Mary Queen of Scots

Mary Stuart was born on the 8th December 1542. Mary's mother, also called Mary, was a French Princess known as Mary of Guise. Mary's father was King James V of Scotland. Even though Mary was the couple's third child, her two brothers had both died before she was born, meaning that Mary was heir to the throne. Just before Mary was born, King James V had received injuries in a battle with English soldiers. On the 14th December, the King died from his injuries and Mary became Queen of Scotland at just six days old. She was known as Mary Queen of Scots.

As Mary was only a child when she was crowned Queen, Scotland needed a regent (someone who looks after the country until a child King or Queen is old enough to rule). Mary of Guise wanted to act as regent for her daughter but the powerful Scottish Lords decided that a relative of Mary's, the Earl of Arran, would become regent instead. The Earl of Arran was well known for being greedy and desperately wanting to be King himself.

At this time Scotland was a difficult country to rule. Not only were wars were raging between the Scottish Catholics and Protestants, but Henry VIII of England regularly invaded Scottish land in an attempt to steal the crown for himself. Fighting these wars with England were expensive, and by the time Mary was born Scotland had already lost many of its best soldiers (including King James V himself) protecting their land and borders.

With no luck invading Scotland, Henry VIII tried a different tactic instead. He decided that his five year old son, Prince Edward, would marry Mary. This would mean both countries would be ruled by him, and later by Edward. However the King of France also wanted Mary to marry his son, Dauphine Francis (Dauphine means heir to the throne in French). Even though Mary of Guise agreed to a marriage between Mary and Prince Edward when the young Queen was ten years old, Henry was impatient and invaded Scotland again to take the young child when she was a baby.

Mary of Guise hid Queen Mary, hiding her in different castles for five years. The threat of King Henry was always there and after five years she finally asked King Henri II of France for help protecting her daughter. The King of France agreed but instead of marrying Edward, Queen Mary would have to marry his son, Dauphine Francis. Mary of Guise agreed and King Henri II sent a fleet of ships to safely bring Mary, who was now six years old, to France.

Mary of Guise did not trust the Scottish Lords. She was worried that if she also went to France, any one of them could make themselves the new King of Scotland. To make sure this didn't happen, Mary made the difficult decision to stay in Scotland. This decision meant that she never saw her daughter again. Queen Mary travelled to France in a rickety wooden ship with a Governess and four companions, each called Mary (or Marie in French). Their names were Mary Seton, Mary Beaton, Mary Livingston and Mary Fleming. The nursery rhyme, 'Mary Mary Quite Contrary', was written about these 'four Maries'.

On her arrival, the young Queen Mary was warmly welcomed by the French people. She became instant friends with Dauphine Francis, who was a year younger than her, and the two grew up together playing like brother and sister. The four Maries could not live with her in the Palace but were well cared for in local convent instead. Nine years later the group were reunited on Queen Mary's wedding day. When she was fifteen years old she married Dauphine Francis, the heir to the French throne, at Notre Dame Cathedral. She wore a long train and a golden crown. She had grown into a beautiful, intelligent young woman who was now Queen of Scotland and Queen Dauphiness of France.

Unfortunately for Mary, a few months later the King of France died suddenly in a jousting tournament, leaving Mary and her new husband as the young rulers of France. The following year Mary's mother died in Scotland and later that year Mary's husband Francis, also died. Mary was devastated to lose her mother and husband so soon. The law stated that the French throne did not belong to her without her husband and a new French King, Charles IX was crowned. Mary decided to return to Scotland to rule there instead.

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Most Scottish people cheered on the streets when Queen Mary returned, but some were not pleased to see her. Scotland had become a Protestant country, and Mary was a Catholic Queen. After years of fighting about what religion Scotland should follow, this made people nervous. One man called John Knox was especially annoyed at Queen Mary's return, and preached in church about the sin of being a Catholic. The Scottish Lords weren't interested in helping Mary rule, they were still powerful, untrustworthy and very jealous of each other. Luckily Mary had a half-brother, who did help her, so she made him the Earl of Moray. But even with his help Mary knew she needed a husband and heir to secure her place as Queen.

Mary wanted to marry another King, and create a powerful alliance between Scotland and another country. This worried the English Queen, Elizabeth, as it meant that Scotland might invade England. Queen Elizabeth suggested some English choices of husband for Mary instead. Even though Mary was interested in some of them, she then fell in love with one of Elizabeth's relations, a man called Lord Darnley. Elizabeth was furious because she knew that any children of Mary and Darnley's would have a strong claim to throne of England. At this time Mary also appointed Lord Bothwell, who she had known in France, as one of her advisors. People thought he could not be trusted and warned Mary against it.

Despite Elizabeth's disapproval, Queen Mary married Lord Darnley in 1565. Mary fell pregnant soon afterwards but the marriage was a disaster. Lord Darnley was not happy being the Queen's husband and wanted to be the King instead. He was jealous of Mary's half-brother, The Earl of Moray, and continually fought with him. Queen Mary was quick to take her husband's side in the arguments, and the Earl of Moray was forced to flee Scotland as a result.

Unfortunately for Queen Mary the Scottish Lords were loyal to the Earl of Moray and came up with a plan to get rid of Darnley. They convinced him that the Queen was in love with a man called Riccio who was her private secretary. One night, when Mary was heavily pregnant, Darnley burst into her private rooms and held her back whilst his friends stabbed Riccio to death. This was exactly what the Lords had wanted, and knew that Mary must punish her husband for his part in the murder. However, Mary decided to forgive Darnley and knowing the Lords would be angry, secretly moved with him to Edinburgh Castle.

In Edinburgh Castle Mary gave birth to a baby boy and named him Prince James, after her father. People rejoiced and bonfires were lit all over Scotland in celebration of the new heir to the throne. However, Mary's marriage to Darnley did not improve, and when he refused to attend his son's Christening Mary decided she wanted a divorce. She wrote to the Earl of Moray explaining how cruel Darnley had been, and asked him and Lord Bothwell for their help in getting her a divorce.

Shortly after this, Lord Darnley was recovering from smallpox in his Edinburgh house at a place called Kirk o' Field when there was a huge explosion. Guards arrived to find the house blown up and the bodies of Lord Darnley and his servant in the garden. Mysteriously however, the bodies appeared to have been strangled and showed no marks of being in an explosion at all. When people found out, and were instantly suspicious of Lord Bothwell. It was widely believed that he was in love with the Queen and wanted to be the new King. Despite criticism, Mary continued her close friendship with Lord Bothwell. This angered the Scottish people who began to think that maybe the Queen had been in on the plan as well.

A few months after Darnley's death, Queen Mary and Lord Bothwell were on the way home from visiting the young Prince James when Bothwell kidnapped the Queen and forced her to marry him in secret. The Scottish Lords were furious with Bothwell. They raised an Army and marched to where the two were staying.

The Lords' Army surrounded the castle but Queen Mary distracted them by making a speech whilst Lord Bothwell escaped. Later than night Mary disguised herself as a man and followed him. Queen Mary realised that she was in danger of losing her throne and began to raise an Army. On the 15th June, 1567 the Queen's Army met the Lords' Army. The Lords demanded that if she wanted to stay as Queen then Bothwell would have to leave Scotland. Queen Mary persuaded him to flee and he ran away to Denmark. She then followed the Lords to Edinburgh, believing that she was still their Queen.

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When Mary reached the city she realised that she had been tricked. The crowds shouted and jeered. She was no longer a Queen, but the Lords' prisoner and was locked up in the isolated Loch Leven Castle. Mary's marriage with Bothwell had left her pregnant with twins, but the damp, cold castle was no place for babies, and after the twins were born they soon died. Mary herself then became very ill and signed abdication papers declaring her one year old son, Prince James as the new King James VI of Scotland. But King James VI was a child and needed a regent. The duty was given to Mary's old ally, the Earl of Moray. Mary realised sadly that this had been his plan all along.

Whilst imprisoned, Mary was allowed a lady in waiting and for this role she chose a woman called Mary Seton, (one of the original four Maries who had accompanied the Queen to France all those years ago). Mary also made two friends in Loch Leven Castle and together, they helped Queen Mary to escape. Once she was free, with help from her supporters, Queen Mary gathered an Army, determined to take back her throne.

Mary led her Army into Glasgow where the Earl of Moray was staying. The two sides fought in what became known as the Battle of Langside. The Earl's Army was much smaller, but just as the fight commenced, one of Mary's Generals fainted. Mary's Army were unorganised, and some say that they were even in league with the other side. Queen Mary rode amongst the men to encourage them, but there was confusion and they were fighting with each other. Mary realised she had lost the battle and quickly rode to the South of Scotland, planning eventually to sail to England and ask Queen Elizabeth for help.

Queen Mary was met by hundreds of soldiers when she landed on the English coast. She expected to be taken straight to Queen Elizabeth, but to her surprise the English Queen refused to see her. Elizabeth was still worried that Queen Mary also wanted to rule England and saw her as a dangerous Catholic rival who would cause trouble in Protestant England. Elizabeth also believed that Queen Mary had known of the plot to murder her husband, and Elizabeth's relative Lord Darnley. The English Queen used this a reason to imprison Queen Mary once again. However, Queen Elizabeth did offer Queen Mary a chance to defend herself by arranging a trial for the murder of Lord Darnley. Queen Mary insisted she knew nothing of the plot, but the Earl of Moray also attended the hearing, and produced a box of letters from Mary to Bothwell discussing the plan. Elizabeth sent a group of nobleman to come to a decision and even though they decided that these letters were forgeries, they still could not come to a decision. Queen Mary would not be released.

For the next nineteen years Queen Mary was Elizabeth's prisoner whilst Mary Seton, the last of the four Maries, stayed with her as her lady in waiting. Mary spent her time planning escapes and wrote to English Catholics asking for their help in making her the new Catholic Queen of England. These escapes were always discovered and in the end she was forbidden from writing letters. Queen Elizabeth also gave one of her men the job of spy master. He discovered how she was smuggling her letters in and out and began reading them. Mary always hoped that her son, King James VI would come to help her, but he had been raised by the Earl of Moray, who had convinced him that his mother should be feared and hated.

In 1586 Queen Mary learned that her son, King James VI had signed a peace treaty with England and had banned Queen Mary from ruling in Scotland. He had received the promise from Queen Elizabeth that on her death he would become King of England. Queen Mary realised that her son was never going to set her free and set about plotting to escape and kill Queen Elizabeth for the last time.

Sir Babington and a group of English Catholics had already formulated a plan for Mary's escape and all they needed was her agreement. Not realising that Mary was being watched by Elizabeth's spy master, she wrote a secret letter agreeing to the plan and hid it in a beer barrel. Like the rest of her letters, he intercepted it and now had cold hard proof that the Scottish Queen was guilty of treason.

Mary Queen of Scots was charged with the attempted treason of the Queen of England and was executed in 1587. Her son, King James VI of Scotland, also became King James I of England in 1603.

Megan Dunsby

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Mary Queen of Scots

1. What date was Mary Stuart Born? (AF2)

2. Loch Leven Castle is described as _____, _____ and _____. (AF2)

3. Can you think of another two adjectives to describe how you imagine Loch Leven Castle to be? (AF3/AF5)

4. Match the following quotes in the text with what they tell us about Queen Mary. (AF3)

'Queen Mary spent her time planning to escape.'	popular
'Scottish people cheered on the streets when Queen Mary returned'	scheming

5. Find a quote in the text to pair with this adjective. (AF5) naive

6. List all of the female characters that appear in the text from first to last. (AF2/AF4)

7. Tick the true statement. (AF2)

Queen Mary died in England.	☐
Queen Mary was not liked by the French people.	☐
Lord Bothwell was happy to leave Scotland.	☐

8. Match the following words with their meanings. (AF2)

Regent	French heir to the throne
Convent	a person who rules a kingdom for a young King or Queen
determined	a title for a nobleman
flee	another word for began, started
commenced	will do anything to achieve something
treason	a secret plan to do something illegal
treaty	to run away
preached	killing or over throwing the King or Queen
Dauphine	a place where nuns live
Earl	an agreement
plot	to give instructions, normally about religion
Edinburgh	two different types of Christians
Catholics and Protestants	the capital city of Scotland

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10. How do you think Queen Mary felt about King James VI when she was in prison in England? Explain why? (AF3)

11. Can you think of any other people who were executed by an English King or Queen? (AF7)

12. How were King James V and King James VI related? (AF3)

13. Why was Mary Stuart heir to the throne when she was born? (AF7)

14. Why did Mary of Guise stay behind in Scotland? How do you think she felt about staying behind? (AF2/AF3)

15. Do you think Mary was in on the plan to kill Lord Darnley? Why or why not? (AF3)

16. Why has the author used the word 'persuaded' in this sentence, 'Queen Mary persuaded him to flee'? (AF5)

18. Why was King James called King James VI in Scotland and King James I in England? (AF7)

19. Why was Lord Darnley not King of Scotland? (AF7)

20. In your opinion what was Queen Mary's biggest mistake? (AF3)

21. What is the main purpose of this text? Is this text fiction or non-fiction? What in the text tells you this? (AF6)

22. Put the following events in the correct order. (AF4)

Mary gets engaged to Lord Darnley. Mary runs away to England. Mary travels to France.
Mary marries Dauphine Francis. Mary returns to Scotland.

23. How was the Earl of Moray related to Queen Mary? (AF2)

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Mary Queen of Scots

1. What date was Mary Stuart Born? (AF2) 8th December 1542

2. Loch Leven Castle is described as isolated, damp and cold. (AF2)

3. Can you think of another two adjectives to describe how you imagine Loch Leven Castle to be? (AF3/AF5)

4. Match the following quotes in the text with what they tell us about Queen Mary. (AF3)

'Queen Mary spent her time planning to escape.'	popular
'Scottish people cheered on the streets when Queen Mary returned'	scheming

5. Find a quote in the text to pair with this adjective. (AF5)

'to her surprise the English Queen refused to see her' naïve

6. List all of the female characters that appear in the text from first to last. (AF2/AF4) 1. Mary Stuart (Mary Queen of Scots) 2. Mary of Guise 3. Mary's Governess 4. The four Maries (Mary Seton, Mary Beaton, Mary Livingston and Mary Fleming) 5. Queen Elizabeth

7. Tick the true statement. (AF2)

Queen Mary died in England.	✓
Queen Mary was not liked by the French people.	
Lord Bothwell was happy to leave Scotland.	

8. Match the following words with their meanings. (AF2)

Regent	French heir to the throne
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plot	to give instructions, normally about religion
Edinburgh	two different types of Christians
Catholics and Protestants	the capital city of Scotland

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10. How do you think Queen Mary felt about King James VI when she was in prison in England? Explain why? (AF3) Various answers if justified.

11. Can you think of any other people who were executed by an English King or Queen? (AF7) Guy Fawkes, Anne Boleyn, Katherine Howard etc.

12. How were King James V and King James VI related? (AF3) Grandfather and Grandson

13. Why was Mary Stuart heir to the throne when she was born? (AF7) Because her parents' two other children had both died before she was born.

14. Why did Mary of Guise stay behind in Scotland? How do you think she felt about staying behind? (AF2/AF3) Because she was worried that one of the Scottish Lords would make themselves King of Scotland or let Henry VIII invade, Various answers.

15. Do you think Mary was in on the plan to kill Lord Darnley? Why or why not? (AF3) Various answers if justified.

16. Why has the author used the word persuaded in this sentence, 'Queen Mary persuaded him to flee'? (AF5) Because it shows Lord Bothwell didn't want to leave Scotland.

18. Why was King James called King James VI in Scotland and King James I in England? (AF7) Because he was the sixth King of Scotland to be named James but the first King of England with that name.

19. Why was Lord Darnley not King of Scotland? (AF7) Because the bloodline of the heirs passed through Mary and he married the Queen after her coronation. If he was King he would have had more power than her, so he was Prince Consort.

20. In your opinion what was Queen Mary's biggest mistake and why? (AF3) Various answers if justified.

21. What is the main purpose of this text? Is this text fiction or non-fiction? What in the text tells you this? (AF6) The purpose of the text is to inform, it is a non-fiction work designed to inform the reader. You can tell this from the dates and facts that make up the passage.

22. Put the following events in the correct time order. (AF4)

3. Mary gets engaged to Lord Darnley. 5. Mary runs away to England. 1. Mary travels to France.
2. Mary marries Dauphine Francis. 4. Mary returns to Scotland.

23. How was the Earl of Moray related to Queen Mary? (AF2) He was her half brother.

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