



## QUEENS, CROWNS, & CONFLICTS

In a time where men were considered the legal, religious, and cultural superiors of women, when women had limited rights and opportunities, and when the thought of a regnant queen had been called “monstrous,” two queens held center stage in the great political and religious battle of the late sixteenth century.

Elizabeth Tudor was born a princess in 1533, but her birth represented a failure as Henry VIII was desperate for a son. When Anne Boleyn had not provided the king a son by 1536, the king turned on her. He had the marriage annulled and sent Anne to her death (the first Queen of England to be executed). Elizabeth was declared illegitimate and sent away from court. During her half-brother Edward VI’s reign, she was interrogated for her relationship with Thomas Seymour, who was eventually executed as a traitor. During the reign of her half-sister Mary I, she was sent to the Tower and accused of participating in the Wyatt rebellion. Against all odds, after the death of Mary I in 1558, Elizabeth came to the English throne.

Mary Stuart was born a princess in 1542. As her two brothers had recently died, she was born the heir to the Scottish throne and became Queen of Scots when her father died a few days later. Determined that her daughter not marry Prince Edward, son of Henry VIII, Marie of Guise sent little Mary off to France to marry the Dauphin, who would become King of France. Mary grew up pampered and adored at the French court and married her beloved Francois in 1558, a few months before Elizabeth became Queen. At the urging of her father-in-law Henri II, Mary claimed the English throne when Mary I died. When Henri II died in 1559, Francois and Mary publicly declared themselves King and Queen of France, Scotland, and England.

After Francis II’s death in 1560, Mary returned to take up her reign in Scotland. It appeared that the two nations would be ruled by these women, both descendants of Henry VII: Elizabeth was his granddaughter and Mary was his great-granddaughter. Both faced resistance and resentment from the men around them. Both were determined to rule in their own way. But as the world expanded and opposition increased, it became clear that both women could not succeed. Their valiant attempts to prevail over the religious, political, and cultural forces moving against them created one of the epic stories of history.

You might enjoy these books:

*Elizabeth and Mary: Cousins, Rivals, Queens* by Jane Dunn

*Elizabeth and Mary: Royal Cousins, Rival Queens* by Susan Doran (British Library exhibition)

*Elizabeth I* by Anne Somerset

*Mary Queen of Scots* by Antonia Fraser

*Rival Queens: The Betrayal of Mary, Queen of Scots* by Kate Williams

<b>Elizabeth I</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Mary Queen of Scots</b>
<b>Elizabeth born &amp; loses favor</b>	1533-36	
<b>Lives primarily out of favor</b>	1542	<b>Mary born &amp; becomes queen</b>
<b>Edward VI becomes King</b>	1547-48	<b>Sent to French court to wed Dauphin</b>
<b>Interrogated, “answers answerless”</b>	1548-58	<b>Lives at court and marries Francois</b>
<b>Becomes Queen of England</b>	1558	<b>Claims English crown for herself</b>
<b>Establishes religion &amp; culture</b>	1558-60	<b>Becomes Queen and widow</b>
<b>Recovers from smallpox</b>	1561-65	<b>To Scotland, marries Darnley</b>
<b>Pressured to marry and name heir</b>	1566-67	<b>James born, forced to abdicate</b>
<b>Faces increasing Catholic rebellions</b>	1568	<b>Flees to England, asks for army</b>
<b>Excommunicated by Pope</b>	1570	<b>Catholic choice for English Queen</b>
<b>Turns down offer from Leicester</b>	1570-75	<b>Tries to marry Duke of Norfolk</b>
<b>Relationship with Anjou ends</b>	1576-83	<b>Spends time with Bess of Hardwick</b>
<b>Protected by Bond of Association</b>	1584-85	<b>James officially declines to co-rule</b>
<b>Agrees to protect Netherlands</b>	1586	<b>Implicated in Babington plot, guilty</b>
<b>Eventually signs death warrant</b>	1587	<b>Executed at Fotheringhay</b>
<b>Celebrates success over Armada</b>	1588	
<b>Dies; succeeded by James VI</b>	1603	<b>Son becomes King of England</b>
<b>Body placed with Mary I by James</b>	1606-12	<b>Buried at Westminster Abbey</b>