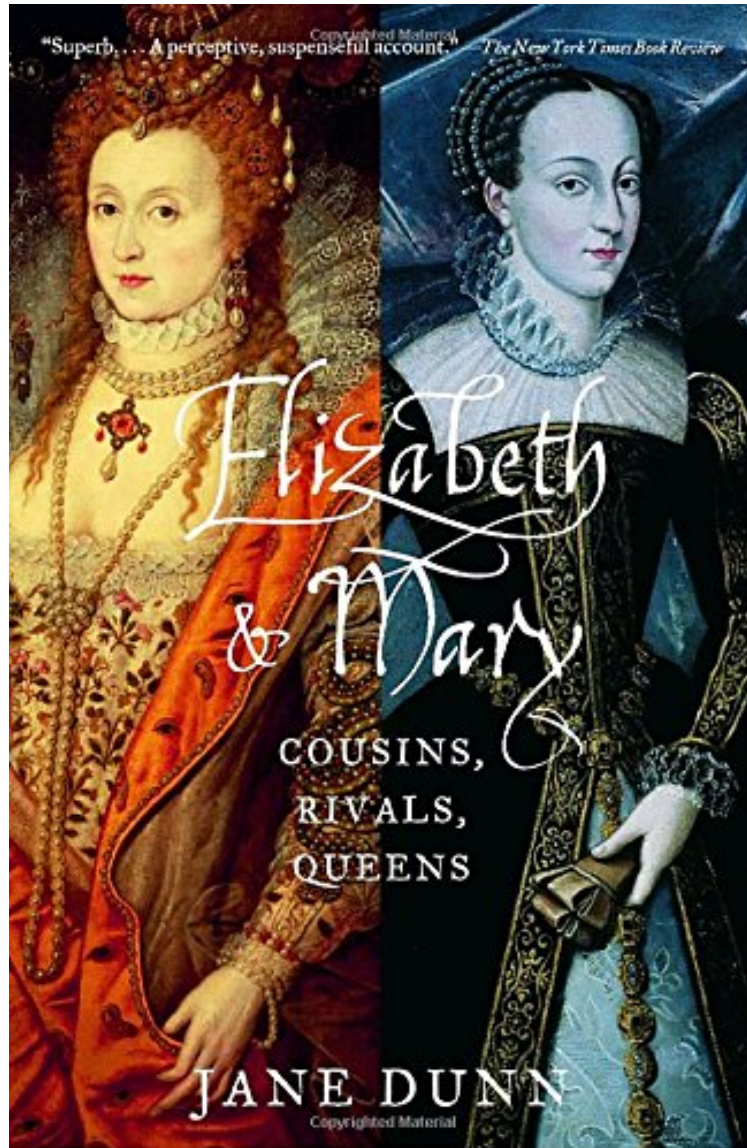


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Elizabeth and Mary: Cousins, Rivals, Queens

Jane Dunn

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Jane Dunn : Elizabeth and Mary: Cousins, Rivals, Queens before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Elizabeth and Mary: Cousins, Rivals, Queens:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Doubly interesting By Jaylia 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 queens life is contrasted and enriched, and Jane Dunns 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. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Scholarly, lucid, and readable. By Opossum 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. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars. By Fernando Great portrayals of two sovereign Queens with everything to lose, doing all they can to remain in power.

"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 Herald The 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.

.com Jane Dunn's *Elizabeth and Mary: Cousins, Rivals, Queens* offers a blend of history and biography that traces the "dynamic interaction" between two of the most powerful women in Western history. Dunn remains ever aware of the uniqueness of her two central figures: both women ruled as divinely ordained monarchs in a male-dominated power structure; and both women were from the same family (Elizabeth I was the granddaughter of Henry VII, and Mary Queen of Scots the great-granddaughter of King Henry). By focusing not on pure biography but instead on relationships, Dunn is able to narrow her book (still mammoth in scope) to the most salient and interesting events in the two queens' lives. The book begins in 1558, the year in which Mary first wed and Elizabeth assumed the throne of England. Almost immediately the cousins were embroiled in a conflict that would endure for the remainder of Mary's life. A restless, sexually-active Catholic, and leader of the Scottish people in alliance with France, Mary was ever a conduit for rumors of rebellion. The "Virgin Queen" Elizabeth used Mary as a dark reflection to underline her own celibate constancy as a ruler of law and order. The pair never met face to face, but as Dunn reveals, their lives were closely intertwined. After holding Mary in Fotheringhay prison for nearly two decades, Elizabeth ordered her cousin executed in 1587. Mary had chosen martyrdom in favor of a confession to complicity in the Babington assassination plot. In court, she declared: "I would never make Shipwreck of my Soul by conspiring the Destruction of my dearest Sister." Though the ostensible victor, Elizabeth (who had struggled to find a way to release her cousin while still upholding her own power as queen) confessed, "I am not free, but a captive." In *Elizabeth and Mary*, Dunn has built a rich world that underlines the tragic struggle between private emotions and the public faces history puts on them. -- Patrick O'Kelley From Publishers Weekly This is not so much a dual biography of Elizabeth Tudor and Mary Stuart as a

cross-section of the royal cousins' lives as they intersect in fact and in theme. As a successful, ultimately beloved monarch, Elizabeth has been granted the upper hand by history, but here the mirror images of the two queens' experiences suggests how differently their stories could have ended. The opposing trajectories of their lives - Elizabeth rising from a politically and personally precarious childhood to become a powerful ruler and Mary descending from undisputed Scottish heir to prisoner and self-styled martyr for Catholicism - elucidate the problems of early modern queenship more fully than a single biography would. Opening accounts of Elizabeth's coronation and Mary's wedding serve as an emblematic introduction to their experiences of education, religion, family, marriage and leadership. Unfortunately, these accounts are clearly cut from chapter four, where their loss creates a jarring leap. The dual narrative also leads British biographer Dunn (*Moon in Eclipse: A Life of Mary Shelley*) to overdo her interpretation and to repeat incidents and reintroduce characters, seemingly not trusting her readers to keep them straight. However, she does Mary a service by digging more deeply into her childhood and evaluating her more rigorously than many authors have. Her emphasis on Elizabeth's insecurities heightens the comparison between the two queens and renders the decision to execute Mary the turning point in Elizabeth's reign. While this may slightly exaggerate the centrality of the rivalry to Elizabeth's thinking, it nicely captures the intertwined lives of these two women. 24 pages of color illus., not seen by PW. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From School Library Journal Adult/High School-A compelling account of the rivalry between two of history's most fascinating monarchs. In covering the lives of cousins Elizabeth Tudor and Mary Stuart, Dunn focuses on describing their effects on one another, rather than cataloging all of the events in their lives. The two young queens, coping with troubled finances, religious strife, and belligerent nobles, could hardly have been more different in background and temperament. Protestant Elizabeth, disinherited, humiliated, and imprisoned in her youth, learned to be cautious and calculating. She placed her role as queen above all other considerations. Catholic Mary, her parents' only surviving heir, was always secure about her right to Scotland's throne. Raised indulgently in the luxurious French court as the future bride of the dauphin, she was headstrong, passionate, and impulsive. Only nine years apart in age, the two royals corresponded copiously, and constantly grilled spies and ambassadors about one another, but never met. Using a variety of contemporary documents, including letters, diaries, and court papers, Dunn shows readers the queens' surprisingly parallel lives. Both were charismatic leaders who inspired fanatic devotion and bitter enmity throughout their lives. This is not an easy book for students, but it's well worth the time it takes to read it. The pomp and pageantry of the 16th century, as well as its superstitions, hardships, and cruelty, are vividly described. Family trees, a detailed chronology, and 24 pages of color photographs of portraits of Elizabeth, Mary, and those most important to them are included. Kathy Tewell, Chantilly Regional Library, VA Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.