



Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Murder of Lord Darnley

By Alison Weir

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Handsome, accomplished, and charming, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, staked his claim to the English throne by marrying Mary Stuart, who herself claimed to be the Queen of England. It was not long before Mary discovered that her new husband was interested only in securing sovereign power for himself. Then, on February 10, 1567, an explosion at his lodgings left Darnley dead; the intrigue thickened after it was discovered that he had apparently been suffocated before the blast. After an exhaustive reevaluation of the source material, Alison Weir has come up with a solution to this enduring mystery. Employing her gift for vivid characterization and gripping storytelling, Weir has written one of her most engaging excursions yet into Britain's bloodstained, power-obsessed past.

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Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Murder of Lord Darnley By Alison Weir Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-1587), has for centuries fascinated historians and the general public, her life the stuff of Hollywood myth, involving murder, rape, adultery, abdication, imprisonment and execution. In bestselling historian Weir's (Henry VIII, etc.) able hands, we see the young Catholic queen ruling over Protestant Scotland and a group of unruly nobles. Mary's second husband, Lord Darnley, participated in the 1566 murder of Mary's favorite adviser, David Rizzio, after which Mary and Lord Darnley became estranged. Darnley himself was murdered the next year, and some historians have claimed that Mary plotted his death so she could marry her lover, Bothwell. But Weir argues convincingly that the evidence against Mary is fraudulent, part of a coverup initiated by rebellious lords. Weir tells how and why Darnley was killed, and, shockingly, reveals that Bothwell, whom Mary did marry, was one of the murderers. Mary's lords took up arms against her, and she was forced to abdicate, fleeing to England, where she expected her cousin Queen Elizabeth to help her regain her throne. Instead, Mary was held captive for 16 years and finally beheaded for plotting Elizabeth's assassination. Mary could not hope for a better advocate than Weir, who exhaustively evaluates the evidence against her and finds it lacking. Mary's ultimate sin, according to Weir, was not murder but consistently "poor judgment," especially in choosing men. This is entertaining popular history that will satisfy fans of Weir's previous bestsellers. 16 pages of color illus.

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Weir, a popular British historian and the author of, most recently, *Henry VIII: The King and His Court* (2001), visits one of the most intriguing murder mysteries in European history. Mary, Queen of Scots, failed as sovereign of her realm and even failed to save her own life--eventually sent to the executioner's block by her much more practical second cousin, Queen Elizabeth I of England. Married as a child to the dauphin of France, Mary was widowed early and, while still only a teenager, returned to rule over her Scottish kingdom, which she had inherited as an infant. Mary then married her cousin Lord Darnley, who was also a cousin of Queen Elizabeth. Handsome but dissolute and insufferably arrogant, Lord Darnley alienated nearly everyone in Scotland, including, very quickly into his marriage, Queen Mary herself. In a plot that was "ill-conceived, careless and staggeringly amateurish," Lord Darnley was murdered, "but the identity of the person or persons responsible is surrounded by great mystery." To this day, establishing the identity of the perpetrator proves difficult, but Weir goes to great lengths to isolate the clues and marshal them into a convincing indictment. No stone is left unturned in her investigation, and despite its detail, her book is as dramatic as witnessing firsthand the most riveting court case. Naturally, much of Weir's focus is on the question of Queen Mary's complicity in her husband's death. The author concludes that the "bulk of evidence against Mary is flawed," and ultimately Mary, Queen of Scots, is to be regarded as "one of the most wronged women in history." *Brad Hooper*

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Review

"Conspiracy, treason, perjury, and forgery, along with . . . political assassination, and several deadly sins . . . While Ms. Weir does not stint on the sensational details, she is above all a historian and dogged researcher. She sifts through sources, which were often compromised, and thinks like a forensics expert."

—*The Wall Street Journal*

"One of the most intriguing murder mysteries in European history . . . No stone is left unturned in Weir's

investigation, and . . . her book is as dramatic as witnessing firsthand the most riveting court case.”

—*Booklist* (boxed and starred review)

“The finest historian of English monarchical succession writing now is Alison Weir. . . . Her assiduousness and informed judgment are precisely what make her a writer to trust.”

—*The Boston Globe*

“Alison Weir has perfected the art of bringing history to life.”

—*Chicago Tribune*

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