



0. MARY IS BEHEADED - Story Preface

1. ENGAGED AT SIX YEARS OLD

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4. ELIZABETH I HELPS HER COUSIN

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8. MARY IS BEHEADED

9. A GRUESOME DEATH

10. TOGETHER IN DEATH: FINAL IRONY

11. OTHER COOL LINKS

Painted by Scipione Vanutelli in 1861, "Mary Stuart Walks to the Scaffold" was the winner of the Florentine Exposition that year. The artist has imagined what it must have been like for the Queen, and her ladies-in-waiting, as she approached the end of her life. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons. PD

Execution was set for the morning of February 8, but Mary did not learn about it until after dinner on the 7th. She did not have much time to prepare.

Even as she faced death the following day, Mary's rights were disregarded. She was not allowed to speak with her priest. She was offered the services of a protestant minister, which she declined.

During the evening hours, she distributed her remaining possessions to her servants and wrote a Will. She also wrote a letter to her brother-in-law, Henry III, King of France. It was the last letter she ever wrote. (Follow the links to see the actual three-page letter written in French and the English translation.)

By 2 a.m. on the morning of February 8, Mary had finished all her final chores. She had put things in order. She was prepared to die.

She lay on her bed, fully dressed, making no effort to sleep. Between 8 and 9 a.m., she dressed for the last time. She wore a black satin dress, trimmed with velvet. Over her beautiful auburn hair she wore a white veil which touched the ground. Her petticoat was the red of a Catholic martyr. She had a crucifix and prayer book with her. Two rosaries were around her waist.

Since her execution was to be a public spectacle, she had to ascend a stage where - in front of everyone - she would be stripped to her petticoat. For an accurate account of what happened at the execution, we can rely on the report of an eyewitness, Robert Wynkfielde.

...All this time they were pulling off her apparel, she never changed her countenance, but with smiling cheer she uttered these words, 'that she never had such grooms to make her unready, and that she never put off her clothes before such a company.'

Once undressed, she told her female servants goodbye. Embracing them, and speaking in French, she told them not to cry for her. She also told them to "rejoice and not weep" since her troubles would soon be over.

After she said her farewells to the male servants, she asked them to pray for her until "the last hour."

Now she was ready to die. Robert Wynkfielde observed:

This done, one of the women have a Corpus Christi cloth lapped up three-corner-ways, kissing it, put it over the Queen of Scots' face, and pinned it to the caule of her head.

Blindfolded with the cloth, speaking a psalm in Latin and

...groping for the block, she laid down her head, putting her chin over the block with both her hands, which, holding there still, had been cut off had they not been espied. Then lying upon the block most quietly, and stretching out her arms cried, In manus tuas, Domine, etc., three or four times.

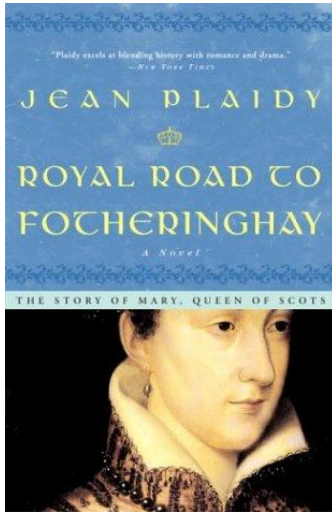
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MARY-IS-BEHEADED-Regicide-Mary-Queen-of-Scots>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/MARY-IS-BEHEADED-Regicide-Mary-Queen-of-Scots>

Media Stream



Royal Road to Fotheringhay - by Jean Plaidy

Image online, courtesy publisher and Google Books.

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Mary, Queen of Scots - Execution Clothing

Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Mary Queen of Scots - Final Dress and Catholic Reverence

Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots - by Robert Herdman - online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Mary's Execution - Witnessed by the Masses

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