The True Story of “Bloody Mary”

C:\Users\Kaleigh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\0SBWVD0D\MC900411244[1].wmf Queen Mary I of England was born on February 18, 1516 to King Henry VIII of England and Catherine of Aragon. She was the center of attention at the court. However, as time passed no other children entered the royal nursery. In the end, Princess Mary was the only child born to Catherine that survived childhood.

King Henry VIII realizing that he had no son to take the throne after his death started to look for a solution to his problem. His answer was found in Anne Boleyn. King Henry sought an annulment to his marriage with Catherine under the claim that the marriage had always been **illegitimate** on the basis that she was married to his brother, Arthur, first. King Henry’s annulment would not be granted by the Pope who was under the control of Catherine’s cousin Philip, the **Holy Roman Emperor**.

C:\Users\Kaleigh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\0SBWVD0D\MC900411244[1].wmf King Henry wanted his annulment so badly that he took matters into his own hand. He broke from the Catholic Church and formed the **Anglican Church**. Under the **Anglican Church**, King Henry was able to get his divorce since he was now head of church and state. He took Anne Boleyn as his wife. She would be replaced four additional times.

During this time, Princess Mary was declared **illegitimate** and would now be called “The Lady Mary.” Throughout the remainder of King Henry’s reign, Mary and her father had their quarrels about his wives but they showed caring for one another. In his will, Henry named Mary as second in line to the throne after her brother, Prince Edward.

Edward’s reign was unfortunately short. Today it is believed that he suffered from tuberculosis. During this time, however, Edward made great changes in England to support the church his father had created. This caused a point of conflict between Mary and Edward. Mary was a devote Catholic, just as her mother was. Mary disagreed with the

When was Queen Mary born? Who were her parents?

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What movement was going on the European continent that gave King Henry the idea to break from the Roman Catholic Church?

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Protestant faiths and wanted to have England return to Catholicism and restore its ties with the Pope.

After Edward’s death, Mary was to become queen according to King Henry VIII’s will. However, some nobles tried to **usurp** her throne. These nobles feared Mary would return the country to Catholicism and they put a plan into action. The Dukes of Suffolk and Northumberland married their son and daughter, Jane Grey who was next in line to the throne after Mary and Elizabeth. These men had Edward name Jane as his heir in his will.

C:\Users\Kaleigh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\0SBWVD0D\MC900411244[1].wmf Mary realized the plot, and took to action gaining supporters. After her brother’s death in July 1553, Mary sent out a proclamation around the country announcing her secession to the throne. She was prepared to battle for her crown, however, so many supporters flocked to her side that the nobles’ plan was foiled and Mary was named Queen of England.

C:\Users\Kaleigh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\0SBWVD0D\MC900411244[1].wmf Mary was very lenient with the conspirators and only the Dukes of Suffolk and Northumberland were executed. The rest were either put into the **Tower** or released. This would be a mistake that Mary would never make again.

Mary had her **coronation** on October 1, 1553. Mary went to work right away to get Parliament to pass two legislations she had been waiting to pass her whole life. The first of which was to declare the marriage between King Henry VIII and her mother, Catherine of Aragon valid and legal, which passed with little resistance. The second act caused much more controversy.

C:\Users\Kaleigh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\0SBWVD0D\MC900411244[1].wmf Mary wanted to repeal all the religious laws Edward had passed and restore the country to its Catholic roots. Mary would allow the nobles to keep the lands they had taken from the closed down monasteries but pushed for the nobles to return the Church property, such as plates. However she also restored the **medieval heresy laws** which enabled **heretics** to be executed and their property turned over to the crown.

This act did not make Mary popular with the people since many of them had converted to the **Anglican faith**.

Why were the nobles worried about Mary coming to power? How would restoring Catholicism affect England?

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How would Mary’s leniency make her look in the eyes of her enemies?

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What were the two laws Mary wanted to pass?

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How would the validity of her mother and father’s marriage affect her? Was it a personal law or to help secure her power?

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C:\Users\Kaleigh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\0SBWVD0D\MC900411244[1].wmfHowever, Mary also gained dislike among England in her choice of marriage. The English wanted Mary to marry a “good English man,” such as Edward Courtenay the last descendent of the House of York. Mary’s cousin, **Holy Roman Emperor** Charles V had a different idea in mind. He wanted Mary to marry his son King Philip of Spain. Mary accepted the proposal and was married in March 1554.

During this time, Mary’s popularity among the English had diminished slightly and a new plot was discovered to remove her from the throne. The plan would remove Mary and replace her with Elizabeth and Edward Courtenay. In total there were four plots to remove Mary from power.

C:\Users\Kaleigh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\0SBWVD0D\MC900411244[1].wmf Men attempted to overthrow Mary by marching rebel armies to London. The rebellion was put down at the city gate. Mary realized her leniency had allowed her enemies to attack her again. This time one hundred rebels were hanged while four hundred were pardoned, Lady Jane Grey and her husband were also executed. Edward Courtenay and Elizabeth were both arrested and put into the **Tower**.

C:\Users\Kaleigh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\0SBWVD0D\MC900411244[1].wmf With the rebellion crushed, Mary was able to enjoy her marriage and focus on other legislation she wanted to pass. However, the blood shed was just beginning in England. In January 1555, the arrests began to enforce her move back to Catholicism. In total 275 people were burned at the stake for being **heretics** in Mary’s England. Among these 275 people were John Hooper, former Bishop of Gloucester, and Thomas Cranmer, the former Archbishop of Canterbury. However, the burnings did not deter the Protestants. It only increased hatred for Mary. This hatred led to the queen being called “Bloody Mary.”

Throughout her reign, Mary had two “phantom” pregnancies. Each time she thought she was pregnant, she went into **confinement** and no baby ever came. After the second “phantom” pregnancy, when she was forty-two, she remained ill. On November 16, 1558 Queen Mary I died. Elizabeth succeeded her to the throne, becoming Queen Elizabeth I of England.

Who did the English want Mary to marry? Why didn’t they want a foreign prince?

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Create your own question:

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If you lived during this time, would you have converted back to Catholicism or remained a Protestant? Why?

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