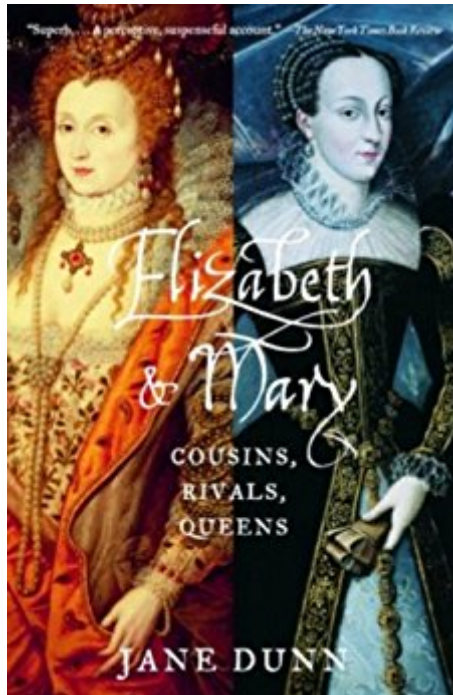




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Elizabeth And Mary: Cousins, Rivals, Queens



Synopsis

"Superb.... A perceptive, suspenseful account." --The New York Times Book Review"Dunn demythologizes Elizabeth and Mary. In humanizing their dynamic and shifting relationship, Dunn describes it as fueled by both rivalry and their natural solidarity as women in an overwhelmingly masculine world." --Boston HeraldThe political and religious conflicts between Queen Elizabeth I and the doomed Mary, Queen of Scots, have for centuries captured our imagination and inspired memorable dramas played out on stage, screen, and in opera. But few books have brought to life more vividly the exquisite texture of two women's rivalry, spurred on by the ambitions and machinations of the forceful men who surrounded them. The drama has terrific resonance even now as women continue to struggle in their bid for executive power. Against the backdrop of sixteenth-century England, Scotland, and France, Dunn paints portraits of a pair of protagonists whose formidable strengths were placed in relentless opposition. Protestant Elizabeth, the bastard daughter of Anne Boleyn, whose legitimacy had to be vouchsafed by legal means, glowed with executive ability and a visionary energy as bright as her red hair. Mary, the Catholic successor whom England's rivals wished to see on the throne, was charming, feminine, and deeply persuasive. That two such women, queens in their own right, should have been contemporaries and neighbours sets in motion a joint biography of rare spark and page-turning power.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Powerful and ambitious cousin queens at a time when kings ruled Europe, I found this dual biography of Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots deeply and doubly interesting. By depicting both personal histories the context of each queen's life is contrasted and enriched, and Jane Dunn's thoughtful, vivid writing captures the ethos of their world, the distinctness of their temperaments, personalities and skills, and the subtleties in their conflicted relationship. Charming, headstrong, and persuasive, Mary became Queen of Scotland at birth and was raised as the pampered future bride of the Dauphin in the French court of Henry II and Catherine De Medici. Insightful, wary, and skilled in the art of negotiation, Elizabeth was very young when she lost her mother Anne Boleyn, and the taint of illegitimacy threatened her freedom, life and reign. Both Elizabeth and Mary were descendants of Henry VII and their rival claims to the English throne made them adversaries, but as kinswomen and fellow queens on an island outpost of a continent governed by men they had a natural bond and connection that each felt. Elizabeth & Mary takes the queens from birth until Elizabeth's 1588 defeat of the Spanish Armada the year after Mary's beheading and fifteen years before Elizabeth's death. It's a fascinating, stirring, and poignant story that's well told in this book.

What a wonderful history! Dunn takes two of the most mythologized and romanticized women in English history and turns them into living, breathing women who are the products of their own personal makeup, their rapidly-changing societies, and their vastly different upbringings. Elizabeth emerges as even more remarkable than the myths make her out to be, but also far more interesting and multidimensional. Mary is treated with equal sympathy and respect, although it's clear that her personal flaws and the sheltered, cocooned life she grew up in combined to make her dangerously shallow and self-absorbed. Very different from Elizabeth, who had to fight for her legitimacy and her very survival from an early age, with no protectors and no weapons but her own wits, and was intellectually and temperamentally suited to become the great leader that she was. The contrasts in their childhoods, education, and personal histories are paralleled to fascinating effect. I enjoyed Dunn's references to contemporary accounts and the subjects' own writings, which added a sense of immediacy to the story. This is a scholarly work but it's lucidly written and immensely readable.

Where Dunn draws insights into the characters' thinking and motivations, it's done intelligently and on inference from the historical record, it's not modern-day psychobabble. I've read many popular histories of the Tudor era and I can say that this was as entertaining to read as any of them and far more insightful.

Jane Dunn has authored an outstanding work of Elizabethian history. Dunn is an excellent historian who is also a superb stylist writing with wit and wisdom. Elizabeth and Mary are, of course, Elizabeth I the daughter of Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII and Mary Queen of Scots who was the daughter of Mary of Guise and James V of Scotland. They were cousins, rivals and queens! Mary was raised in the decadent court of France when she married the French king. Later she would marry twice more-Darnley who was murdered and the murderer of her husband Bothwell. Mary was impetuous, vain, a Francophile and a devoted Roman Catholic. Her wish was to make England Catholic and herself queen. She was devious and loved nothing more than a good plot against cousin Elizabeth. Mary died in 1587 as Elizabeth executed her Scottish cousin due to the latter's involvement in a plot against her own life. Elizabeth spent time in the Tower as an adolescent placed there by her half-sister Bloody Mary; had outstanding advisors to guide her diplomacy (such as Cecil, Leicester and Walsingham) while Mary made one tragic mistake after another. Her life was one of adventure, murder (Darnley and her friend Riccio) and an insatiable desire for power. Mary gave birth to James VI of Scotland who despite her wishes was raised as a Protestant later becoming King James I of England. On and on could this reviewer go in delineating the intricacies of life in 16th century Europe as Spain and France with Catholic might looked with hatred at that island upstart called England. Elizabeth is the greatest of English queens who triumphed over both Mary and the Spanish Armada of 1588. This is the only dual biography I know of these two fascinating queens. Dunn has done a superb job and is to be commended for an outstanding biography which will behoove every English history buff to read with enjoyment and profit. Excellent! A

this is a very GOOD kindle book. for those who love stories like i do you will be so interested

The author draws fascinating parallels between very important historical figures. Highly recommended if you are interested in either person as well as the period in question. We are left admiring Elizabeth's judgment and bewildered at Mary's lack of it.

Very good book about the cousins of the Tudor and Stuart periods in Royal family history.

its a good boock!! thanks..

What a great read with lots of information that was new to me. Enjoyed it!

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