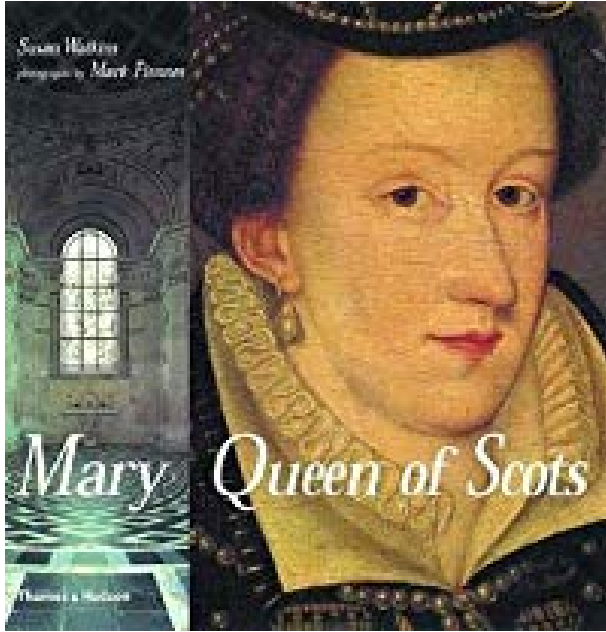


Mary Queen of Scots



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Mary's inheritance gave her both the Scottish throne in 1542, when she was only six days old, and a claim to the English throne that would lead to her death. It gave her an upbringing in France, cultural and intellectual centre of Europe, where she witnessed the power play of her Guise relations, married the heir to the French throne, and became queen of France, only to be widowed at 18. There was a turbulent interlude as ruler of Scotland, made the more tumultuous by two disastrous marriages and rumours of adultery and murder. Finally, there was an 18 year exile as Elizabeth I's prisoner, passing the long days of captivity at her embroidery or her prayers, the centre of a network of intrigue, double agents, coded dispatches, and mysterious couriers, which was to lead inevitably to her trial and execution.