

0. "FOR the CAUSE of the TRUE RELIGION" - Story
Preface

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Execution, by beheading, was set for the morning of February 8, 1587. Mary learned about the event after dinner on the 7th. She had little time to prepare.

Deeply religious, Mary was not allowed to speak with her priest. Offered the services of a protestant minister, she declined.

As the hours passed, from evening to morning, Mary 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 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 account of what happened at the execution, we have 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 dressed for execution, 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 tells us:

This done, one of the women having 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

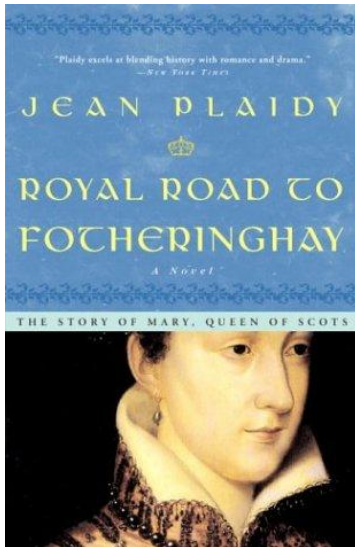
...groping for the block, she laid down her head, putting her chin over the block with both her hands, which, holding there still, had been cut off had they not been espied. Then lying upon the block most quietly, and stretching out her arms cried, In manus tuas, Domine, etc., three or four times.

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/-FOR-the-CAUSE-of-the-TRUE-RELIGION-Mary-Queen-of-Scots>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

Media Stream

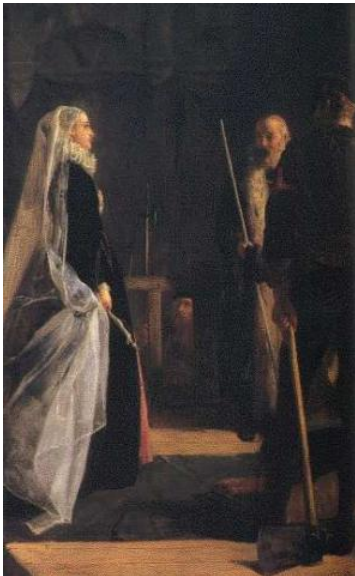


Royal Road to Fotheringhay - by Jean Plaidy

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Mary, Queen of Scots - Execution Attire

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Mary, Queen of Scots - Execution a Public Spectacle

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