had not experienced in France, causing her to dissolve into tears at some point during their meeting.<sup>9</sup> Religious tensions continued when Mary decided to tour her country after spending the three weeks following her return at Edinburgh. In Stirling Protestant nobles led by Archibald Campbell, the fifth Earl of Argyll (c. 1532-1573), violently attacked the priests and clerks present during one of Mary's private Masses.

Additionally, Mary, it seems, failed to consider these religious tensions when she began searching for a new husband in 1563. Mary was only just beginning to achieve a precarious religious balance, despite resistance from dissidents like Knox. If Mary decided to wed a Catholic, she risked upsetting this balance, because such a choice would emphasize Mary's own religious sensibilities and suggest that she was merely tolerating Protestantism. Wedding a Protestant, on the other hand, also presented complications, because Mary relied on political support from Catholic kingdoms like France. To make matters even more difficult, John Knox learned in December 1563 that Mary sought a husband and began preaching against Mary's potential betrothal to a Catholic.<sup>10</sup> Upon learning of Knox's intention to stir resistance among her people, Mary called him to a meeting at Holyrood palace in Edinburgh — the fourth of five meetings between the two. According to John Knox's account of the meeting, Mary said:

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<sup>6</sup> Williams, 110.

<sup>7</sup> John Knox, *The History of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland*, third edition, ed. William McGavin (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1841), 250.

<sup>8</sup> John Knox was steadfastly opposed to the notion of female rulership. In 1558 he wrote a book entitled *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Menstruous Regiment of Women* in which he argues that female rule is against the word of the Bible. Knox was further incensed by Mary's Catholic sensibilities and stated that Mary intended to "wreck the religion" within Scotland and that it was lawful to resist an ungodly prince as a means of attempting to incite Scottish people to rebel against Mary. Knox, 247.

<sup>9</sup> Fraser, 155.

<sup>10</sup> Guy, 169.

I have borne with you in all your rigorous manner of speaking, both against myself and against my uncles;<sup>11</sup> yea, I have sought your favour by all possible means; I offered unto you presence and audience, whensoever it pleased you to admonish me, and yet I cannot be quit of you.<sup>12</sup>

Following these words, Mary dissolved into tears and “howling,” which prevented her from speaking any further with Knox. This exchange indicates that John Knox was gaining a psychological and political edge over Mary, whose efforts to meet with Knox and gain his favour only made him more confident in his opposition to her. He seems to have felt empowered by her desire for dialogue and felt safe in speaking against Mary, fearing no repercussions.

Later during this same meeting, Mary asked Knox: “what have you to do with my marriage?”<sup>13</sup> Mary’s question was made point blank in the heat of this encounter, demonstrating that she did not think her subjects had any right to suggest a husband for their sovereign. This thinking demonstrates in turn, the extent to which Mary was distanced from her people and her lack of understanding regarding the role her subjects played in keeping her in power. Knox responded by acknowledging that he was one of her subjects and could hold opinions on her marriage because he did not want harm to come to Scotland.<sup>14</sup> This response is notable because it evidences the way Scottish subjects felt they should engage with their queen. Knox noted also that, if Mary were to marry a Catholic, she would betray the freedom of her realm and sacrifice her comfort.<sup>15</sup> Upon hearing this, Knox records that Mary began crying once more, at which point John Erskine, the Baron of Dun, the Superintendent of the Reformed church at Angus and Mearnes (1509-1591).<sup>16</sup> attempted to calm his queen by complimenting “her beauty...her excellency; and how that all the princes in Europe would be glad to seek her favours.”<sup>17</sup> Mary was likely upset because Knox refused to speak to her as though she was his queen, addressing

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<sup>11</sup> Mary is likely referring to her Catholic Guise uncles who resided in France

<sup>12</sup> David Laing, eds, *The Works of John Knox, Collected and Edited*, Volume Two (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1848), 387.

<sup>13</sup> Laing, 388.

<sup>14</sup> Laing, 388.

<sup>15</sup> Laing, 388.

<sup>16</sup> Laing, 386. John Knox notes that several of his followers had accompanied him to his meeting with Mary, but only John Erskine, the Baron of Dunn, and Knox himself were permitted entry into the cabinet. Due to the “gentle nature” attributed to him by Knox, John Erskine often acted as a mediator between Protestants and Catholics.

<sup>17</sup> Laing, 388.

her instead as someone who was ethically inferior to him.<sup>18</sup> This meeting with Knox demonstrates how Mary's emotional nature interfered with her ability to hold an important political debate and likely influences the notion that Mary ruled with her heart rather than her mind.<sup>19</sup>

In 1565 Mary was still considering her options for marriage. On 24 February 1564, Elizabeth had sent Thomas Randolph, the English ambassador to Scotland (1523-1590) to name Robert Dudley, the first Earl of Leicester (1532-1588) as an approved suiter, a suggestion that Mary had all but dismissed, because it was beneath her dignity to wed a mere English subject.<sup>20</sup> By 18 April 1565 it became clear that Mary wished to wed the Catholic Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley (1545-1567) when she sent a messenger, John Hay (1546-1608) to inform Elizabeth that had chosen Darnley as her husband.<sup>21</sup> Mary perceived this union to be advantageous because Darnley was behind only Mary in the English line of succession, meaning it would strengthen her claim to English throne. Additionally, she knew that other Catholic rulers would approve of this union, namely the Pope, King Philip II (1527-1598) of Spain and King Charles IX (1550-1574) of France. Despite benefits she perceived in contracting a Catholic marriage, Mary's decision to wed Lord Darnley only created further divisions in her court, generating hostility among her Protestant nobles and angering Elizabeth, who had not given Mary permission to wed an English subject.<sup>22</sup> In early June 1565, when Mary summoned a meeting of her nobles to obtain their approval for a union with Darnley, a number of nobles refused to attend, including: Mary's half-brother, James Stewart, the first Earl of Moray, Archibald Campbell, the fifth Earl of Argyll (1558-1573), William Cunninghame, the sixth Earl of Glencairn (1532-1580), Andrew Leslie, the fifth Earl of Rothes (1541-1611), Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange (1520-1573), Andrew Stewart, the second Lord Ochiltree (1521-1591), and James Hamilton, the Duke of

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<sup>18</sup> Guy, 169.

<sup>19</sup> Guy, 170.

<sup>20</sup> Strickland, 14.

<sup>21</sup> Strickland, 17. All communication regarding Mary's wedding to Elizabeth was conducted via messengers and ambassadors, meaning that it is difficult to discern what each queen was thinking.

<sup>22</sup> Alison Weir, *Mary Queen of Scots and the Murder of Lord Darnley* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2009), 72.

Châtellerauld and second Earl of Arran (1516-1575).<sup>23</sup> Despite the strong opposition these absences signalled, Mary was wed to Darnley at Holyrood Palace on 29 July 1565.

Merely a month after this marriage, the Earl of Moray had raised an army against his half-sister. The ensuing rebellion, led by Moray, Ochiltree, Kirkcaldy of Grange, Robert Boyd, the fifth Lord Boyd (1517-1590), and Andrew Leslie, later become known as the Chaseabout Raid. On 26 August 1565 the insurgents attempted to occupy Edinburgh but were driven out by the people, who for the most part still supported their queen.<sup>24</sup> Then, on 8 October after months of evading Mary's royal army, the Earl of Moray fled to England, marking the end of the rebellion.<sup>25</sup> Many of Mary's subjects still supported her in 1565, ensuring her victory over Moray's rebel lords. By 1567, however, Mary had made a series of impulsive decisions that caused many of her nobles to rebel openly against her a second time. This led to a series of events that culminated in Mary's defeat at the Battle of Langside (13 May 1568) and her subsequent escape to England in 1568.<sup>26</sup> Mary's decisions and the events that ensued will be discussed later in this chapter.

Elizabeth Tudor faced a similar state of religious instability when she became the Queen of England in 1558. Elizabeth was better prepared than Mary to manage the precarious politics she faced because, as discussed in chapter two, she had learned the perils of English politics from a young age and that ambitious nobles often acted to benefit themselves rather than her.

Upon her accession Elizabeth inherited a country that had swung violently from the Protestant rule of King Edward VI (r. 1547-1553) to the strictly Catholic realm overseen by Mary I (r.1553-1558). In 1558, Protestant exiles who had fled persecution during Mary Tudor's reign began flooding back into England, and demanded that Elizabeth reinstate a Protestant state.<sup>27</sup> Governmental institutions were as religiously disorganized as was the realm: for instance, English churches were staffed by Catholic clergy who had been installed by Mary Tudor. Parliament was also divided: The House of Lords was dominated by its Catholic members, while membership of the House of Commons was largely Protestant, a state of affairs that made enacting of legislation difficult.

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<sup>23</sup> Weir, 79

<sup>24</sup> Weir, 89.

<sup>25</sup> Guy, 222.

<sup>26</sup> Fraser, 365.

<sup>27</sup> MacCaffrey, 49.

A speech delivered before both houses of Parliament by the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, Sir Nicholas Bacon (1509-1579) on 25 January 1559, the date of the first meeting of Parliament following Elizabeth's accession, provides evidence of principles guiding Elizabeth's approach to the religious affairs of the kingdom. Bacon emphasized the queen's desire for the "uniting of these people of the Realm into a uniform order of religion."<sup>28</sup> Bacon also asserted that members of Parliament were to respect one another, warning that religiously charged insults such as the terms "heretic" or "papist" would not be tolerated.

In 1559 Parliament enacted a series of statutes that determined England's official religion and defined the relationship between church and state. This legislation, later called the 'Elizabethan Settlement', was effective because it promoted compromise by language that was deliberately ambiguous. In essence, the goal of these statutes was to create a religious observance that would foster peace, unity, and order in England.

The first two Acts Elizabeth caused to be promulgated in 1559 were a reformed Act of Supremacy and a reformed Act of Uniformity.<sup>29</sup> The Act of Supremacy repealed Mary Tudor's Second Statute of Repeal and restored an ecclesiastical structure similar to that which Henry VIII had instituted during the 1530s. The Act of Supremacy also granted Elizabeth the title of "Supreme Governor of the Church of England." Henry VIII and Edward VI had adopted the title "Supreme Head of the Church of England," but Elizabeth recognized that many Catholics found use of the term 'Head', a term Catholics reserved for popes, insulting because such a term had been perceived as "confronting the [Catholic] church hierarchy directly."<sup>30</sup> Rather, Elizabeth believed it was her job as governor of the English church to delegate her authority to ecclesiastical officials; thus, she instituted the Ecclesiastical Commission. Members of this commission were charged with punishing crimes against ecclesiastical laws, settling religious disputes, and ensuring religious uniformity.<sup>31</sup> Finally, the Act of Supremacy compelled, upon request of royal officials, Elizabeth's subjects to swear an oath that they would observe its terms:

I...do utterly testify and declare in my conscience that the Queen's Highness is the only Supreme Governor of this realm and of all other her Highness's dominions and countries, as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal, and that no foreign

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<sup>28</sup> MacCaffrey, 51-52.

<sup>29</sup> To read the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Unity see J.R. Tanner, 130.

<sup>30</sup> Carole Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 24.

<sup>31</sup> Levin, 25.

prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, preeminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm, and therefore I do utterly renounce and forsake all foreign jurisdictions, powers, superiorities, and authorities, and do promise that from henceforth I shall bear faith and true allegiance to the Queen's Highness, her heirs and lawful successors, and to my power shall assist and defend all jurisdictions, . preeminences, privileges, and authorities granted or belonging to the Queen's Highness, her heirs and successors, or united or annexed to the imperial Crown of this realm : So help me God and by the contents of this Book.<sup>32</sup>

Those who refused to swear the oath could be punished for treason. It is worth noting that, when Elizabeth chose to charge anyone who did not uphold the oath, royal officials charged the violator as a traitor rather than as a heretic. In so doing, royal officials accused violators of a crime against the state, rather than of a crime against the Anglican Church, diminishing the potential that the issuing of such charges might increase religious tensions.

The Act of Uniformity, passed by a mere three-vote majority in the House of Lords,<sup>33</sup> came into effect on 24 June 1559, establishing the doctrine of Elizabethan church in a manner designed to appeal to both Protestant and Catholic sensibilities. A Catholic administrative structure and a fairly traditional liturgy, albeit conducted in English, were integrated with anodyne Protestant doctrinal formulations. Elizabeth hoped that this reform would appeal to a broad spectrum of Catholic and Protestant religious opinions. The reissuing of the 1552 *Book of Common Prayer* modified to describe the eucharist as, simultaneously, a miracle (to appeal to Catholics) and a memorial (to appeal to Protestants) testifies to this intent.<sup>34</sup> The Act of Uniformity contained a set of fines for those who did not attend mass, requiring that

all and every person and persons inhabiting within this realm or any other the Queen's Majesty's dominions, shall diligently and faithfully, having no lawful or reasonable excuse to be absent, endeavour themselves to resort to their parish church or chapel accustomed, or upon reasonable let thereof, to some usual place where common prayer and such service of God shall be used in such time of let, upon every Sunday and other days ordained and used to be kept as Holy Days, and then and there to abide orderly and soberly during the time of the common prayer, preachings, or other service of God there to be used and ministered; upon pain of punishment by the censures of the Church, and also upon pain that every person so offending shall forfeit for every such offence twelve pence, to be levied by the churchwardens of the parish where such offence shall be done,

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<sup>32</sup> J.R. Tanner, 134.

<sup>33</sup> Levin, 26.

<sup>34</sup> J.R. Tanner, 136.

to the use of the poor of the same parish, of the goods, lands, and tenements of such offender by way of distress.<sup>35</sup>

Notably, Elizabeth made no systematic attempt to seek out and punish heretics as Governor of the English Church, nor did she accuse people of secretly harbouring religious sensibilities that were contrary to those practiced by the Church of England. Rather, she asked people simply to comply outwardly with the teachings contained in her prayer book.

Both Elizabeth Tudor and Mary Stuart, therefore, faced religious instability in their countries, but they navigated their respective political and religious challenges in markedly different ways. Elizabeth succeeded in peacefully subduing religious tensions by working alongside her Parliament to create legislation that allowed for a comprehensive set of religious reforms that appealed to a broad range of sensibilities. Mary Stuart, conversely, simply declared that Scotland could maintain its official Protestant faith while continuing herself to attend private Catholic Masses. The different manners in which Elizabeth and Mary attempted to stabilize their countries speaks to the gap between their respective levels of political experience. Elizabeth was prepared by her perilous childhood to manage these nuanced and tense political situations, whereas Mary had no substantial experience or training prior to assuming the Scottish throne. Moreover, her time in France deprived her of an understanding of Scottish culture, and this ultimately had serious consequences for ability to reign.

### **Letters exchanged, 1567-1570**

On 10 February 1567, Mary Stuart's second husband Lord Henry Darnley (1545-1567) was murdered under mysterious circumstances. As MacCaffrey notes "responsibility for the murder itself was universally ascribed to the Earl of Bothwell<sup>36</sup>, but unpleasant imputations also hung around the Queen's reputation."<sup>37</sup> Rumours that the chief nobles of Scotland had been involved in regicide rapidly spread to England, motivating Elizabeth to send Mary a letter on 24

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<sup>35</sup> J.R. Tanner, 139.

<sup>36</sup> Here MacCaffrey is referencing James Hepburn (c. 1534-1578) who was the fourth Earl of Bothwell.

<sup>37</sup> MacCaffrey, 104.

February 1567, urging her to act swiftly to bring Darnley's murderers to justice. Elizabeth's letter is written in a direct manner:

Madame, my ears have been so deafened and my understanding so grieved and my heart so affrighted to hear the dreadful news of the abominable murder of your mad husband and my killed cousin<sup>38</sup> that I scarcely yet have the wits to write about it... O madame, I would not do the office of faithful cousin or affectionate friend if I studied rather to please your ears than employed myself in preserving your honour. However, I will not at all dissemble what most people are talking about: which is that you will look through your fingers<sup>39</sup> at the revenging of this deed, and that you do not take measures that touch those who have done as you wished, as if the thing had been entrusted in a way that the murderers felt assurance in doing it. Among the thoughts in my heart I beseech you to want no such thought to stick at this point.<sup>40</sup>

In this letter Elizabeth assumes the position of an older sister who is giving advice to a younger sibling. In fact, she signed the letter "with my very heartfelt recommendations to you, very dear sister."<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, Elizabeth identifies herself as Mary's faithful cousin and affectionate friend in the letter, which attests to the amicability shared between Mary and Elizabeth. More importantly, Elizabeth offers Mary some solid counsel. Elizabeth likely learned the necessity of maintaining a good reputation as a consequence of her experience with Thomas Seymour and was worried at Mary's inaction to bring an end to the rumours about her involvement in the Darnley murder. In her letter Elizabeth informs her cousin that people in England believed Mary's reluctance to bring any men to trial was because she had been involved in plotting Darnley's murder. Elizabeth also recommends that Mary should act in a timely manner to prevent any of these rumours from lingering among her subjects in a manner to damage her reputation. Elizabeth also wrote:

...I exhort you, I counsel you, and I beseech you to take this thing so much to heart that you will not fear to touch even him whom you have nearest to you if the thing touches him<sup>42</sup>, and that no persuasion will prevent you from making an example out of this to the

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<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth is referring to Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley (1545-1567), who was Elizabeth's cousin. Darnley was the great-grandson of King Henry VII (r. 1485-1509).

<sup>39</sup> 'look through your fingers' is a proverbial phrase meaning to ignore

<sup>40</sup> Marcus, Mueller, and Rose 116.

<sup>41</sup> Marcus, Mueller, and Rose 117.

<sup>42</sup> Here Elizabeth is likely referring to James Hepburn, the fourth Earl of Bothwell (1534-1578) whom Mary was known to favour, but was widely thought to be involved in the plan to murder Lord Darnley.

world: that you are both a noble princess and a loyal wife. I do not write so vehemently out of doubt that I have, but out of the affection that I bear you in particular.<sup>43</sup>

Elizabeth's recommendation that Mary ignore her bond with Bothwell for the sake of proving to Europe that she is "a noble princess" is indicative of her political policy. As queen, Elizabeth prioritized the needs of her country over the interests of her close companions. This is particularly evidenced both by Elizabeth's decision to imprison Mary Stuart upon her arrival in England on 16 May 1568 and her eventual decision to execute her, despite her queenly status, on 8 February 1587. Mary did not, however, place such importance on the stability of her country and so delayed Bothwell's trial. Mary chose instead, to grant him plots of land and the captaincy of Dunbar castle,<sup>44</sup> actions that heightened, rather than curbed, Bothwell's influence in government.

Eventually, the Privy Council, with Bothwell at its head, set a trial date of 12 April 1567. The hearing can only be described as a show trial. Edinburgh was packed with about 4,000 of Bothwell's supporters, who ensured that those entering the hearing were his adherents. Predictably, at the conclusion of the hearing, Bothwell was acquitted due to a lack of evidence. Following the trial, the Scottish diplomat Robert Melville, the first lord of Melville, (1527-1621) wrote a letter to the English diplomat Sir Nicholas Throckmorton (c. 1515-1521) in which he observed that the jurors acquitted Bothwell due to fear, favour, and the expectation of a reward.<sup>45</sup> On 15 May 1567, Mary and Bothwell were wed a mere three months after Darnley's murder despite continuing wide-spread suspicion in Scotland of Bothwell's role in the late king's death. This action indicated Mary's lack of regard for public opinion. Unlike Elizabeth, Mary seems to have been unaware of the reckless decision she had made and the possible implications it would hold for her future as Queen of Scotland.

The perception that Bothwell's trial had been illegitimate followed by Mary's hasty marriage with the man widely suspected of murdering her husband outraged public feeling in Scotland. On 1 June 1567 several Scottish nobles met and agreed to capture Mary and Bothwell in order to protect Mary's son with Darnley, the young Prince James, and to punish Bothwell for

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<sup>43</sup> Marcus, Mueller, and Rose 116- 117.

<sup>44</sup> Dunn, 294.

<sup>45</sup> Weir, 383.

Darnley's murder.<sup>46</sup> The Scottish nobles, as MacCaffrey notes, were often divided, but in summer 1567 they seemed to be largely united in opposition to Bothwell and Mary.<sup>47</sup> In early June, the insurgent lords began to gather a rebel army with the intention of capturing their queen. On 15 June 1567, the queen's army and the army led by the rebel lords met at Carberry hill, about eight miles east of Edinburgh. The men in the loyalist army, led by Bothwell quickly realized that they were outnumbered and left the battlefield out of fear. Bothwell himself fled the country, leaving his wife of just over a month to the mercy of the rebel lords. Antonia Fraser notes that Mary's entrance into the rebel camp "immediately and rudely jolted her confidence in the love which she still believed her subjects bore for her."<sup>48</sup> The soldiers did not enthusiastically greet her, rather, they shouted insults at her and called for her death.<sup>49</sup>

On 17 June 1567, Mary was escorted to Lochleven Castle by the rebels. The castle stood in the middle of a loch, accessible only by boat, making it an ideal place for the insurgents to imprison their queen. During the first few weeks at Lochleven, Mary's captors asked her to annul her marriage to Bothwell. Fraser details one occasion where William Maitland of Lethington (1525-1573) informed Mary that if she agreed to end her marriage to Bothwell, she would be restored to power.<sup>50</sup> Mary refused to act on Maitland's suggestion. Although the reasons why Mary refused to accept Maitland's proposal are unknown, it is possible that she did not believe the rebel lords genuinely wished to restore her power. Releasing Mary from Lochleven would have forced the lords to relinquish some of their newly acquired power and would not have benefitted the rebels in any way. It is also possible that Mary did not question the motives of the rebels and chose to remain married to Bothwell out of a sense of loyalty to her husband, placing her queenship at stake in the process.

Upon learning about Mary's capture, Elizabeth was enraged that the Scottish rebels had formed an army to fight against a lawful sovereign and, upon their victory, had imprisoned their queen. On 23 June 1567, Elizabeth sent a letter to Mary Stuart regarding events in Scotland.

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<sup>46</sup> Marcus, Mueller, and Rose 119. *The Betrayal of Mary, Queen of Scots* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2018), 205. Although I could not find information on the exact number of nobles who initially agreed to rebel, in Kate Williams notes that thirty lords supported the rebels before the battle at Carberry hill.

<sup>47</sup> MacCaffrey, 104.

<sup>48</sup> Fraser, 331.

<sup>49</sup> Fraser, 331.

<sup>50</sup> Fraser, 341.

Although writing to support her cousin, Elizabeth begins her letter by expressing disappointment in Mary's seemingly impulsive decision to marry the man many suspected of the murder of the king-consort, Lord Darnley:

For how could a worse choice be made for your honor than in such haste to marry a subject, who besides other and notorious lacks, public fame hath charged with the murder of your late husband...<sup>51</sup>

Elizabeth mentions her concern for Mary's honour again in this letter. Elizabeth assumes the position of a concerned older sister who genuinely seems to wish the best for Mary and wants to help her cousin to learn to rule in a more effective manner. Elizabeth illustrates her care for Mary in the letter:

It hath been always held for a special principle in friendship that prosperity provideth but adversity proveth friends, whereof at this time, finding occasion to verify the same with our actions, we have thought meet, both for our profession and your comfort, in these few words to testify our friendship, not only by admonishing you of the worst but to comfort you for the best.<sup>52</sup>

Elizabeth also writes that she is displeased that Mary failed to properly seek out Darnley's murderer:

we wish, upon the death of your husband, your first care had been to have searched out and punished the murderers of our near cousin, your husband, which having been done effectually, as easily it might have been in a matter so notorious, there might have been many more things tolerated better in your marriage than now can be suffered to be spoken of.

Later in this letter, Elizabeth expresses the desire to help free Mary from Lochleven and to restore her to the Scottish throne. Although she acknowledges Mary's faults, Elizabeth criticizes the behaviour of the rebels and promises to help liberate Mary:

we assure you that whatsoever we can imagine meet for your honour and safety that shall lie in our power, we will perform the same that it shall well appear you have a good neighbor, a dear sister, and a faithful friend, and so shall you undoubtedly always find and prove us to be indeed towards you. For which purpose we are determined to send with all speed one of our own trusty servants, not only to understand your state but also

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<sup>51</sup> Marcus, Mueller, and Rose 117-118.

<sup>52</sup> Marcus, Mueller, and Rose 117-118.

thereupon so to deal with your nobility and people as they shall find you not to lack our friendship and power for the preservation of your honor in quietness.

Elizabeth immediately sent the English diplomat Sir Nicholas Throckmorton to Scotland to help Mary gain release from the rebel lords. Upon his arrival, however, Throckmorton was not allowed access to Lochleven and had to depend on the lords' narrative account of circumstances of Mary's captivity to gain any sense of her health. It is notable that, despite Elizabeth's promises of aid, she never sent an army to Scotland to free her cousin even though Mary was compelled to abdicate her throne on 24 July 1567, remaining imprisoned at Lochleven Castle for nearly a year thereafter. This may indicate that Elizabeth came to judge that it was in her interest that Mary be overthrown.

During the spring of 1568, while Mary remained imprisoned at Lochleven, she was able to arrange for the smuggling of a few letters detailing her suffering to various allies in France, including Catherine de Medici, the dowager queen of France (1519-1589) and Archbishop James Beaton (c. 1517-1603), who was then serving as her ambassador to the French court. Mary also sent a letter to Elizabeth on 1 May 1568,<sup>53</sup> in large and untidy handwriting, as opposed to her customarily neat lines. Antonia Fraser believes such straying from Mary's usually meticulous writing demonstrates the despair she was feeling after being held captive for ten months.<sup>54</sup> According to Fraser, in this letter Mary referenced a ring that Elizabeth had gifted to her in 1563. Mary considered the ring a symbol of the good relationship enjoyed between the two queens and regretted that she could not send it to England as a memento of their friendship and to inspire Elizabeth to continue her efforts to liberate her.<sup>55</sup>

On 2 May 1568, Mary successfully escaped her prison at Lochleven with the help of a castle page known as "Little Willie."<sup>56</sup> She fled to Niddry Castle near Winchburgh, West Lothian, before riding to Cadzow Castle in Lanarkshire, which was owned by the Hamilton noble family. At Cadzow, Mary met with her supporters and prepared to recruit an army that she intended to use to fight the rebel lords who were then ruling Scotland in her son's name. On 8 May 1568, nine earls, eighteen lairds, nine bishops, and one hundred other influential men signed

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<sup>53</sup> This letter is not preserved in any of the collections that are available to me.

<sup>54</sup> Fraser, 354.

<sup>55</sup> Fraser, 354.

<sup>56</sup> Guy, 355.

the Hamilton Bond at Cadzow, declaring their support of Mary's intent to reclaim her Scottish throne.<sup>57</sup>

Mary and her supporters fought the rebel lords on 13 May 1568, at the battle of Langside, just outside Glasgow. After forty-five minutes, however, Mary's forces had been defeated and, believing that she could do no more to fight for her cause, she fled on horseback before the rebels might recapture her.<sup>58</sup> Mary and her supporters rode to Terregles Castle near Dumfries where she decided to leave Scotland. Her supporters attempted to persuade Mary to travel to France, where she possessed valuable lands, the income of a dowager queen, and allies such as her Guise relations and her brother-in-law King Charles IX.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, France was a Catholic nation and more likely to have a vested interest in helping the Catholic Queen free her nation from a group of mainly Protestant rebel lords.<sup>60</sup> In fact, Mary's Guise relatives had taken a leading role in the French Wars of Religion (1562-1598) by which they were attempting to crush a Calvinist Huguenot movement supported by Geneva, led by John Calvin (d.1564) and his successor, Theodore Beza (d. 1605). Mary instead made the decision to escape to England, acting in a naïve belief that Elizabeth would help her raise an army that would defeat the rebel lords in Scotland.<sup>61</sup> As Fraser eloquently summarizes:

In place of friendly France, Mary Stuart chose to fling herself upon the mercy of unknown England, a land where she had no party, no money, no estates, no relatives except her former mother-in-law, Lady Lennox<sup>62</sup>, who hated her and Queen Elizabeth herself, whom she had never met personally, and whose permission she had not even obtained to enter the country. As decisions go, it was a brave one, a romantic one even, but under the circumstances it was certainly not a wise one...<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Williams, 227.

<sup>58</sup> Giovanni Correr, letter to the Signory, May 26, 1568, quoted in Rait 130.

<sup>59</sup> Fraser, 366.

<sup>60</sup> Fraser, 367.

<sup>61</sup> Weir, 490.

<sup>62</sup> Lady Lennox was Lord Darnley's mother.

<sup>63</sup> Fraser, 367.

On 16 May 1568, without Elizabeth's permission, Mary set sail in a fishing-boat from Abeyburnfoot with a few of her closest supporters and crossed the Solway Firth landing at Workington in England.<sup>64</sup>

Upon her arrival in England on 17 May 1568, Mary wrote a letter to Elizabeth that informed her cousin that she had fled to England, indicating to Elizabeth that Mary had made another rash decision. Mary begins her correspondence by recounting her capture by the rebel lords after the Battle of Carberry hill and after four pages details her escape from Lochleven Castle. Mary also describes her decision to flee to England:

But God, through his infinite goodness, has preserved me, and I escaped to my Lord Herri's, who, as well as other gentlemen, have come with me into your country, being assured that, hearing the cruelty of my enemies, and how they have treated me, you will, conformably to your kind disposition, and the confidence I have in you, not only receive for the safety of my life, but also aid and assist me in my just quarrel, and I shall solicit other princes to do the same. I entreat you to send to fetch me as soon as you possibly can, for I am in a pitiable condition, not only for a queen, but for a gentlewoman.<sup>65</sup>

Mary betrays a fatal misunderstanding of her people in this letter, likely as a result of her upbringing in France, that prevented her from developing the sympathy she might otherwise have formed for her Scottish subjects. In this letter Mary suggests that she did not comprehend why the rebel lords were upset:

They [the rebel lords] have, under this pretence, arrayed themselves against me, accusing me of being ill advised, and pretending a desire of seeing me delivered from bad counsels, in order to point out to me the things that required reformation. I feeling myself innocent, and desirous to avoid the shedding of blood, placed myself in their hands, wishing to reform what was amiss...<sup>66</sup>

Although Elizabeth appeared sympathetic to Mary's cause, her chief advisor, William Cecil (1520-1598), recognized the crisis that Mary's presence in England could trigger. Northern England was comprised of several Catholic counties that Cecil feared were at risk of shifting their loyalties from Queen Elizabeth to support Mary's potential claim to the English throne.

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<sup>64</sup> *Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Documents connected with her Personal History* Volume I ed. Agnes Strickland (London: Henry Colburn Publisher, 1842), 39.

<sup>65</sup> Strickland, 43.

<sup>66</sup> Strickland, 41.

Such a shift in loyalties could have led to civil war in both countries.<sup>67</sup> Upon hearing of Mary's arrival in England, Elizabeth called an emergency meeting of the Privy Council and proposed to meet with her cousin to discuss Mary's restoration to the Scottish throne. Cecil and the rest of the council opposed this idea, favouring instead returning her to Scotland. After Elizabeth denied the council's recommendation for fear that rebels would kill Mary if she returned to Scotland, Cecil persuaded Elizabeth that a commission should investigate Mary for her alleged involvement in Darnley's murder before the council could begin planning any sort of restoration.<sup>68</sup> Until the conclusion of the trial, Elizabeth agreed it was prudent to imprison Mary, who was escorted to Carlisle Castle on 18 May 1568<sup>69</sup> by Richard Lowther, the deputy governor of Cumberland (1532-1607). Cecil ordered a strict guard to supervise Mary's movements and determined that she should be investigated as an accomplice in Darnley's murder.<sup>70</sup> Frustrated at her captivity, Mary sent over twenty letters to Queen Elizabeth between her arrival in May 1568 and 10 January 1569. Antonia Fraser observes that the majority of these letters were exceedingly long, well-reasoned pleas for Elizabeth's assistance in her mission to reassert her power in Scotland.<sup>71</sup>

The first known letter that Mary sent to her cousin from her captivity at Carlisle is dated 28 May 1568. Mary expresses, again, the reasons why she had decided to come to England and urges Elizabeth to provide the assistance she had promised in the letters she sent to Mary during her captivity at Lochleven. Mary also asks her cousin to arrange that they might meet personally so she might better present her case:

Madame, I am sorry that the haste in which I wrote my last letter caused me to omit, as I perceive by yours, the principal thing which induced me to write to you, and which is also the principal cause of my coming into this your kingdom, which is that, having for a long time been a prisoner, and, as I have already informed you, being unjustly treated, as well by their acts as by their false reports, I wished above all to come in person to lay my complaint before you, as well on account of our near relationship, equality of rank, and professed friendship, as to clear myself before you from those calumnious charges which they have dared to prefer against my honour...and forthwith to let me have your answer in writing, whether it would be agreeable to you if I were to come without delay and without ceremony to you, and tell you more particularly the truth about all that has

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<sup>67</sup> Guy, 357.

<sup>68</sup> Williams, 231. The records from this session of the Privy Council are not available, nor is the date on which the meeting was held.

<sup>69</sup> Weir, 491.

<sup>70</sup> Guy, 357.

<sup>71</sup> Fraser, 375.

happened to me, in contradiction to all their lies, which I am sure you would have pleasure to hear, as you were pleased to write to me in your letters, that you would take my justification into your hands, till you had replaced me in the state to which Heaven had pleased to call me, and that all princes are bound to support and assist one another.<sup>72</sup>

Mary wrote to Elizabeth in the manner that became typical of her correspondence. She appealed to the blood ties between the cousins, their friendship, and their equality as queens in an attempt to persuade Elizabeth to help restore her to power. Mary then begins to complain about her captivity at Carlisle:

...but this detention, which, to speak freely to you as you do to me, I think rather harsh and strange, considering that I came so frankly into your country without any condition or any distrust of your friendship, promised in your frequent letters; and though I have lived in a manner a prisoner in your castle, for a fortnight since the arrival of your councillors, I have not obtained permission to go to you to plead my cause, as my confidence in you was such that I asked for nothing more than to go to you to make you acquainted with my grievances.

Mary questions why Elizabeth imprisoned her when she had entered England only to seek her cousin's help. She also references past correspondence in which Elizabeth had written of their friendship. This letter illustrates Mary's ignorance of court politics because she did not understand the threat her presence posed to the hard-won religious stability Elizabeth was attempting to maintain in England.<sup>73</sup> Despite Mary's desire that she and Elizabeth meet, a wish she expresses in this and a number of other letters, these royal cousins, so bound together by events and in popular memory and imagination, never met.

When Elizabeth did not respond to the letter Mary wrote on 28 May, Mary continued to send letters to her cousin. On 13 June Mary composed a letter defending her decision to flee to England, and accused Elizabeth of treating her poorly:

Madam my good sister, I thank you for the disposition which you have to listen to the justification of my honour, which ought to be a matter of importance to all princes, and especially to you, as I have the honour to be so near of kin to you. But it seems to me, that those who persuade you that my reception would turn to your dishonour manifest the contrary. But alas, madam, when did you ever hear a prince censured for listening in person to the grievances of those who complain that they have been falsely accused. Dismiss, madam, from your mind, the idea that I came hither to save my life; neither the

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<sup>72</sup> Strickland, 47.

<sup>73</sup> Strickland, 47-48.

world nor all Scotland has cast me out; but to recover my honour, and to obtain support to enable me to chastise my false accusers, not to answer them as their equal, for I know that they ought not to enter into engagements against their sovereign, but to accuse them before you, that I have chosen you from among all other princes, as my nearest kinswoman and perfect friend, doing as if I supposed it an honour to be called the queen-restorer, who hoped to receive this kindness from you, giving you the honour and the glory all my life, making you also thoroughly acquainted with my innocence, and how falsely I have been led...<sup>74</sup>

Mary informs Elizabeth that, although she could have asked any country for assistance in restoring her to the throne, she chose to solicit Elizabeth's help due to their friendship and kinship. Mary also appeals to Elizabeth's ego, writing that she chose to seek Elizabeth's aid because she wanted her cousin to be given the title of "queen-restorer."

In a letter written on 5 September 1568, Mary deviates from her familiar emotional pleas and accuses Elizabeth of mistreating her:

...For when I was in prison, and before the battle, you promised to reinstate me, and when I came and put myself into your hands, could you do less? I think not; though your letters are civilly cold. As for the ambiguity of these, although I am persuaded that if you had no intention to oblige me, you would not take upon you the trouble of my affairs, the good or ill success of which will be attributed to you, as either the restorer of a queen or the contrary. I will cease to admonish you about any thing; do as you think best, seeing the confidence I have in you.<sup>75</sup>

Mary was becoming anxious that her enemies were continuing to gain political favour in Scotland while she remained in captivity. In spite of the friendly conclusion to the letter, Mary warns Elizabeth that she was not honouring her promises and criticizes the cold and ambiguous letters she had been receiving

This passage particularly illustrates the differing political attitudes demonstrated by the two queens. Mary continued to write emotional letters to her cousin that emphasized their friendship and familial ties even though she had been imprisoned upon her arrival in England. Mary operated in this emotional manner when she ruled Scotland too, placing friendships and personal relationships above her duty to her nation as demonstrated by her marriage to Bothwell. Conversely, Elizabeth had essentially stopped responding to Mary's long letters and had

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<sup>74</sup> Strickland, 50-51.

<sup>75</sup> Strickland, 81.

abandoned her former sisterly tone for a tempered, political one. Elizabeth's change in attitude may have been because she feared, reasonably, that Mary's release might become a focus of English Catholic political hopes that might endanger her position as queen. Additionally, Elizabeth had worked for a decade by 1568 to heal England's religious wounds by superintending the 'Elizabethan Settlement', outlined above. This relative religious peace was endangered by Mary's presence in England. Elizabeth, therefore, likely had religious, patriotic and dynastic motives for her conduct towards Mary.

Elizabeth refused to meet Mary until an English investigation cleared her of involvement in Darnley's murder; therefore, on 4 October 1568, a hearing began at York, which was later moved to Westminster on 26 November so that Elizabeth and Cecil could keep a closer eye on the proceedings.<sup>76</sup> The English were careful to avoid the word trial when referring to the Conferences because the English courts did not have the authority to try foreign princes for crimes committed in their own countries.<sup>77</sup> This chapter will not examine the legal details of the inquiry because Mary and Elizabeth did not communicate at length about the proceedings and there are few hearing documents that have been digitized; but it is notable that the proceedings offer insight into Elizabeth's and Mary's politics.

As was typical of Tudor monarchs, Elizabeth did not reach her own conclusions about Mary's involvement in Darnley's murder; rather, she allowed a group of commissioners, led by Thomas Howard the fourth Duke of Norfolk (1536-1572), to decide Mary's fate in the councils of York (4 October-November 1568) and Westminster (26 November 1568- 10 January 1569). If Mary was acquitted and would agree to forfeit formally and publicly her claim to the English throne, she would return to Scotland indebted to England and Elizabeth. If Mary was found guilty, she would remain imprisoned in England.<sup>78</sup> According to a meeting of the English Privy Council at Hampton-Court on 30 October 1568, it does not seem as though Elizabeth and her

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<sup>76</sup> Elizabeth wished to move the inquiry to Westminster for several reasons: first, was frustrated that the Scottish rebel lords had not produced any evidence against Mary. Elizabeth had also heard rumours that the Duke of Norfolk, who headed the commission, planned to marry Mary Stuart. To ensure that the commission was not partisan to Mary, Elizabeth wanted the hearings to take place at Westminster, so her Privy Council could be in attendance. Additionally, Elizabeth added ten Protestant lords who were hostile to Mary to the commission- including Cecil, and Sir Nicholas Bacon. Weir, 514-519.

<sup>77</sup> Weir, 507.

<sup>78</sup> Guy, 358.

advisors wished to liberate Mary. During the proceedings the council decided that Elizabeth would meet with Mary's commissioners: John Lesley, the Bishop of Ross (1527-1596) and John Maxwell, the 4<sup>th</sup> Baron of Herries (1512-1583). Cecil recorded: "That the Queenes majesty should shew to the first, how desyrous she was to have some good End, and therffor ment to have Conference with them to resolve hir of certen difficultees."<sup>79</sup> This is to say that Elizabeth intended to reassure Mary's commissioners that the inquiry would resolve in their queen's favour. Immediately following Elizabeth's meeting with Mary's supporters, she met with the Scottish rebels William Maitland of Lethington (1525-1573) and James Macgill (d.1579). In this meeting Elizabeth told the rebels:

If they will in the end be content to show sufficient matter to prove hir [Mary Stuart] guilty, so as they may be certainly assured, that after that proved, they shall not be made subject to hir indignation; it is thought good for many respects, that they should be assured, if it may certenly and manifestly appeare to hir Majesty and hir Counsell that the said Quene was guilty of the Murdre of hir husband, that than hir Majesty will never restore hir to the Crown of Scotland, nor permit her to be restored.... but will make manifest to the world what she thynketh of the cause.<sup>80</sup>

That Elizabeth promised both Mary and her rebel lords that the inquiry would go in their favour attests to her understanding of the nature of politics. Elizabeth likely desired that the insurgents make a compelling case for Mary's guilt for Darnley's murder. If the public believed that Mary was guilty, that would sour opinion of the queen and make her a less dangerous captive. It is likely with this intention that Elizabeth urged Lethington and Macgill to declare Mary's guilt during the hearing and promised to ensure that they would never face her indignation. The council also demonstrated significant forethought and acknowledged that Mary might learn of Elizabeth's actions:

And because this manner of procedying can not be so secretly used, but the knolledg therof will by some meanes come to the Queen of Scotts: It is thought most necessary afore all things, that she be circumspectly looked unto for dout of escaping... and therfor it is thought good, that all preparation be hastened for hir removing to Tutbury.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> William Cecil, Proceedings in the Council at Hampton Court, 30 October 1568, in *A Collection of State Papers Relating to Affairs in the Reigns of King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth: From the Year 1542-1570* ed. Samuel Haynes, 487.

<sup>80</sup> Cecil, 487.

<sup>81</sup> Cecil, 487.

It was decided that the best procedure was to move Mary to the Castle of Tutbury quickly so as to thwart any plans she may have had of escaping from England.

After four months of hearings, on 10 January 1569 Elizabeth ended the inquiry into Mary's involvement in Darnley's murder. Elizabeth presented her decision to the rebel lords in a meeting at Hampton Court. She said:

Whereas the Earl of Murray, and his adherents, come into this realm, at the desire of the Queen's Majesty of England, to answer to such things as the Queen their sovereign objected against them, and their allegiances; and for so much as there has been nothing deduced against them, as yet, that may impair their honour or allegiances; and, on the other part, there had been nothing sufficiently produced nor shown by them against the Queen, their sovereign, whereby the Queen of England should conceive or take any evil opinion of the Queen, or good sister, for anything yet seen...<sup>82</sup>

It is notable that Elizabeth decided to meet with the rebel lords, and allowed them to depart for Scotland with a £5,000 subsidy.<sup>83</sup> Meanwhile, Mary remained imprisoned; the council prepared to move her to a more secure castle, and she was still forbidden from meeting Elizabeth. Alison Weir observes that Elizabeth made a thoughtful political move by dissolving the hearing. The evidence presented against Mary enabled Elizabeth to continue to keep her captive, but because the examination had not declared Mary guilty, and the documents submitted to trial remained private, Elizabeth reserved the ability to restore her cousin to power if it was advantageous.<sup>84</sup>

Mary's own politics are revealed in a letter addressed to Elizabeth on 12 January 1569: Madam, I came to you in my trouble for succour and support, on the faith of the assurance that I might reckon upon you for every assistance in my necessity; and, for this reason, I refrained from applying for any other aid to friends, relatives, and ancient allies; relying solely upon your promised favour.<sup>85</sup>

Mary's letter betrays her lack of political forethought. Mary decided to flee to a nation that had historically been at odds with her own and trusted that a woman with whom she had an inconsistent relationship would help reinstate her power. It is notable that there is no record that Mary asked her supporters for assistance during the first year of her imprisonment, indicating that she remained confident that Elizabeth would provide her with assistance.

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<sup>82</sup> Elizabeth Tudor's Proceedings at Hampton Court, January 1569, quoted in Rait, 160.

<sup>83</sup> Fraser, 390.

<sup>84</sup> Weir, 543.

<sup>85</sup> Strickland, 107.

Only on 10 November 1569, does Mary begin to lose some of her faith in Elizabeth and ask for permission to seek aid from other countries:

I beg you to answer... me ...namely, that it may please you, according to my first requests, to oblige me for ever, by assisting me with your support to recover the state to which it has please God to call me among my subjects, as you have always promised; or if consanguinity, my affection for you, and my long patience, should not seem to you to deserve this, at least do not refuse me the liberty to depart, as freely as I came, and retire either to France or elsewhere, among my friends and allies; or should it please you to use rigour, and treat me as an enemy (which I have never been to you, nor desire to be), allow me to redeem myself from my miserable imprisonment by ransom, as is the custom among all princes, even those who are enemies, and give me opportunity to negotiate with the said princes, my friends and allies, for raising the said ransom.<sup>86</sup>

Mary observes in this letter that she wished Elizabeth to restore her to the Scottish throne, but for the first time in the available selection of letters, she also offers to pay a ransom for her freedom. Increasingly, Mary recognized that Elizabeth did not treat her as an equal monarch; therefore, Mary decided to suggest an allowance that was offered to noble prisoners in hopes that she would be granted the ability to leave England.

Mary continued to complain to Elizabeth about her mistreatment following the trial. In a letter composed on 12 January 1569, Mary accused Elizabeth of allowing her rebel lords to tarnish her name, while refusing to allow Mary access to the inquiry so she could defend herself. Mary also criticized Elizabeth for permitting the insurgents to retire freely to Scotland to rule the kingdom they usurped after absolving them of their sins. Mary expressed her frustration that she has not been authorized to send or receive correspondence from her relatives in France, her servants, or her allies in Scotland.

After failing to respond to several of Mary's letters, Elizabeth sent a letter to Mary Stuart on 20 February 1570. Elizabeth addressed this letter after she had quelled the Northern Rebellion, which took place in November 1569 and was led by several of the Catholic earls of Northern England. These nobles sought to reinstate the Catholic Mass and desired to place Mary on the English throne. Elizabeth's frustration with Mary is evident in her scathing letter:

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<sup>86</sup> Strickland, 111.

Good madame, what wrong did I ever seek to you or yours in the former part of my reign, when you know what was sought against me, even to the spoil of my crown from me?<sup>87</sup> Did I invade your country and take or detain any part thereof, as all the world knoweth I might, and as any king or queen of my condition, being so wronged, might with justice and honor have done? But therein my natural inclination to you overcame myself. Did I, when I might have, sell or put to ransom the whole army of the French that were sent into Scotland on your behalf to invade my realm and to oppress my crown? Did I not, I say, friendly send them home into France in my own ships? Yea, did I not victual them and lend them money? Was I not content to accord with your ambassadors (authorized by you and your husband) to remit all injuries past, to my great damage and charges? And what moved me thereto but my natural inclination towards you, with whom I desired to live as a neighbor and a good sister?<sup>88</sup>

Elizabeth names several incidents in this letter that demonstrate her perception that Mary had acted disrespectfully towards England, including Mary's decision to wed Lord Darnley without Elizabeth's consent. Providing evidence that she was kind, despite Mary's disrespectful actions, Elizabeth writes:

And in our most extremity- when you were a prisoner indeed, not as you have at times noted yourself to be here in my realm, and then sought notoriously by your evil-willers to the danger of your life- how far from my mind was the remembrance of any former unkindness showed to me? Nay, how void was I of respect to the hurt that the world had seen attempted by you to my crown and the security that might have ensued to my state by your death, when I, finding your calamity so great as you were at the pit's brink to have miserably lost your life, did not only entreat for your life but so threatened such as were irritated against you that (I only may say it) even I was the principal cause to save your life.<sup>89</sup>

Moreover, Elizabeth warned Mary that she should have been offended by the latter's persistent, demanding letters and protested that Mary accused her unjustly of violating her promises, the rules of hospitality and their kinship. Elizabeth wrote that instead of taking offense to the accusations, she chose to be considerate of Mary's poor mental state. Near the end of her letter Elizabeth cautions Mary:

you would minister to me hereafter a plain probation and a demonstration how I may be assured of some contrary course, both by yourself and your ministers, in answering with some like fruits of goodwill as mine hath been abundant. For otherwise surely both in

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<sup>87</sup> In this passage Elizabeth is likely referring to Mary's decision to bear the arms of England while she was the queen-dauphiness of France. See introduction for more details.

<sup>88</sup> Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, 122.

<sup>89</sup> Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, 123.

honor and reason, not only for myself but for my people and my countries, I must be forced to change my course and, not with such remissness as I have used towards offenders, endanger myself, my state, and my realm.<sup>90</sup>

This letter best demonstrates Elizabeth's change in opinion about Mary; she does not refer to Mary in the affectionate terms that she had used in the letters sent in 1567. Additionally, Elizabeth did not sign this letter, which was likely a purposeful action intended to express her irritation with Mary.

The letters exchanged between Mary and Elizabeth reveal much about the women's personalities, relationship with one another, and their politics. Mary's emotional letters betray her over-reliance on personal connections and her impulsive nature. Notably, Mary's letters to Elizabeth consistently expressed her love for her cousin despite her long imprisonment and inability to meet with Elizabeth in person. In comparison, Elizabeth's letters show an evolution of tone and substance. Initially, Elizabeth assumes the role of an elder sister and offers political advice to her younger cousin. After Mary's arrival in England, however, Elizabeth became frustrated with Mary's abundance of accusatory letters and her correspondence turns unemotional and diplomatic.

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<sup>90</sup> Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, 124.

## CONCLUSION

Mary Stuart and Elizabeth Tudor, though contemporary regnant queens in neighbouring countries, experienced two vastly different lives. During their reigns both queens were forced to manage religious challenges the advent of the Reformation brought to their countries. Additionally, Mary and Elizabeth ruled countries that had a history of enmity with one another, and attempted, for a time, to establish a positive relationship.

This thesis argues that Mary and Elizabeth's differing youths contributed to their dissimilar political behavior. During Mary Stuart's time in France (October 1548-August 1561) she became accustomed to the luxurious life led by French royalty, an experience that distanced her from the economic and political realities of Scotland and led to a fatal distance between Mary and her people. Because she was destined to become Queen-consort of France, Mary was never taught to navigate the political challenges of rulership. This deficiency likely contributed to her downfall upon her return to Scotland, because she did not anticipate that her nobles and advisors would act chiefly in their own interests. Elizabeth Tudor, conversely, was not protected by powerful figures in her adolescence. The experience of having to navigate the dangers presented by the Seymour affair and Mary Tudor's suspicions, likely taught her to think for herself rather than to trust blindly her advisors after her accession to the throne. Elizabeth's time in the Tower of London also may have demonstrated the importance of maintaining her people's favour, because popular support for her was critical to her survival and success during the 1550s and 1560s. Mary and Elizabeth's different capacities for handling politically charged occasions is best exemplified by events that took place when each woman was, coincidentally, fifteen-years-old.

At fifteen both Mary Stuart and Elizabeth Tudor were placed in precarious political situations to which they reacted in markedly different manners. Before her wedding in 1558 Mary Stuart was asked to sign several secret documents. It was the first time that Mary Stuart had been asked to make political decisions on her own; consequently, she acted naively and made decisions that compromised the independence of Scotland. In 1549, when she was fifteen, Elizabeth Tudor was questioned about allegations that she had participated in Thomas Seymour's plots. She understood the treacherous nature of the English politics in a way that her cousin Mary Stuart did not understand the challenging nature of Scottish politics. Elizabeth showed great

forethought during her interrogation and conducted herself in a manner that made it impossible for Sir Robert Tyrwhitt to extract from her a confession of guilt.

On 4 April 1558, a few weeks before her wedding to the Dauphin of France, Mary Stuart was asked to sign a series of three documents at the palace of Fontainebleau. Neither the Scottish commissioners, who had been sent to France for the purpose of drawing up a marriage treaty for the young queen, nor Mary's Guise relations, who had charged themselves with overseeing all her political actions, were aware of the meeting.<sup>1</sup> Rather, Henry II was responsible for drafting the documents and compelling Mary to sign them.

The first of these documents asserts that, if Mary were to die without an heir, the kingdom of Scotland and her rights to the English throne would pass to the King of France. The document states that France was entitled to Scotland because “the kings of France had always shown singular and perfect affection in protecting and defending Scotland against the English, ancient and inveterate enemies of the Queen and her predecessors.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the document asserts that Mary's kingdom should pass to Henry II because he had paid a great sum of money to care for Mary during her childhood.<sup>3</sup>

The second document acknowledges that if Mary died without heirs, France would be granted full access to Scotland's revenues until the kingdom was repaid one million pieces of gold. Mary was likely led to believe that this was the sum Scotland owed France for years of military defence and for Mary Stuart's educational fees.<sup>4</sup> Scotland was not a wealthy nation. Because Scotland owed so large a debt, it “would remain a French province for a very long time.”<sup>5</sup> This document implies that Francis I had spent a great sum of money ensuring Scotland's defense, and that Henry II intended to continue spending money to provide military assistance to Mary's native country.<sup>6</sup>

In the last of the secret documents Mary “actually renounced in anticipation, any agreement she might make at the [Scottish] Estates' behest, which might interfere with these

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<sup>1</sup> Fraser, 68.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Labanoff, “Recueil,” quoted in Stoddart, 151.

<sup>3</sup> Stoddart, 152.

<sup>4</sup> Guy, 88.

<sup>5</sup> Guy, 88.

<sup>6</sup> Stoddart, 153.

arrangements.”<sup>7</sup> This document was signed by both Mary Stuart and Francis II, stipulating that each of these secret papers would take legal precedence over any documents Mary had signed in the past or might sign in the future. Stoddart notes that “every loophole of possible escape is closed,”<sup>8</sup> indicating that Mary would not be able to nullify these secret papers.

This incident demonstrates the inadequacy in Mary’s upbringing to prepare her for the challenges and responsibilities of rulership. She was far too trusting, and believed that Henry II would not wish to harm her or her country. Consequently, Mary signed these documents, likely without a comprehensive understanding of the agreements she was making. As Jane Dunn observes, however:

The plea that she was but a young woman of fifteen, keen to please and in awe of her powerful uncles and the fond King Henri, is just enough. Although it excuses her of the worst motives, it does not do her much credit. Fifteen-year-olds were leading men into battle, having children and dying for their beliefs. The Queen of Scots’ political naivety and lack of judgement, even if merely following the advice of these apparently trustworthy men, did not bode well for her political deftness in the future. Her lack of respect for the independence of her own ancient and sovereign kingdom was a failure of education and imagination.<sup>9</sup>

Mary’s lack of political experience caused her to act in a heedless manner that betrayed the independence of her native kingdom. Moreover, her political ineptness caused her to sign documents that affected the future of Scotland impulsively and without consulting the regent or the Estates of her nation.

In early 1549, when Elizabeth Tudor was fifteen, she fell under the suspicion of Edward VI’s government for her alleged implication in Thomas Seymour’s plots against his brother the Lord Protector. Members of the Privy council were particularly concerned about the unusual relationship<sup>10</sup> between the two and had cause to believe that Elizabeth had collaborated with Seymour in a plan to marry secretly<sup>11</sup>. Because she enjoyed a potential claim to the English throne, all Elizabeth’s relationships were political, meaning that Elizabeth could be perceived

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<sup>7</sup> Fraser, 68.

<sup>8</sup> Stoddart, 154.

<sup>9</sup> Dunn, 14.

<sup>10</sup> To read more about Seymour’s conspiracy see pages 32-34.

<sup>11</sup> Dunn, 78.

potentially as engaging in treacherous behaviour should she encourage any relationship that was not approved by the Privy Council.

Elizabeth was isolated from her household and interrogated individually by the extremely skilled Sir Robert Tyrwhitt. Moreover, her servants Katherine Ashley and Mr. Parry were placed in the Tower for questioning. Jane Dunn writes eloquently about Elizabeth's position:

Elizabeth was not just frightened for her life; at this point her reputation was almost as precious to her. If she wished to safeguard her place in the succession, or even continue to be considered eligible for a good marriage, she had to remain virtuous and be seen to be virtuous. This was of particular sensitivity in her case because of the traumatic history of her mother's downfall. These rumours of lascivious relations with a stepfather were too close an echo of the accusations of incest brought against Anne Boleyn and her own brother.<sup>12</sup>

The princess' tumultuous childhood and extensive schooling prepared her for Sir Tyrwhitt's lies and threats.<sup>13</sup> Virginia Townsend writes the following about Elizabeth's conduct during her interrogations:

At this time the real qualities of Elizabeth Tudor came to the light— the splendid courage, the reticence, the rare discretions which were to carry her through many an awful peril in the years to come...How adroit and self-possessed the young girl must have been when brought before her stern examiner, who was in the interest of the Government! She confessed nothing.<sup>14</sup>

Elizabeth answered every question with intelligence and forethought, maintaining her innocence against an experienced interrogator who was convinced of her guilt.

Elizabeth also used her understanding of rhetoric to write a persuasive letter to the Lord Protector Edward Seymour on 29 January 1549 asserting her innocence. Elizabeth used the letter to reiterate the answers she had provided to Sir Robert Tyrwhitt during her interrogations. She also asserted Katherine Ashley's and Mr. Parry's innocence. The letter uses both an authoritative and a submissive tone to emphasize Elizabeth's innocence, but also illustrate the girl's vulnerable position. Elizabeth writes:

Master Tyrwhit and others have told me that there goeth rumors abroad which be greatly both against mine honor and honest, which above all other things I esteem, which be

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<sup>12</sup> Dunn, 78.

<sup>13</sup> Dunn, 80.

<sup>14</sup> Townsend, 33.

these: that I am in the Tower and with child by my lord admiral [Thomas Seymour]. My lord, these are shameful slanders, for the which, besides the great desire I have to see the king's majesty, I shall most heartily desire your lordship that I may come to the court after your first determination, that I may show myself there as I am.<sup>15</sup>

The above words show Elizabeth's authority because she asks for an invitation to court in an attempt to maintain her virtuous reputation and prevent the further spread of rumours that she was both in the Tower and pregnant with Thomas Seymour's child. Elizabeth, on the other hand, recognized the importance of demonstrating her vulnerability and signed the letter, artfully "your assured friend to my little power" as a reminder that Edward Seymour had ultimate control over Elizabeth's future.

Mary Stuart illustrated her lack of political astuteness and Elizabeth Tudor demonstrated her capacity to act with forethought when placed in precarious political incidents. Mary's luxurious childhood and lack of political experience caused her to act in an impulsive manner that betrayed the independence of her nation. This manner of navigating difficult situations was characteristic of Mary's reign and was caused by her lack of an education that prepared her to act to advantage in the world of politics. Elizabeth, contrarily, experienced a tumultuous childhood, and understood the precariousness of courtly politics. Consequently, she was able to respond to Robert Tyrwhitt's questions carefully and logically. Moreover, Elizabeth used her understanding of rhetoric, which she gained through intensive study of classical texts, to write letters to those in positions of power to argue for her innocence. In this way, Elizabeth's childhood enabled her to navigate court life as a young girl and as a queen with far greater success than Mary Stuart achieved.

Mary and Elizabeth's relationship continued to sour following 1570. On 25 February 1570 Pope Pius V (r.1566-1572) issued the bull *Regnans in excelsis*<sup>16</sup> in which he excommunicated Elizabeth and released English subjects from any allegiance to her. Elizabeth likely recognized the danger posed by this bull, because it threatened the precarious religious stability England had enjoyed as a consequence of the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559. By promulgating this bull, Pius V openly encouraged Elizabeth's Catholic subjects to plot against

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<sup>15</sup> Marcus, Mueller, and Rose 24.

<sup>16</sup> For full text see: Gilbert Burnett, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, Volume Two, Part Two (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1829), 531.

her. Consequently, between 1571 and 1586 there were several plots to overthrow Elizabeth and replace her with Mary Stuart, including the Ridolfi plot of 1571<sup>17</sup> and the Throckmorton Plot of 1583<sup>18</sup>, after which English Parliament passed the Safety of the Queen Act of 1584.<sup>19</sup> This Act, as Allison Heisch notes, was passed with Mary Stuart in mind, and declared that any person involved in a conspiracy against Elizabeth would be tried, and if deemed guilty, executed.<sup>20</sup>

Although the extent of Mary's involvement in many of these plots is unknown, Mary Stuart was arrested on 11 August 1586, and on 15 October 1586 she was brought to trial under the Safety of the Queen Act for her suspected involvement in the Babington Plot.<sup>21</sup> Throughout the trial Mary insisted that the court could not pass judgment on a sovereign queen, and refuted the accusations that she had participated in the plot. Although Williams maintains that Mary

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<sup>17</sup> In 1570, the Florentine Banker, Roberto Ridolfi worked with Don Guerau de Spes, the Spanish ambassador to England to enforce *Regnans in excelsis*. The plan was to wed Mary Stuart to Thomas Howard, the Duke of Norfolk. Following this union, the King of Spain (1556-1598) would invade England with the purpose of killing Elizabeth, restoring Catholicism and placing Mary on the English throne. This plot was uncovered by Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's principal secretary, who scholars commonly refer to as the "spymaster" (c. 1532-1590) and William Cecil. Upon the plot being uncovered, Thomas Howard was imprisoned and executed in 1572 following trial. For more information see Williams, 272-284. Weir, 555-557.

<sup>18</sup> In 1583 Sir Francis Walsingham arrested Sir Francis Throckmorton (1554-1584) for his participation in a plot to place Mary Stuart on the English throne. After examining Throckmorton's house, Walsingham found a list of Catholic lords who would assist in an invasion of England. Later, under torture, Throckmorton admitted that he was part of a plot to encourage King Philip II and Henri I, the Duke of Guise (1550-1588) to invade England. In July 1584 Throckmorton was executed for his participation in this plot. The Spanish ambassador with whom Throckmorton communicated, Bernadino de Mendoza (1540-1604) was expelled from England, and was the last Spanish ambassador allowed in England under Elizabeth's rule. For more information see Williams, 290-291.

<sup>19</sup> Williams, 295. For the full text of the Safety of the Queen Act see: J.R. Tanner, 417.

<sup>20</sup> Allison Heisch, "Arguments for an Execution: Queen Elizabeth's 'White Paper' and Lord Burghley's 'Blue Pencil,'" in *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 24, no. 4 (1992), 592.

<sup>21</sup> In July 1586, Sir Francis Walsingham uncovered a plot that was led by Anthony Babington (1561-1586). The plan was to send troops to liberate Mary Stuart from her captivity at Chartley, while simultaneously send men to kill Elizabeth. The plot was foiled, however, when Babington recruited one of Walsingham's agents to act as a messenger. Rather than catching Babington and his fellow conspirators when he initially learned about the plot, Walsingham, allowed the plan to be further formulated for the purpose of gathering evidence of Mary's involvement. For more information see Williams, 300-323. John Guy, *Elizabeth the Later Years* (New York: Penguin Books, 2017), 81-82.

defended herself strongly against the court of thirty-six hostile nobles,<sup>22</sup> Mary's emotional nature did impede her ability to plead her innocence. When the council informed Mary that it possessed letters that had been sent between Babington and herself evidencing her guilt, Mary burst into tears and said "I would never make shipwreck of my soul, by conspiring the destruction of my dearest sister."<sup>23</sup> The council responded by declaring that Mary's sentiment would be soon disproved.<sup>24</sup>

On 25 October the commissioners declared Mary guilty of plotting against Queen Elizabeth.<sup>25</sup> The commissioners stated that:

Divers matters have been compassed and imagined within this realm of England, by Anthony Babington and others, *cum scientia*, in English, with the pricacy of the said Mary, pretending title to the crown of this realm of England, tending to the hurt, death and destruction of the royal person of our said lady the Queen.<sup>26</sup>

Following the commission's decision, Parliament was convened at Westminster during which session both Houses of Parliament addressed Elizabeth and regarding Mary's trial. The Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Bromley (1530-1587) said that Mary's supporters:

...will never cease to prosecute by all possible means they can, so long as they may have their eyes and imaginations fixed upon that lady [Mary Stuart], the only ground of their treasonable hope and conceits, and the only seed plot of all dangerous and traitorous devices and practices against your sacred person. And seeing also what insolent boldness is grown in the heart of the same Queen, through your majesty's former exceeding favors and clemencies towards her; and thereupon weighing with heavy and sorrowful hearts, in what continual peril of such like desperate conspiracies and practices your majesty's most royal and sacred person and life is and shall be still without any possible means to prevent it, so long as the said Scottish Queen shall be suffered to continue and shall not receive due punishment which by justice, and the laws of this your realm, she has so often and so many ways for her most wicked and detestable offenses deserved, therefore, and for what we find, that if the said lady should now escape the due and deserved punishment of death for these her most execrable treasons and offenses, your highness's royal person shall be exposed to many more and those more secret and dangerous conspiracies than before...<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Williams, 313.

<sup>23</sup> James D. Taylor Jr, *Complete State Trials of the Tudor Era* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2019), 368.

<sup>24</sup> Taylor, 368.

<sup>25</sup> Fraser, 517.

<sup>26</sup> Taylor, 374.

<sup>27</sup> Taylor, 376.

Consequently, Parliament recommended the execution of Mary Stuart. On 1 February 1587 at Greenwich Palace Elizabeth signed Mary's execution warrant.<sup>28</sup> Informed on the evening of 7 February<sup>29</sup> 1587 that she was to be executed, Mary sat down to write a farewell letter to King Henry III of France (r. 1574-1589), informing him of her impending death:

Tonight, after dinner, I have been advised of my sentence: I am to be executed like a criminal at eight in the morning. I have not had time to give you a full account of everything that has happened, but if you will listen to my doctor and my other unfortunate servants, you will learn the truth, and how, thanks be to God, I scorn death and vow that I meet it innocent of any crime, even if I were their subject. The Catholic faith and the assertion of my God-given right to the English crown are the two issues on which I am condemned, and yet I am not allowed to say that it is for the Catholic religion that I die, but for fear of interference with theirs.<sup>30</sup>

Mary also asks Henry III to convey her body to France following her death, suggesting that she thought France more her home than her native country of Scotland.<sup>31</sup> Mary was beheaded the next morning on 8 February 1587 at Fotheringhay palace. It is notable that Mary did not write a letter to Elizabeth the night of 7 February.

Queen Elizabeth continued to rule England successfully until her death in 1603 when Mary's son, James VI of Scotland and James I of England (r. 1603-1625) united the kingdoms of Scotland and England under his rule. Elizabeth's long reign demonstrates her ability to navigate successfully difficult political situations, whether it be settling religious tensions in her realm or securing the political safety of England by negotiating shrewdly with both Mary and Scottish rebel lords during the inquiry into Darnley's murder in 1568. Elizabeth likely learned the skills necessary to succeed as a ruler during her tumultuous childhood, where she discovered the necessity of trusting only herself and the importance of securing and preserving the favour of the English people. Mary, contrarily, lacked all the political skills that her cousin possessed. She was a woman who made impulsive decisions, acted too emotionally and willingly trusted those around her, blind often to the circumstance that they were often acting in their own interest. Mary's childhood in France accustomed her to a lavish court filled with people who acted with deference to their rulers. Moreover, during her time in France, Mary did not learn how to act as a

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<sup>28</sup> Fraser, 527.

<sup>29</sup> National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS, 54.I.I

<sup>30</sup> William, 329.

<sup>31</sup> National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS, 54.I.I

political player. Consequently, when Mary returned to Scotland in 1561, she did not understand the culture of her people, could not maneuver the factionalism characteristic of the Scottish clan system, and was shocked when her subjects, such as John Knox, abrasively attacked her person. Mary and Elizabeth's turbulent relationship was symbolic of a larger conflict over power in Europe. Their lives were shaped by competing claims to the throne of England that had fatal consequences for Mary in 1587, consequences that were forecast by the events of the period 1567-1570 and the letters they then exchanged, when Mary, having fled Scotland, fell into English captivity.

**APPENDIX A: Chronology of Events Pertinent to this Thesis**

1457	28 January	Henry VII born
1489	29 November	Margaret Tudor (Mary Stuart's Grandmother) born
1501	22 April	Henry VIII becomes King of England
1533	25 January	Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII married
1533	7 September	Elizabeth I born
1536	19 May	Anne Boleyn executed (Elizabeth Tudor aged two)
1536	1 July	Elizabeth Tudor declared illegitimate, removed from succession
1542	24 November	Scottish lose battle at Solway Moss to the English
1542	8 December	Mary Stuart born
1542	13 December	James V dies, Mary Stuart becomes Queen of Scotland
1543	June	Elizabeth Tudor reinstated in the English succession
1543	July	Treaties of Greenwich agrees to marriage between Mary Stuart and Edward Tudor
1547	28 January	Henry VIII dies, Edward VI becomes king of England
1547	3 March	Henry II ascends to the French throne
1548	7 July	Mary Stuart engaged to Francis II of France
1548	29 July	Mary Stuart sails to France for protection
1549	January	Elizabeth Tudor questioned on her connection with Thomas Seymour
1553	6 July	Edward VI dies, Mary Tudor ascends the English throne
1554	15 March	Elizabeth imprisoned in the Tower of London
1554	19 May	Elizabeth released from the Tower
1558	4 April	Mary Stuart signs secret documents before her marriage
1558	24 April	Mary Stuart marries Francis II of France

1558	17 November	Mary Tudor dies, Elizabeth assumes the throne of England
1558	17 November	Henry II of France declares Mary Stuart the Queen of England, Ireland and Scotland
1559	2 April	French and English sign the Treaty of Cateau-Cambresis
1559	10 July	Henry II of France dies, Francis II and Mary Stuart become King and Queen of France and Scotland
1559	10 May	Scottish Lords rebel against the regency of Mary of Guise. (Mary Stuart's Mother)
1559	18 September	Mary and Francis proclaim they are King and Queen of England and Ireland
1559	18 December	Elizabeth sends aid to the Scottish lords rebelling against Mary of Guise
1560	6 July	Mary Stuart refuses to ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh that would illegitimate her claim to the English throne
1560	5 December	Francis II dies, leaving Mary Stuart the dowager queen of France
1561	19 August	Mary Stuart returns to Scotland (eighteen years old)
1565	29 July	Mary Stuart marries Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley
1567	10 February	Darnley murdered
1567	15 May	Mary Stuart marries Lord Bothwell
1567	15 June	Mary surrenders to rebel lords and is imprisoned at Lochleven Castle
1567	24 July	Mary Stuart forced to abdicate the throne of Scotland in favour of her son James VI
1568	2 May	Mary Stuart escapes from Lochleven Castle to England where she is placed on house arrest for twenty years
1568	October	Elizabeth begins inquiry into Mary Stuart's role in the Darnley murder
1583	November	Throckmorton plot to put Mary Stuart on the English throne is discovered

1586	July	Babington Plot to assassinate Elizabeth and replace her with Mary Stuart is uncovered
1586	15- 16 November	Mary Stuart tried for her involvement in the Babington Plot
1586	25 October	Mary Stuart convicted for conspiring to assassinate Elizabeth
1587	1 February	Elizabeth Tudor signs Mary Stuart's death warrant
1587	8 February	Mary Stuart executed (forty-four years old)

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