

0. SHAM PROCEDURES - Story Preface

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ELIZABETH SIGNING MARY'S DEATH-WARRANT.

Illustration, depicting an etching by an unknown artist, imagines the moment when Queen Elizabeth I signs the Death Warrant for her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons. PD

The purpose of the prosecution, mounted against Mary, was to achieve a single, intended result: Execution of Elizabeth's heir.

The trial began on October 12, 1586 with a letter from Elizabeth to Mary. Here is the [translation](#), from the French original:

You have in various ways and manners attempted to take my life and to bring my kingdom to destruction by bloodshed. I have never proceeded so harshly against you, but have, on the contrary, protected and maintained you like myself. These treasons will be proved to you and all made manifest. Yet it is my will, that you answer the nobles and peers of the kingdom as if I were myself present. I therefore require, charge, and command that you make answer for I have been well informed of your arrogance.

Act plainly without reserve, and you will sooner be able to obtain favour of me.

Elizabeth

If a lawyer had been allowed to speak for Mary, he would have stressed her extraordinary circumstances:

- Although a Queen herself, and the rightful heir to the throne of England, she had been under [house arrest](#) (Elizabeth's captive) for nineteen years.
- Why would she not enlist the help of those who would engineer her escape?

Speaking on her own behalf, Mary expressed her disgust with the proceedings in general and with the conduct of the trial in particular.

I do not recognize the laws of England nor do I understand them, as I have often asserted. I am alone without counsel or anyone to speak on my behalf. My papers and notes have been taken from me, so that I am destitute of all aid, taken at a disadvantage.

The trial of Mary, Queen of Scots took only ten days. By October 25th, the verdict was in. Mary was guilty of treason.

Whether she continued to believe the trial was illegal was of little consequence now. All that remained was for Elizabeth to pass sentence.

It was one thing to charge Mary with high treason. Other people did that. It was something else to sentence Mary - another queen - to death. Elizabeth had to do that herself.

She delayed for months. Under pressure from her secretary, Walsingham, and others, Elizabeth finally signed her cousin's death warrant on February 1, 1587.

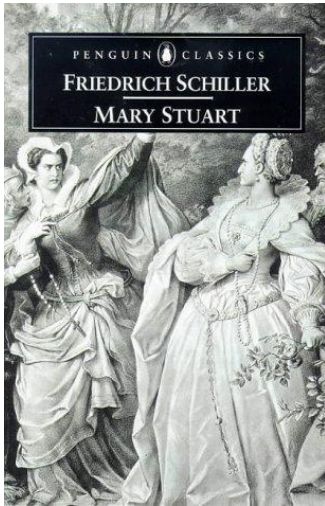
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SHAM-PROCEDURES-Regicide-Mary-Queen-of-Scots>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/SHAM-PROCEDURES-Regicide-Mary-Queen-of-Scots>

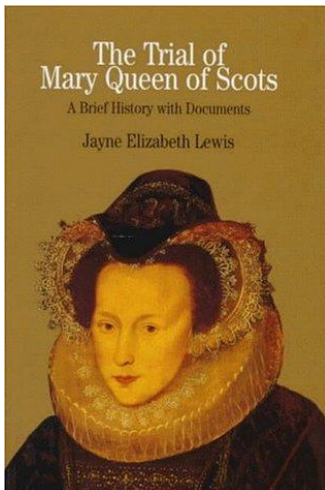
Media Stream



Mary Stuart - Falsely Imprisoned

Image online, courtesy Amazon.

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The Trial of Mary, Queen of Scots - by Jayne Elizabeth Lewis

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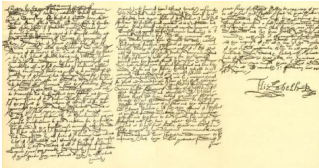
Mary, Queen of Scots - Guilty Beyond a Reasonable Doubt

Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Mary, Queen of Scots - Condemned to Death

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