

Some matters appertaining to the  
accusation, trial, and  
execution of  
Mary  
Queen of Scots



*Being letters and records of that perilous time  
with Clarification and Notes by ye humble Editrix*

*Maggie Pierce Secara*

Selected, Edited, Mapped, and Adapted for Modern Readers from  
*History of the Life of Mary Queen of Scots, 1681*

# The Contents

<i>The Examination of Mary Queen of Scots</i> .....	4
Wednesday, 12 October .....	4
Thursday, 13 October .....	4
Friday, 14 October .....	4
<i>Queen Elizabeth's Letter directed to Sir Amyas Paulet, Knight, keeper of the Queen of Scots, at the castle of Fotheringay</i> .....	14
<i>The Scottish Queen's Letter to Anthony Babington</i> .....	15
<i>Anthony Babington a Letter written by him to the Scottish Queen</i> .....	16
<i>The answer of the Scottish Queen to a Letter written by Anthony Babington, the Traitor, as followeth</i> .	20
<i>Commission for executing the Queen of Scots</i> .....	28
<i>The Execution</i> .....	30

# The Examination of Mary Queen of Scots

Shewing the hopes the Papists then had of a Popish successor  
in England; and their plots to accomplish them.

\* \* \*

From the papers of a Secretary of Sir Francis Walsingham  
Now published by a Person of Quality  
London

Printed for Tho. Cockerill at the sign of the Three Legs  
in the Poultry over against the Stocks-Market.

1681

This text is transcribed (with updated spelling and paragraphing) from the *History of the Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, printed in 1681, microfilmed in 1976 and stored at Ann Arbor, MI. As far as we can tell, it is otherwise unpublished. The text appears to be in part drawn from [Camden's Annals](#) and the relevant [calendar of state papers](#), which provides a more complete transcript.

## *The Editing Process*

My original is a printed transcription set from a hand-written document. Some errors are bound to have crept in. I've tried to be open to seeing and adjusting them, without assuming too much.

I've attempted to clarify names and terms by reference to various sources, including Antonia Fraser's *Mary Queen of Scots* and Jane Dunn's *Elizabeth and Mary*. I have also used paragraphs to break up long sentences with too much matter in them, in some cases employing bullets where they seemed especially useful.

In general, spelling has been updated and some vocabulary silently modernized (accounts for accompts, and so on). And I have occasionally removed or inserted a word or two for clarity. Words in brackets are either:

[plain text] An insertion to clarify meaning or to indicate something illegible in the copy

[*italic*] A definition of the preceding word or phrase, or a name provided for an otherwise nameless title.

Especially long definitions, comments, or identifying notes on individuals have been banished to footnotes to keep from breaking the flow. Hopefully that's less distracting than putting them in with the text.

# THE EXAMINATION OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

The Examination of Mary Queen of Scots  
Living at Fotheringay-Castle, by the  
Lords of Her Majesties Most Honourable Privy Council and other  
Commissioners Appointed for That Purpose, for the Hearing of the Same.  
Anno Dom. 1586

## Wednesday, 12 October

Upon Wednesday the twelfth of October, 1586, the Lords Commissioners for the hearing of the Scottish Queen came to the castle of Fotheringay, in the county of Northampton, about nine of the clock in the morning. At which time, in the chapel of said castle, the Dean of Peterborough preached before them.

And from thence they sent Sir Walter Mildmay and Sir Amyas Paulet, Governour of the House, to the Scottish Queen, to know whether she would appear.

There was delivered unto her a letter from Her Majesty to that effect. After which summons, she refused to appear; and so stood all that day though often required thereunto by some of the commissioners sent unto her.

## Thursday, 13 October

Upon Thursday they went unto her, into her lodging, the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Treasurer, the Earls of Oxford, Shrewsbury, Kent, and Warwick, Viscount Montague, Lords Zouche, Grey, and Lumley, Sir Ralph Sadler, Sir James Acroft [*or Croft*], Mr Vice-chancellor, Sir Amyas Paulet, the two Chief Justices of England, Dr Dale and Dr Ford, with Baker and Wheeler, notaries, who remained with her almost two hours; signifying that if she would not come forth before the Commissioners, they would proceed against her according to their commission. But that whole day was spent in coming and sending unto her.

## Friday, 14 October

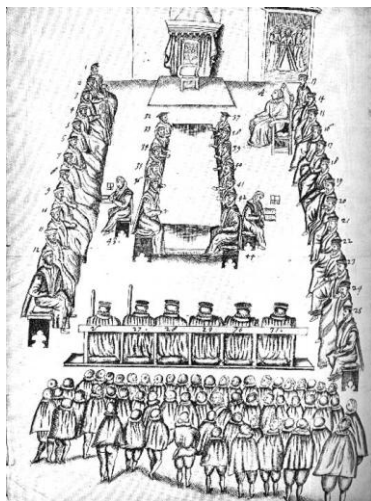
Upon Friday in the morning she resolved to appear, and so about nine of the clock came forth into the Presence Chamber prepared and hanged with a cloth of estate in the upper part, and down along both sides stood forms [*benches*] covered with green for the Lords; first, Earls on the right side and Barons on the left.

Somewhat below in the midst of the chamber was a bar; within which bar there was set a form for the knights of the Privy Council. And before their forms, a chair with a cushion for the Queen of Scots, directly against the State.

In the middle of the chamber was a Table whereat sat the Queen's Attorney [*Popham*] and Solicitor [*Egerton*], the Queen's sergeants, the Clerks of the Crown, and the Notaries.

Directly above the table in the middle of the chamber were the forms set whereon sat on the right side the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, the Lord Chief Baron, Doctor Dale and Doctor Ford.

Over against them sat the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Justice Clench and Justice [P—]. Below the bar, such gentlemen as came to see the action.



<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/4260/fotheringay.html>

### **The Right Side of the Lords**

The Lord Chancellor [*Sir Thomas Bromley*]  
The Lord Treasurer [*Burghley*]  
The Earl of Oxford  
The Earl of Kent  
The Earl of Derby  
The Earl of Shrewsbury  
The Earl of Worcester  
The Earl of Rutland  
The Earl of Cumberland  
The Earl of Warwick  
The Earl of Lincoln  
The Earl of Pembroke  
The Viscount Montague

### **The Left Side of the Lords**

The Lord of Abergavenny  
The Lord Zouche  
The Lord Morley  
The Lord Stafford  
The Lord Grey  
The Lord Lumley  
The Lord Stanton  
The Lord Sandys  
The Lord Wentworth  
The Lord Mordaunt  
The Lord St. John of Bledsoe  
The Lord Compton  
The Lord Cheyneys

### **Knights**

Sir Walter Mildmay  
Sir Ralph Sadler

Sir Francis Walsingham  
Sir Christopher Hatton  
Sir James Acroft (Croft)

The lords being thus far, and all things ready, the Queen was brought in, having a way or lane made from her lodging door, which was in the lower corner of the chamber, with halberds.

She was in a black gown covered over with a white veil of lawn, a very tall and big woman, being lame and supported by Melvin, her gentleman, and her physician. One of her women carried up her train and three others attended on her.

One of the other servants brought her a chair and a cushion covered with crimson velvet, a little before her coming in. This chair was removed from the bottom of the Chamber to the upper part below the [cloth of] State, and set as it were cornerwise towards the Lords and Barons.

Then silence being made, the Lord Chancellor stood up, and being uncovered [*hatless*] he spoke to this effect.

**Sir Thomas Bromley** “Madam, the Queen being strongly informed of sundry practices by you made against her hath caused this meeting, as hath been signified unto you, you have read the Queen’s letters certifying the same, and I must say this much unto you from her Majesty’s mouth, that having born so many things at your hands, she cannot forbear any longer to proceed against you; not for the peril may fall upon herself, for God she trusteth who hath ever defended her, will still deliver her from them.

“But there dependeth more upon it, she seeth [*sees*] that you are made a foundation of all practices against her; and if she should forget it, she should neglect the cause of God, and bear the Sword in vain. It is not malice, Madam, nor regard for her person, that causeth her so to do it.

“And albeit she might otherwise proceed against you, yet she hath dealt thus in honour against you, that you should be heard and speak for yourself.”

**The Scottish queen** The Queen answered to this effect, by way of protestation, that she was a free Prince and born a Queen, not subject to any but to God, to whom she must give account, and therefore that her appearing should not be either prejudicial to kings or princes nor allies nor her son, and thereupon desired an act to be made, that is, to have such her protest registered by public notaries, and required her own servants to bear her witness of it

**Sir Thomas Bromley** The Lord Chancellor again protested against that protestation, that it should in no wise be prejudicial to the Queen’s Majesty nor to the crown of England, and that they all on behalf of her Majesty required the same to be likewise enacted or registered.

**Master Powell** Then Mr Powell, Clerk of the Crown, read the Commission grounded upon the statute 27 Eliz.<sup>1</sup>

**The Scottish queen** The Commission being read, the Queen said, “I protest that this law is insufficient, and therefore I cannot submit myself unto it.”

**Lord Burghley** Then the Lord Treasurer avouched and justified the law to be sufficient<sup>2</sup> to proceed against her; to whom she replied that the law was not made against her.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Act of Association, 1585, made it a capital offense for anyone to be the subject of a plot to kill the Queen of England, even if that person were unaware of it. Also anyone who was known to be in favor of such a plot.

The Lord Treasurer said, “We have a commission to proceed, and if you will not hear, we will proceed against you herein.”

**The Scottish queen**

Then she said, “I will both hear and answer.”

**Sergeant Gawdy**

Then arose Sgt. Gawdy and declared the statute, and then inferred that the Queen of Scots there present had offended against both the branches thereof, viz.

- ♥ that she had been privy to the conspiracy of killing the Queen’s Majesty,
- ♥ and also had herself practiced to compass [*acted to bring about*] the same;
- ♥ and so ript [*wrapped?*] up the whole complot [*conspiracy*] from Ballard’s first coming into this realm.

**The Scottish queen**

When the sergeant said the Queen present was both a mover and a compasser, she bowed her body and smiled.

**Sergeant Puckering**

Then Sergeant Puckering pursued [*proceeded with*] the rest of [Babington’s letters](#) to her, and her answer again.

**The Scottish queen**

The queen answered she never had seen Babington, nor ever had speech with him, nor ever received letters from him, and that she could stop no man going across the seas: “but let any man” (said she) “in England come and say that I ever did anything against the Queen’s life.”

**Master Sandys, Clerk of the Crown**

Then Sandys, the Clerk of the Crown, read Babington’s confession, and Sergeant Puckering opened [*revealed*] the points.

**Sergeant Puckering**

The Queen said that being kept from all intelligence of her friends and her son, it may be she might desire intelligence; but if any other man hath done or practiced anything, it is no matter to that purpose.

“There be some that did send me letters, and I know them not, nor from whence they come.”

**Master Sandys**

The Clerk of the Crown read again Babington’s confession.

**The Scottish queen**

The Queen said again, “I never wot [*knew*] of any such letter.”

Then was read the letter of [Anthony Babington](#).

To which she said: “If Anthony Babington and all the world say it, they lie. But I would see my own handwriting.” And to Babington’s letters to her, she said: “I never saw that letter, nor ever heard of it.”

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<sup>2</sup> confirmed and demonstrated that it was indeed legal

<sup>3</sup> Although, of course, it was.

**Lord Burghley** The Lord Treasurer proved the receipt of Babington's letter, and the Sergeant showed an answer to [it] from her, in the same cypher, sent by a serving man in a blue coat, and so opened [*revealed*] all the points of [her letter to Babington](#).

**The Scottish queen** When mention was made of the Earl of Arundel [*Philip Howard*], she wept and blubbered out, saying: "Woe is me that your house hath suffered so much for my sake."

And having blubbered a time, she said: "If ever I made any such device against the Queen my sister, then I pray to God I may never see His face. I have written, I confess, about my deliverance, as any prince kept as captive as I am might do, but never against the Queen. I confess for the Catholics' delivery from persecution.

"I will work and, if I could, with my blood save them from destruction, I would. And if it may be so, I pray you lay it upon me" and therewith wept according to her guile.

**Lord Burghley** The Lord Treasurer answered, saying: "Madam, the Queen puts no man to death for his conscience, but [rather] [they might enjoy the liberty of their conscience if they would live as dutiful subjects, and therefore Madam, reform your opinion therein."

**The Scottish queen** The Queen said she had read it so in a book.<sup>4</sup>

**Lord Burghley** The Lord Treasurer answered saying "They that did write it so, Madam, did [also] write that the Queen of England is no Queen."

**The Scottish queen** Then she picked a quarrel against Mr Secretary [*Walsingham*], that he had been her sore enemy and her son's, and had practiced with certain person's against her.

"But," said she, "Mr Walsingham, I think you are an honest man, and I pray you say in the word of an honest man, whether you have been so unto me."

**Sir Francis Walsingham** Mr Secretary rose up and came to the end of the table, standing in the midst before his seat saying:

"Madam, I stand charged by you to have practiced something against you. I call God and the world to witness [that] I have done nothing as a private man [that is] unworthy of an honest man, nor as a public person [anything] unworthy of my calling. I protest before God that as a man careful of my Mistress's safety, I have been curious.

And if Ballard<sup>5</sup> had offered me his service, I would have regarded him. But if

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<sup>4</sup> Assuming she is not simply saying, rather smugly, 'Oh I read it somewhere', she may be referring to any of "diverse lewd books spread by the Jesuits and other Popish factors asserting that princes excommunicated, as Queen Elizabeth for some time had been, were not to have any allegiance paid unto them but ought to be deposed, etc." Possibly Parson's *Book of Succession* and other "pamphlets flung about by them in those times". Possibly the papal bull *Regnans in Excelsis*. — FROM THE 1681 INTRODUCTION.



he were practiced with by me, why did he not plead it for his life?”

- The Scottish queen** Here again she wept and protested that she would not make shipwreck of her soul in conspiring against her and her good sister, and that those whom Mr Secretary had set over her as spies were spies for her against him, and had likewise told her things of him.
- Mr Popham** Then the Queen’s Attorney proved that the Queen of Scots was privy to the conspiracy, and gave instructions to her secretary to write—by him confessed upon oath, without constraint [*torture*]  
—some in cyphers and some translated, according to her direction, into English, by Jacques Nau and Gilbert Curle.
- Mr Egerton** The Queen’s Solicitor proved [*demonstrated*] both points of the statute agreeing [*relating*] to the points of the Commission.  
*First:* That she was privy to the conspiracy in that she received Babington’s letters wherein the conspiracy was contained to kill the queen.
- The Scottish queen** To which she gave answer as hath been deposed by her secretaries, who besides their oaths and voluntary confession did set down, according to their memory, the minutes and points of Babington’s letters to the queen and her answer to Babington wherein especially they remember the points of the conspiracy particularly confessed also by Babington before he was apprehended, and at large, when he thought to have executed it and been advanced by it.
- Mr Egerton** He also showed her letters and answers to Ballard, Savage, and Tuchborne; and they confessed it.  
*Second:* he proved [*established*] that she herself did conspire and compass the queen’s death for, besides the approving of Babington’s plot, she addeth in her own letters the manner and order of the execution of this design.
- The secretaries’ statements** The secretaries, at the view of her letters, did write thus: *Per le expresse commaundment de la Royen ma Maitresse*, (that is, by the special commandment of the Queen my Mistress).<sup>6</sup>
- The Scottish queen** Being asked whether it [*the statement*] were their [*Nau and Curle’s*] hands, she confessed that she knew it to be their hands, and that Curle was an honest man, but she would not be judged by him. And that Nau was the king’s secretary of France, and that he had been secretary to the cardinal of Guise.

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<sup>5</sup> The English Jesuit who recruited Anthony Babington

<sup>6</sup> Her secretaries signed this statement having been shown her letters and confirmed they were hers.

**Lord Burghley**

But when she said she knew not Babington nor Ballard, my lord Treasurer said: “Madam, I will tell you whom you know. You know Morgan who hired Parry to kill the Queen [*a previous plot*] and after you knew it, you gave him a pension. Madam, you give pensions to murderers.”

**The Scottish queen**

Then she said: “He hath lost all for my sake, but you give pensions in Scotland against me, to my son.”

**Lord Burghley**

The Lord Treasurer said: “The Queen, because the revenues of the Crown are diminished, giveth the King a benevolence, being her kinsman.”<sup>7</sup>

## The Second Day

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**The Scottish queen**

The second day, at her first coming, she renewed her protestation saying: “I am a sacred and anointed queen, and ought not to be judged by the law. I am a free Prince, and owe no more to any prince than they owe to me. I come hither for the justification of my honour, and that which is laid to my charge, that I should do against my sister.” Her oration was very long and of many things.

“I like not,” said she, “to take this course. Though I desire the Catholics should be delivered out of their persecution, I had rather play the part of Hester than of Judith: to pray for my people [rather] than to take any other way to deliver my people. God forbid that I should deserve of Jesus Christ before his Father. They gave it out that I was of no religion<sup>8</sup> for there was a time when I tendered myself, but they cared not for my soul.

“But, my lords, when you have done all that you can, and put me from that I should have, yet you shall not obtain your cause of Mary Stewart!” And here she wept and blubbered that they could not conceive [*understand*] her speech. “I desire,” said she, “that another assembly may be called where I may have my council. I appeal to God first, who is the just Judge; and to my princes [and] my allies.”<sup>9</sup>

**Lord Burghley**

Here my Lord Treasurer said: “Madam, we have set down your protestations under a notary’s hand, and we have protested that your protestation be not prejudicial to the Crown of England.

**The Scottish queen**

The Queen said: “Indeed, my lord, you take no commission but that may serve your own turn. You have done the worst you can. I have often offered, if I

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<sup>7</sup> Queen Elizabeth had given King James a gift of £5,000.

<sup>8</sup> Her religious tolerance in Scotland had prompted some to say she was lax in her own faith.

<sup>9</sup> It was customary in treason trials that the accused have no legal counsel.

might be at liberty, that I would do all duty, and labour to quench the troubles that are made. But I could not be heard. I was made believe that I should be at liberty, and I promised [hostages](#) for my security, my own son and my cousin Guise's son."

**Lord Burghley**

The Lord Treasurer answered: "It is true the Queen was contented [to accept the offer], and so was the Council. You offered hostages, as you say. But it is [just] as true that the Lords of Scotland would not consent that the King should come."

**The Scottish queen**

The Queen said, "But I told you that if I might be at liberty I would effect it [*make it happen*]."

**Lord Burghley**

"Madam," said the Lord Treasurer. "The Queen shall set you at liberty and you shall seek her destruction. For all this practice at your enlargement was nothing else but a plot against the Queen; for, even then, when it was adoing, your man Morgan hired Parry to kill the Queen!"

**The Scottish queen**

"My lord," quoth she. "You are my enemy."

**Lord Burghley**

"No," said my Lord Treasurer. "I am enemy to the Queen's enemies."

**The Scottish queen**

"Was it not reported," said the Queen of Scots. "That the Queen of England should never be free from practices [*threats*] until I were set at liberty? And I therefore desired that the occasion might be taken away."<sup>10</sup>

**Her letters are read**

Then was also read a letter to Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, wherein she promised to give the King of Spain the kingdoms of England and Scotland if her son would not be reclaimed from that heresy wherein she said he was misled.

Then there was read a letter to Dr Allen<sup>11</sup> whom she calleth Beloved Father in God, and dealeth with him about the invasion, and his letter to her also.

Then there were read her letters to the Lord Paget, Charles Paget<sup>12</sup> and Sir Francis Englefield.<sup>13</sup> In every one of which letters she saith she hath given direction to the Catholics on this side [of the English Channel] for a dispatch."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> that the opportunity might be removed

<sup>11</sup> The English Jesuit

<sup>12</sup> Lord Paget's brother who was also an agent of Walsingham's

<sup>13</sup> an ex-patriot Catholic living in Spain, friend of Dr Allen

<sup>14</sup> she has given orders to kill the Queen

**The Scottish queen**

Here she being pressed with truths of conspiracy, and because her own man had sworn it, she said she thought he made no conscience of the oath given him.

Hereat the whole House murmured concerning the giving away of the Kingdom of England to the king of Spain. Writing to Mendoza, she advised him thus: "Let not this be known, for if it should, it would be in France the loss of my dowry, in Scotland, the breach with my son, and in England my total destruction."<sup>15</sup>

**Mr Egerton**

Here Mr Solicitor remembered [*reminded*] the Lords that if a foreign prince had the kingdom as she would assign it, what would become of their dignities and estates?

**Lord Burghley**

"Madam," said my Lord Treasurer. "The succession of the Crown, whoever hath it, cannot give it to a foreign prince. It must go, by the laws of the Realm, to a natural Englishman born. Your enemies in Scotland threatened to kill you, and her Majesty said she would then revenge it; and so your life was assured."

**The Scottish queen**

At her first rising up she talked long with the Lord Treasurer, coming to him to his seat; after to Mr Vice-chamberlain and Mr Secretary, excusing herself to them, and used great insinuations to persuade them.

She said to the Earl of Warwick that she had heard that he was an honourable gentleman, desiring him not to believe all things he heard of her. And also she desired him to commend her to my lord of Leicester, saying that she wished him good success in his affairs.<sup>16</sup>

To the judges and lawyers she said: "I pray God bless me [*save me*] from you. You have fore hands over them that be under you."<sup>17</sup>

And to Mr Phillips<sup>18</sup> "Thou never redest any good for me."

**And so concluded**

And so the Lords broke up their sitting on Saturday, October 15, 1586 at one o'clock in the afternoon, and adjourned to the Star Chamber.

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<sup>15</sup> see State Papers, Spanish, III, 206

<sup>16</sup> A veiled dig at Leicester's sexual as well as political adventures?

<sup>17</sup> Is this a legal joke?

<sup>18</sup> Walsingham's code breaker, who deciphered her codes and read all her letters

## The terms and conditions aforesaid

The terms and conditions the Scottish Queen agreed to were these:

1. That she and her son should promise to practice nothing hurtful to Queen Elizabeth and the Realm of England.
2. That she would voluntarily confess that whatsoever was done by Francis II, the French king, her husband, against Queen Elizabeth was done against her will, and that she should utterly disallow the same as unjust, by confirming the treaty of Edinburgh.
3. That she should condemn all the practices ever since that time, and ingenuously renounce them.
4. She should bind herself not to practice anything directly or indirectly against the government of the realm of England in ecclesiastical or civil affairs but by all manner of means oppose herself and resist such practicers as public enemies.
5. That she shall challenge or claim no right unto herself in the kingdom of England during the life of QE and that afterward she will submit her right to the succession unto the estates of England.
6. And to that end, she may not hereafter use any cavil, and say that she condescended to these conditions (being a prisoner and by coercion) she herself should not only swear unto them but also procure the estates of Scotland to confirm them by public authority.
7. The king himself also should ratify them by oath and by writing.
8. And that hostages should be given.

## Queen Elizabeth's Letter directed to Sir Amyas Paulet, Knight, keeper of the Queen of Scots, at the castle of Fotheringay

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Amyas, my most faithful servant! God regard thee treble-fold in the double [*three times for two, like saying 150%*] of thy most troublesome charge, so well discharged. If you knew, my Amyas, how kindly, besides dutifully, my grateful heart accepts your double labours and faithful affections and safe regards, performed in so dangerous a charge, it would ease your travail and rejoice your heart in that I cannot balance, in any weight of my judgment, the value that I prize you at, and suppose no treasure to countervail such faith, and shall condemn myself, in that thought I never committed, if I reward not such deserts.

Yea let me lack when I most need, if I acknowledge not such a merit with a reward, not *omnibus datum*; but let your wicked murderess know how with hearty sorrow her vile defects compel these orders, and bid her from me ask God forgiveness for her treacherous dealing against my life many years, to the intolerable peril of her own: and yet not content with so many forgivenesses, but must fall again so horribly, far passing a woman's thought, much less a Prince's. Instead of executing whereof not one can serve it, being so plainly confessed by the author of my guiltless death. Let repentance take place, and let not the Fiend possess her, so that the better part be lost, which I pray, with hands lifted up, to him that can both save and spill.

With my most loving adieu and prayer for thy long life.

Your assured and loving Sovereign  
as heart by good desert endureth

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Elizabeth I". The signature is highly stylized and cursive, with elaborate flourishes and a large, decorative initial "E" at the beginning. The name "Elizabeth" is written in a clear, flowing script, followed by a large, ornate "I" that extends to the right and loops back under the name.

## The Scottish Queen's Letter to Anthony Babington

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*Since the point of this exercise is to make these texts more accessible to non-scholarly readers, I find that for these letters it is most useful to simply provide a parallel, interpreted version. In the original, only spelling is modernized.*

My very good friend, albeit it be long since you heard from me, not more than I have done from you, it is against my will; yet would I not you should think I have in the mean while, nor ever will be unmindful of the effectual affection you have showed heretofore towards all that concerneth me. I have understood that upon the renewing of your intelligence there were addressed unto you, both from France and Scotland, some packets for me. I pray you, if any be come to your hands, and be yet in place, to deliver them to the bearer hereof, who will safely convey them unto me. And I pray to God for your preservation.

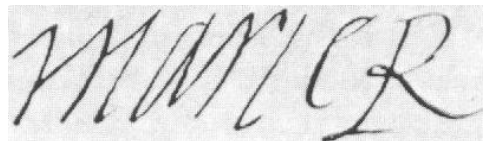
Your assured good friend  
Marie R

June the 18<sup>th</sup>, at Chartley

Although it has been a long time since you heard from me (and just as long since I have heard from you) it was not my fault. But don't think I've forgotten the care and love you have always shown everything that concerns me. I have heard that you have some letters for me. If that's true and you still have them, please give them to the person who brings you this. He will get them to me safely. I pray that God keep you safe,

Your undoubted good friend,  
Mary the Queen

June the 18<sup>th</sup>, at Chartley

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'MARIE R'. The letters are dark and somewhat faded, set against a light, textured background.

# Anthony Babington

## a Letter written by him to the Scottish Queen

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*This letter is so wandering and incoherent, I've tried to interpret and re-phrase each sentence—going for meaning rather than word for word—for readers who may find the original to be impenetrable. But I also wanted to retain the flavor and sensibility of the original. Thus, for each paragraph, the left hand column contains the original text, with modernized spelling and punctuatio, and some very long paragraphs are broken up for easy of understanding. On the right is a modern version of what he meant. Where extra information is required, I've tried to provide it.*



Most mighty, most excellent, my dread sovereign lady and queen, unto whom I owe all fidelity and obedience.

It may please your gracious majesty to admit excuse of my long silence, and distance from those dutiful offices, intercepted upon the remove of your royal person from the ancient place of your abode to the custody of a wicked Puritan and mere Lecestrian a mortal enemy both by faith and faction to your majesty and to the Catholic estate.

I held the hope of our country's weal depending (next under God) upon the life of your majesty, to be desperate, and thereupon resolved to depart the realm, determining to spend the remnant of my life in such solitary sort as the miserable and wretched estate of my country doth require, only expecting, according to the just judgment of God, the present confusion thereof; which God, for his mercy's sake, prevent.

The which my purpose being in execution, and standing upon my departure, there was addressed unto me from parts beyond the seas, one Ballard, a man of Nurture and Learning and of singular zeal to the Catholic cause, and your majesty's servant.

It may please your gracious majesty to excuse my long silence, and distance from those dutiful offices, intercepted upon the remove of your royal person from the ancient place of your abode to the custody of a wicked Puritan [Paulet] who is completely Leicester's man.

*[Paulet was the earl of Leicester's candidate for chancellorship of the duchy of Lancaster) a mortal enemy both by faith and faction to your majesty and to the Catholic estate. ]*

I knew that any hope for our country's welfare was desperate —depending as it does on your welfare almost as much as on God—and so decided to leave the country and spend the rest of my life alone, because my country is too miserable to live in. I could only expect that God's justice would quickly bring it down (God forbid).

As I got ready to leave, I met one Ballard, an educated gentleman, living overseas, who is deeply dedicated to the Catholic cause and to your majesty.



The man informed me of great preparations by the Christian princes, your majesty's allies, for the deliverance of our country from the extreme and miserable estate wherein for a long time it hath remained.

Which when I understood, my spiritual desire was to advertise by what means I might, with the hazard of my life, and all my friends in general do your Sacred Majesty one day's good service.

Whereupon, most dread sovereign, according to the great care which these princes have of the preservation and safe deliverance of your majesty's sacred person, I advised of means and considered circumstances accordingly, to and with so many of the wisest and most trusty as with safety I might commend the secrecy thereof unto. I do find, by the assistance of Lord Jesus help, assurance of good effect and desired fruit of your travail.

These things are first to be advised in this great and honourable action, upon issue of which dependeth not only the life of your most excellent Majesty, which God long preserve, to your inestimable comfort and to the salvation of English souls, and the lives of all us actors therein.

But also the Honour and Weal of our country, far more dear than our lives unto us, and the last hope ever to recover the faith of our forefathers, and to redeem ourselves from the servitude and bondage which hereby heretofore hath been imposed upon us with the loss of many thousand souls.

He told me how the great Christian princes (your allies) are preparing to deliver our country from the miserable condition it has been in for so long.

When I realized what that meant, my heart's desire was to plan a way for me and all my friends to do your majesty one day's good service, even though it might cost my life.

So I secretly gathered as many of my most trusted friends as I safely could. As a result, with Jesus' help, I am assured that your suffering will have been worthwhile.

*("Travail" is often used of a woman giving birth.)*

I have to tell you a few things on which the outcome of everything depends, including your life, our lives, and the salvation of English souls.

These things must be done for our country's honor and welfare—which is more valuable to us than our lives—if we ever hope to restore true religion.

First, in the assuring of invasions, sufficient strength on the invaders' parts to arrive are appointed, with a strong party at every place to win with them and warrant their landing, the deliverance of your majesty, the dispatch of the usurping competitor.

For the effecting of all, may it please your majesty to rely upon my service, I protest before the Almighty, who hath long miraculously preserved your royal person, no doubt to some universal good, that what I have said shall be performed, or all our lives happily lost in the execution thereof. Which vow all the chief allies have taken solemnly, and are upon assurance, by your majesty's to me, to receive the Blessed Sacrament thereupon, either to prevail in the Church's behalf and Your Majesty's or fortunately to die for so honourable a cause.

Now for as much as delays are extremely dangerous, it might please your most excellent majesty by your wisdom to direct us, and by your princely authority to enable us and such as may advance the Affair.

For, seeing there is not any of the nobility at liberty assured to your majesty in this desperate service, except unknown to us, and seeing that it is very necessary that some there be to become Heads to lead the multitude, who are disposed by nature in this land to follow nobility.

Considering withal, it doth not only make the commons and country to follow without contradiction or contention, which is ever founded in equality, but also doth add great courage to the leaders.

For which necessary regard I would recommend some to your majesty as fittest, in my knowledge, to be your Lieutenants in the West Parts, in the North parts, South Wales and North Wales, the counties of Lancaster, Darby, and Stafford. In

First, we need to be sure that the invaders will arrive with sufficient troops, while we will provide military support at every landing place, to ensure both your rescue and the death of the usurper. [*Queen Elizabeth*].

In the course of all this, you can count on me. Please believe that with the help of God, who has so long preserved you for some great purpose, we will either accomplish everything I've said, or die trying. We have made a sacred oath to this end, and sworn to receive Holy Communion to as soon as we hear from you, to either win for the Church's cause and yours or to die happily for such an honourable reason.

Because delay is dangerous, please tell us what to do, since you are wise and, being a prince, lend your authority to our actions as we proceed.

We ask because we are aware of no English nobleman who is both loyal to yourself and free to help us, and obviously someone must be in charge, so it is necessary that someone be appointed to lead the masses, who are naturally inclined to follow nobility.

This will keep the common people focused without bickering among themselves (which is what happens with equality), and also encourages those whom you appoint.

To this end I recommend to you some men who I know to be the most fit, most dependable, and most faithful to you, to take charge in the West, the North, South and North Wales, and in Lancaster,

which all counties parties being already made, and fidelity taken in your majesty's name, I host them as most assured and of undoubted fidelity.

Myself, with ten gentlemen of quality, will undertake the delivery of your person from the hands of your enemies. And for the dispatch of the Usurper, from obedience of whom by executing her we shall be made free, there be six noble gentlemen, all my private friends, who by the zeal they bear to the Catholic cause and your majesty's service will undertake the tragical execution.

It resteth that according to their infinite deserts and your majesty's bounty, their heroical attempts may be honourably rewarded in them, if they escape with life, or in their posterity, and that so much by your majesty's authority, I may be able to assure them.

Now it remaineth only in your majesty's wisdom that it be reduced into method, that your happy deliverance be first, for that thereupon dependeth the only Good, and that other circumstances concur, that the untimely end of the one do not overthrow the rest. All which your majesty's wonderful experience and wisdom will dispose in so good manner, as I doubt not, through God's good assistance, shall take deserved effect, for the obtaining of which every one of us shall think his life most happily spent.

Upon the twelfth day of this month I will be at Litchfield, expecting your majesty's answers and letters to execute what by them shall be commanded.

Derby, and Stafford. In these counties parties already exist who have taken oaths in your majesty's name, and are reliable.

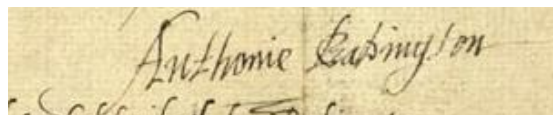
Ten other gentlemen and I myself will rescue you. For killing the usurper whose death will make us free of any duty to her [*Queen Elizabeth*], there are six other noble gentlemen, my personal friends, who out of their devotion to the Catholic cause and to yourself, will do the job.

It remains only that you let me assure them that you will reward their heroism (or their heirs) appropriately, assuming they live through this.

Now the only thing left is for you give us a plan in which your rescue comes first, for everything depends on that, and that everything else go according to that plan so that one mistake doesn't wreck the whole thing. All of which will happen, given your experience and wisdom, and God's aid, I am sure. To this end, we all happily risk our lives.

I will be at Litchfield on the 12th of this month, awaiting your orders.

Your majesty's faithful subject and sworn servant,

A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script on aged, yellowed paper. The signature reads "Anthony Babington".

# The answer of the Scottish Queen to a Letter written by Anthony Babington, the Traitor, as followeth

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*Again, I want to retain the flavor and sensibility of the original. So the left hand column contains the original text, with modernized spelling and somewhat improved punctuation. Somew very lojg paragraphs have been spaced out for ease of comprehension. On the right is a modern interpretation.*



Trusty and well-beloved I according to the zeal and entire affection which I have known in you towards the Common Cause of Religion, and mine, having always made account of you as a principal and right worthy member to be employed both in the one and in the other. It hath been no less consolation unto me to know your estate, as I have done by your last letter, and to have further means to renew my intelligence with you than I have felt grief all this while past, to be without the same.

## What it says

I pray you therefore to write unto me hereafter, so often as you can, of all concurrents, which you many judge in any sort importunate to the good of mine hereafter, wherein I shall not fail to correspond with all the care and diligence that shall be by possibility.

For diverse great and important considerations, which were here too long to be deducted, I cannot but greatly praise and commend your common desire to prevent, in time, the designment of our enemies, for the extirpation of our religion out of this realm, with the ruin of us all;

For I have long ago shewed to the foreign Catholic princes, what they have done against the king of Spain, and in the time the Catholics here remaining, exposed to all persecutions and cruelty, do daily diminish in number, forces, means, and power, so as if remedy be not thereunto speedily provided, I fear not a little but that they shall become altogether unable for ever to arise again to receive any aid at all whensoever it is offered.

Then for my own part, I pray you assure our principal friends, that albeit I had no particular interest in this case, that all that I may pretend unto, being of no consideration to me in respect of the public good of the state, I shall be always ready and most willing to employ therein my

## What it means

Write to me as often as you can and tell me anything you think is important to me. I'll reply as well as and when I can.

For too many reasons to name, I can only praise and thank you for your shared desire to prevent our enemies from exterminating our religion in this realm, to the ruin of us all.

As I have explained to the foreign Catholic princes, what Catholics there are left here are exposed to all sorts of persecution. Their numbers and their power grow less every day. If something isn't done quickly, they may not be able to accept any help at all when it's offered.

For myself, please tell our friends that for this cause, even though it has nothing to do with me, I am always ready and willing to risk my life, everything I have, and everything I hope for in this world.

### What it says

life, and all that I have, or may look for in this world.

Now to ground substantially this enterprise, and to bring it to good success, you must examine duly:

*First*, What forces, as well on foot as on horse, you may raise among you all, and what Captains you shall appoint for them in every Shire, in case a General cannot be had.

*Secondly*, which towns, ports, and havens you may assure yourselves as well on the North, West, and South to receive succors, as well from the Low Countries, Spain, and France, as from other parts.

*Thirdly*, What place you esteem fittest and of most advantage to assemble the principal company of your forces at the same time, which would be compassed conform to the proportions of your own.

*Fourthly*, For how long Pay, and Munition, and Ports fittest for their landing in this realm, from the aforesaid three foreign countries.

*Fifthly*, What provision of Moneys and armor, in case you should want, you would ask.

*Sixthly*, By what means do the 6 gentlemen deliberate to proceed.

*Seventhly*, the manner of my getting forth of this hold.

### What it means

Now, for this plan to succeed, you must look at:

*First*, what armed men you can raise, both infantry and cavalry, and who you can put in charge. If you can't find a general, you'll need to appoint a Captain for every shire (county).

*Second*, what towns, ports, and harbours you can count on for aid, both in England and in Europe.

*Third*, where you mean to base the main part of your army.

*Fourth*, how long you need to pay for troops and ammunition, and what ports are best for landing from the three countries I mentioned?

*Fifth*, how much in money and armour, if you need any, you mean to ask for.

*Sixth*, How the six gentlemen expect to carry out their plan.

*(These are the gentlemen mentioned in the previous [letter](#) as assigned to assassinate Queen Elizabeth.)*

*Seventh*, how I am going to get out of here.

### What it says

Which points having taken amongst you who are the principal actors, and after as few in number as you can; the best resolution in my device is that you impart the same, with all diligence, to Bernardin de Mendoza, Ambassador Leiger for the King of Spain in France, who besides the experience he hath of the Estate on this side, I may assure you, will employ himself most willingly.

I shall not fail to write to him of the matter, with all the recommendations I can, as also I shall do in any wise what shall be needful.

But you must take choice men for the managing of affairs with the said Mendoza, and others out of the Realm, of some faithful and very secret, both in wisdom and in personage, unto whom only you must commit yourselves, to the end things may be kept the more secret, which for your own security I commend to your self.

If your messenger bring you back again sure promise, and sufficient assurance of the Success which you demand, then thereafter (but not sooner, for that it were in vain) take diligent order, that all those on your part make, secretly as they can, provision of armor, fit horses, and ready money, wherewith to hold themselves in readiness to march so soon as it shall be signified unto you by the Chief and Principal in every shire.

And for the better coloring of the matter, reserving to the Principals the knowledge of the ground of the enterprise, it shall be enough at the beginning to give it out to the rest that the said provisions are made only for the fortifying of yourselves in case of need against the Puritans of this Realm, the principal whereof having the chief thereof in

### What it means

When you and your companions have sorted all this out (involving as few people as possible) the best thing to do is to tell Bernardino de Mendoza, the King of Spain's ambassador in France, who not only has experience of the situation on this side, but will be most willing to be involved.

I will write to him about this, with my recommendations, and do anything else that is necessary.

Set the best men to work with Mendoza and others outside of England. Make sure to use only those who are loyal and discrete, so that things are kept secret.

As soon as your messenger returns with the assurance of success that you demand—but no sooner—get all your armour, good horses, and cash together, and be ready to march as soon as every captain in every shire says he's ready.

For the rest, it will be enough at the beginning to just tell them that all these provisions are just in case you are attacked by the Puritans, the chief of whom are in the Low Countries.

You should say that the chief Puritans intend to return to England in disguise to overthrow the

### What it says

the Low Countries, as you may let the bruit go, disguised, do seek the ruin and overthrow at their return home of the Catholics, and to usurp the Crown, not only against me and all other lawful pretenders thereto, but against their own Queen that now is, if she will not altogether submit her self to their government.

These precepts may serve to found and establish amongst all associations, or considerations general, as done only for your preservation and defense, as well in religion as lands, lives, and goods, against the oppression and contempts of the said Puritans, without directly writing, or giving out any thing against the Queen, but rather shewing yourselves willing to maintain her and her lawful heirs after her, unnamng me.

The affairs being thus prepared, and forces in readiness, both within and without the realm, then shall it be time to set the Six Gentlemen on work, taking good order upon the accomplishment of their discharges, I may be suddenly transported out of this place, and meet without tarrying for the arrival of the foreign aid, which then must be hastened with all diligence.

Now for that there can be no certain day appointed for the accomplishment of the said Gentlemen's designment, to the end others may be in readiness to take me from hence,

I would that the said Gentlemen had always about them, or at least at Court, divers and sundry scoutmen, furnished with good and speedy horses, so soon as the design shall be executed, to come with all diligence to advertise me thereof,

and those that shall be appointed for my transporting, to the end that immediately after they may be at the place of mine abode before my Keeper can have advertisement of the execution of the said designment,

or at the least before he can fortify himself within the house, or carry me out of the same:

### What it means

Catholics and usurp the crown.

Say they are working not just against me and other lawful claimants, but against their own queen if she will not submit to their will.

These principles will let you say that this is all done only for your own defense against the Puritans, and for defending her against the Puritan threat against your religion, land, lives, and goods, while appearing to still support the Queen and without writing or saying anything against her, and leaving me out of it.

When everything is ready and troops prepared, inside and outside the kingdom, that's the time to set the Six Gentlemen to their work [*assassination*]. And as soon as that is done, to get me out of here at once, and meet without waiting for foreign help to arrive, although the word must be gotten to them without delay.

Since we can't set a date in advance, because it depends on so many others, and because everything depends on their action, those Gentlemen should keep couriers ready with good and speedy horses ready to send me word the instant the deed is done

and to tell those appointed to rescue me, so that they can get wherever I'm being kept before my keeper knows anything about it,

Or at least before he can either fortify the house or take me somewhere else.

### What it says

It were necessary to dispatch two or three of the said advertisers by divers ways, to the end, if one be stayed, the other may come through. At the same instant, it were needful to also assay to cut off the Posts ordinary ways.

This is the plot that I think best for this enterprise, and the order whereby we shall conduct the same for our common security:

for stirring on this side before you be sure of sufficient foreign forces, that were but for nothing to put ourselves in danger of following the miserable fortune of such as have heretofore travelled in the like actions.

And if you take me out of this place, be well assured to set me in the midst of a good army, or some very good strength, where I may safely stay till the assembly of your forces, and arrival of said foreign forces.

It were sufficient cause given to the Queen in catching me again, to enclose me in some hold, out of the which I should never escape, if she did use me no worse;

and to pursue with all extremity those that assisted me, which would grieve me more than all the unhappiness that might fall upon myself.

Earnestly as you can, look and take heed most carefully and vigilantly to compass and assure all so well that shall be necessary for the effecting of the said enterprise, as with the grace of god you may bring the same to happy end,

remitting to the judgment of your principal friends on this side, with whom you have to deal, therein to ordain and conclude upon this present,

which may serve you for an overture of such proportions as you shall amongst you find best;

### What it means

You must send 2 or 3 of these riders by different roads, so that if one is stopped the other may get through. Also the regular post riders' paths must be cut off.

Here's the plot I think will serve us best, and the safest way to do it:

If you move on this side [of the English Channel] before you can be sure of foreign support, we'll be just as unfortunate as everyone else who has tried similar actions.

And when you get me out of this place, be sure to put me in the midst of a strong army or other force where I can stay safely until our forces are assembled and the foreign help arrives.

If we fail, that will be enough to make the queen, when she catches me, lock me up some place I would never escape from, or something worse;

and to pursue to death all who had helped me, which would grieve me more than my own fate.

Do all you can to make it all happen and, with God's help, it will all end happily.

Rely on the judgment of your friends to conclude matters

which should get you started.



### What it says

And to your self in particular I refer the Gentlemen aforementioned to be assured of all that shall be requisite for the entire execution of their good wills.

I leave their common resolution to advice, in case the design do not take hold, as may happen whether they will or no, do not pursue my transport, and the execution of the rest of the enterprise.

But if the mishap should fall out that you might not come by me, being set in the Tower of London, or in any other strength, with strong guard;

Yet notwithstanding leave not for Gods sake to proceed in the enterprise, for I shall at any time die most contentedly, understanding of your delivery out of the servitude wherein you are holden as slaves;

I shall assay, that at the same time that the work shall be in hand, at that present to make the Catholics of Scotland to arise, and put my son into their hands, to the effect, that from thence our enemies here may not prevail by any succor;

I would also that some stirring were in Ireland, and that it were labored to begin some time before any thing be done here,

and then that the alarm might begin thereby on the flat contrary side, that the stroke may come from your designs, to have some general or chief aid very permanent;

And therefore were it good to send obscurely for the purpose to the Earl of Arundel, or some of his brethren, and likewise to see upon the young Earl of Northumberland, if he be at liberty from over the sea;

The Earl of Westmoreland may be had, whose hand and name, you know, may do much in the North parts; Also the Lord Paget, of good ability in some Shires thereabouts;

Both the one and the other may be had amongst

### What it means

The Six Gentlemen should rely entirely on you for everything they need to do as they intend.

If the plan doesn't work, which could happen whether they want it to or not, do not attempt to move me or carry out the rest of the plan.

If you can't come to me because you've been taken to the Tower or some such fortified place

for godssake don't fail to proceed with the enterprise [killing Elizabeth] for I can die happy knowing you've been delivered from slavery.

While you're putting this all together, I'll be working on the Catholics of Scotland to rise up and kidnap the king, so that our enemies won't be able to find aid from that direction.

I think there should also be some activity in Ireland, and that it begin some time before anything is done here

It would be good to send secretly to the earl of Arundel, or some of his brothers, and also the young earl of Northumberland, if he's available

The earl of Westmorland, who is well known in the North, is ours and will do us much good in the North; so is Lord Paget who has some influence in this neighborhood.

There may be more among those who have been

### What it says

whom secretly so more principal banished, may return if the enterprise be once resolute.

The said Lord Paget is now in Spain, and may treat of all that, by his brother Charles, directly by himself, you will commit unto him touching the affairs.

Beware that none of your messengers, that you send forth of the Realm, carry any letters upon themselves, but make their dispatches, and send them either after or before them by some others.

Take heed of Spies and false-brethren that are amongst you, especially of your practice, already practiced by your enemies, for your discovery, and in any case keep never a paper about you that may in any sort do harm:

For from like errors have come the condemnation of all such as have suffered heretofore, against whom otherwise nothing could justly have been proved;

Discover as little as you can, your names and intentions to the French ambassador, now Leiger at London; for although as I understand he is a very honest gentleman, yet I fear his master entertaineth a course far contrary to our designment, which may move him to discover us, if he had any particular knowledge thereof.

All this while I have sued to change and remove from this house; and for answer, the castle of Dudley only hath been named to serve the turn.

Therefore advise so soon as I shall be there, what provision may be had about that part, for my escape from thence.

If I stay here, there is but one of these three ways or means to be looked for.

### What it means

banished, but will return once the enterprise is in hand.

Lord Paget is currently in Spain, but you can connect with him by his brother Charles, and get a commitment.

The messengers you send out of the country should not carry any letters themselves. Send the letters by other hands, either before or after them.

Beware of spies and false friends. Never keep papers on your person that might do us any harm.

Others who have suffered before have been condemned because of just such mistakes, even there was otherwise no proof against them

Reveal as little as you can of your names and intentions to the French king's ambassador in London, for although he may be an honest gentleman, his master [the king of France] has much different goals than we do, and he might betray us if he [*the ambassador*] knew enough to do so.

While we've been planning all this, I have been trying to get them to move me from this house, and so far, only Dudley Castle [*near Birmingham*] has been suggested.

So as soon as I get there, contact me with whatever information you can get about my escape.

If I stay here, there are three ways and means to consider:

### What it says

The First, that at a certain day appointed for my walking abroad on horseback, on the moors between this and Stafford, where ordinarily, you know, but few people do pass, let 50 or threescore horsemen, well mounted and armed come to take me away, as they may easily, my Keeper having with him but 18 or 20 horses with only dogs.

The Second means, to come at midnight, or so after, and set fire on the barns and stables, which you know are near the house, and whilst my guardian's servants shall come forth to the fire, your company having duly on a mark whereby they may be known one from another, some of you may surprise the house, where I hope, with the few servants I have about me, I shall be able to give you correspondent aid.

And the Third is, some there be that bring carts hither early in the morning. Three carts may be so prepared that being in the midst of the great gate, the carts might fall down or overthrow, that thereupon you might come suddenly and make yourselves masters of the house, and carry me suddenly away;

So you might easily do before any number of soldiers who lodge in sundry places forth of this place, some half a mile, and some a whole mile, could come to relieve.

Whatsoever issue the matter taketh, I do, and shall think myself obliged so long as I live towards you for the offers you make to hazard yourself as you do for my deliverance, and by any means that I ever have, I shall do my endeavor to recognize by effects your deserts;

Herein I have commanded a more ample Alphabet to be made for you, which herewith you shall receive.

God Almighty have you in his protection.

Fail not to burn this privately and quickly

### What it means

First, on a day when I'm allowed out to ride on the moors between here and Stafford, where (as you know) there are very few people, have 50 or 60 mounted and armed horsemen, meet us on the moor and take me away. The Keeper never has more than 18 or 20 men with him and some dogs.

The Second method: Come around midnight and set fire to the barns and stables which are (as you know) near the house. And while my guardian's servants are fighting the fire, you and your friends can surprise the house where, with my servants, I shall be able to help you. (Make sure your men all have some identifying mark on them.)

And the Third is this: This house takes deliveries by cartloads early in the mornings. Prepare three similar carts such that when they come in the main gate, they will break down or be overthrown. Then you can attack and carry me away.

Most of the guards who could interfere are in lodgings, a half a mile or a mile away from this house, so you can do this all before they can get here.

However it turns out, I do and will always be in your debt for your offer to risk so much for me. And by any power I may ever have, I will do right by you.

I have commanded a more complete code to be devised for you, which you will be given.

Your assured friend forever,

## Commission for executing the Queen of Scots.

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Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queen of England, France, and Ireland, &c. To our trusty and well-beloved cousins George Earl of Shrewsbury, Earl Marshall of England, Henry Earl of Kent, Henry Earl of Darby, George Earl of Cumberland, and Henry Earl of Pembroke, greeting &c.

Whereas sithence the sentence given by you and others of our Council, Nobility, and Judges, against the Queen of Scots, by the name of Mary, the daughter of James the 5<sup>th</sup>, late King of Scots, commonly called the Queen of Scots and Dowager of France, as to you is well known; all the states in the last parliament assembled did not only deliberately, by great advice, allow and approve the same sentence as just and honourable, but also with all the humbleness and earnestness possible, at sundry times require, solicit, and press us to direct such further execution against her person as they did adjudge her to have daily deserved;

*Adding* thereunto that the forbearing thereof was, and would be daily certain and undoubted danger, not only to our own life but also unto themselves, their posterity, and the public estate of this Realm, as well for the cause of gospel and true religion of Christ, as for the peace of the whole realm

*Whereupon* we did, although the same were with some delay of time, publish the same sentence by our proclamation, yet hitherto have forborne to give direction for the further satisfaction of the aforesaid most earnest requests made by the said states of our Parliament, whereby we do daily understand by all sorts of our loving subjects both of our Nobility and Council, and also of the wisest, greatest, and best devoted of all subjects of inferior degrees, how greatly and deeply from the bottom of their hearts they are grieved and afflicted with daily, yea hourly fears of our life, and thereby confrequently with a dreadful doubt and expectation of the ruin of the present happy and godly estate of this realm, if we should forbear the further final execution, as it is deserved, and neglect their general and continual requests, prayers, counsels, and advices,

*And thereupon* contrary to our natural disposition in such case, being overcome with the evident weight of their counsels and their daily intercessions, importing such a necessity as appeareth, directly tending to the safety not only of ourself but also to the weal of our whole realm, We have condescended to suffer Justice to take place;

*and for the execution thereof*, upon the special trusty experience and confidence which we have of your loyalties, faithfulness, and love, both toward our person and the safety thereof, and also to your

native Counties whereof you are most noble and principal members, we do will, and by Warrant hereof do authorize you as soon as you shall have time convenient to repair to our castle of Fotheringhay, where the said Queen of Scots is in custody of our right trusty and faithful servant and councillor, Sir Amyas Paulet, Knight;

*And* then taking her into your charge, to cause by your commandment execution to be done upon her person, in the presence of yourselves, and the aforesaid Sir Amyas Paulet, and of such other Officers of Justice as you shall command to attend upon you for that purpose;

*And* the same to be done in such manner and form and at such time and place and by such persons as to five, four, or three of you shall be thought, by your discretions, convenient, notwithstanding any law, statute or ordinance to the contrary.

*And* there our letters patent, sealed with our Great Seal of England, shall be to you and every of you and to all persons that shall be present or that shall be by you commanded to do any thing appertaining to the aforesaid execution, a full sufficient warrant and discharge for ever.

*And* further, we are also pleased and contented and hereby do we will, command, and authorize our Chancellor of England, at the request of you all and every of you, the duplicate of our letters patent, to be to all purposes made, dated, and sealed with our great Seal of England, as these presents now are.

In witness whereof, we have caused these our letters to be made patents.

Given at our manor of Greenwich, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of February, in the 29<sup>th</sup> year of our Reign.



<http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/civilwar/g2/cs1/s1/>

## The Execution

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On Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, 1586, there assembled at the Castle of Fotheringay the earls of Shrewsbury and Kent, with diverse knights and gentlemen, justices of the peace in the counties there.

And about eight of the clock, the earls and the sheriff of the shire went up to the Scottish queen, whom they found praying on her knees with her gentlewomen and men; and the sheriff remembering [reminding] her the time was at hand, she rose up and said she was ready.

Then she was led by the arms from her chamber into the Chamber of Presence where, with great many exhortations to fear God and live in obedience, kissing her women, and giving her hand to her men to kiss, praying them all not to sorrow but to rejoice, and pray for her, she was brought down the stairs by two soldiers.

And being below and looking back, she said she was evilly attended, and besought the Lords that she might, for [her] womanhood's sake, have two of her women to wait upon her.

They said they [her women] were only withheld, for that it was feared by their passionate crying they would much disquiet her spirit and disturb the execution. Then she said, I will promise for them they will do neither. So two whom she wished were brought in to her.

Then she spake much to Melvin, her man, and charged him as he would answer before God, to deliver her speeches and messages to her son, in such sort as she did deliver them. All which tended to will him to govern wisely, and in the fear of God; to take heed to whom he betook his chiefest trust; and not to give occasions to be evil thought on by the Queen of England, her good sister; and to certify to him that she died a true Scot, true French, and true Catholic.

And about 10 of the clock, she was brought into the great hall, where in the midst of the hall and against the chimney (in which was a great fire) was a scaffold set up of two foot high and twelve foot broad, having two steps to come up. About the scaffold went a rail, half a yard high round, covered with black cotton; so was her stool, the boards, and the block, and a pillow to kneel upon.

There did sit upon the scaffold the two earls—the sheriff stood—and the two executioners.

When they were placed, Mr [Robert] Beale, Clerk of the Council, did read her Majesty's commission aforesaid, under the great seal. After which, the Dean of Peterborough, by direction of the lords being provided, began to speak unto her, for her better preparation to die as a penitent Christian in the true faith of Christ.

But when he began his exhortation, she stayed him immediately, refusing to hear him, and said she had nothing to do with him, nor he with her, for she was settled in the Roman Catholic faith, which she would die in.

Then the earl of Kent willed Mr Dean to pray for her, that if it might stand with God's will, she might have her heart lightened with the true knowledge of God, and die therein. Which was pronounced by him accordingly, and followed of the beholders.

All which while she, having a crucifix of white bone between her hands, prayed in Latin, very loud. Prayer being ended, she kneeled down, and prayed to this effect: for Christ's afflicted Church and end of their troubles, for her son, for the Queen's majesty that she might prosper and serve God. And



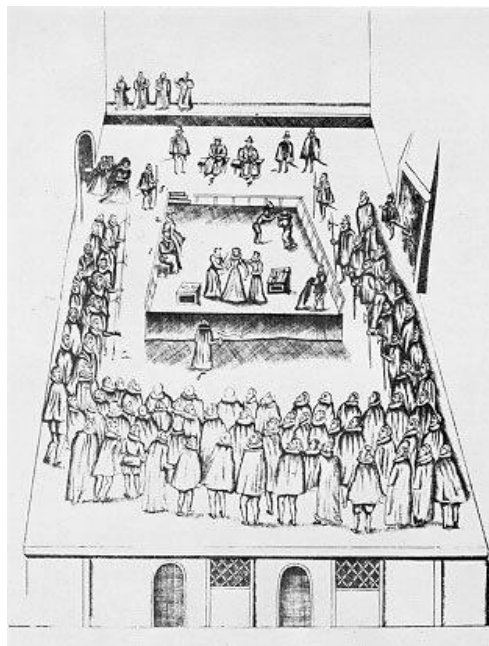
confessed that she hoped to be saved only by the blood of Jesus Christ, at the foot of whose Crucifix she would shed her blood. And that God would avert his plagues from this island. That God would give her grace and forgiveness of her sins.

Then she rose up and was by both the executioners disrobed. She said she was not wont to be undressed by such grooms, and desired to have two of her gentlewomen to unrobe her; the which was granted, and being stripped into her petticoat; which being done, she kissed her women and willed them not to cry for her, but to rejoice; and lifted up her hand and blessed them and also her men, not standing far off.

Then she kneeled down most resolutely, without all fear of death; and after one of her women had knit [tied] a kerchief before her eyes, she spake aloud the psalm in Latin: *In te Domine confido, non confundor in eternum.* [In thee, O Lord, do I trust, let me never be confounded.] *Justitia tua libera me.*

Then lay she down and stretched out her body and her neck upon the block. She cried: *In manus tuas Domine &c.* [Lord, into thy hands, etc.], and so she received two strokes.

The people cried: God save the queen, and so perish all papists and Her Majesty's enemies.



All things were taken from the executioners [who were] not suffered to have so much as the aprons, before they were washed. The blood, the clothes, and whatsoever was bloodied was burned in the fire made in the chimney in the hall, and by the scaffold.



Woodcut from Adam Blackwood's *Martyre de la royne d'Escosse, douairiere de France*, 1589.  
From "Mary, Queen of Scots." Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 13 Aug. 2008  
<<http://original.britannica.com/eb/art-76132>>.

The 1681 story stops here. As most people know, this is not where it usually ends. Like Camden's account, but unlike some others, this narrative does not describe the executioner holding up the head with the wig coming away in his hands, or the lips continuing to move, or anything about a little dog. It's actually pretty spare, and may only have been included because the story needed an end. Perhaps such details would have risked creating sympathy for the Scottish queen, and that was not, as we know, the intention of this publication.