

History: Unit 2

Lesson 12 of 30

Why was Mary, Queen of Scots a problem?



Who was Mary, Queen of Scots?



Background to Mary, Queen of Scots

Mary Stuart was a cousin of Elizabeth because she was **Henry VII's** great granddaughter - she had a **legitimate** claim to the English throne. She became the Queen of Scotland at only six days old when her father, **James V** of Scotland, died in 1542. After this, there was a lot of instability in Scotland which meant that she was raised in France. Her mother was the french **Mary of Guise**, who acted as **regent** for her infant daughter (she ruled on her behalf). **Mary of Guise** was a strict Catholic, but was unable to prevent the Protestant Reformation spreading to Scotland.

Mary Stuart = Mary Queen of Scots.



What was the Treaty of Edinburgh?



The Treaty of Edinburgh, 1560

Mary, Queen of Scots was married to King **Francis II** of France in 1558.

In 1560, Scottish Protestant Lords (members of the Scottish nobility) rebelled against Mary of Guise because they did not like the fact that she brought Catholic influence to Scotland. Elizabeth helped the Scottish Lords with the rebellion by secretly sending money and eventually, soldiers. She helped because she did not want Mary, Queen of Scots to be successful in Scotland. This is because the French Catholics could help her potentially claim the English throne now she was married to the French King.

The Treaty of Edinburgh was signed by the Protestant Lords and Elizabeth in 1560 which said that Mary, Queen of Scots would give up her claim to the English throne.



Death of King Francis II of France

King Francis II of France died unexpectedly from illness in 1560. Mary therefore returned to Scotland from France in 1561.

When Mary returned to Scotland, she had poor relations with the Protestant Lords in her country who controlled the Scottish government. Mary claimed that she never agreed to the **Treaty of Edinburgh** and she wanted to be named Elizabeth's heir.

Elizabeth refused to name Mary as her heir because this would provide hope to Catholics in England and could become a threat to Elizabeth.



Why did Mary, Queen of Scots come to England?



Why did Mary Queen of Scots come to England?

In 1565, Mary married her cousin, **Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley**. He was also a descendant of **Henry VII**, and so also had a claim to the English throne. Mary had a son with Henry, but the marriage was not a success. He was murdered during an explosion at a castle where he was staying in early 1567, but Mary was away at the time.

Shortly after the death of Lord Darnley, Mary married the **Earl of Bothwell**, who was a suspect in Darnley's murder. This led to **Civil War** breaking out in Scotland, and Mary had to **abdicate**. She fled to England in 1568 after being held as a prisoner for a short time, and left her infant son, now **James VI**, behind.



Why was Mary's arrival a problem for Elizabeth?

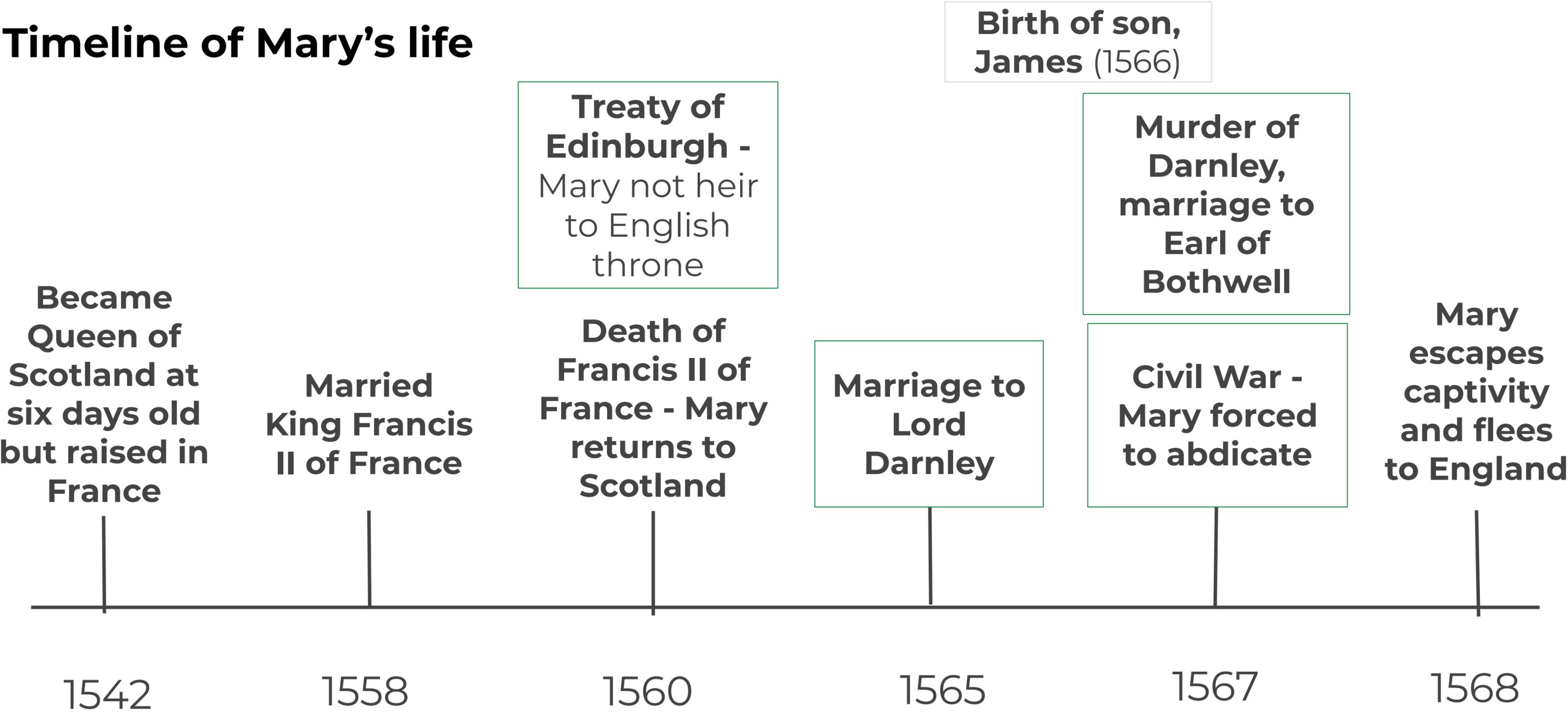


Why was it difficult for Elizabeth to decide what to do on Mary's arrival?

- **She could help Mary to fight back against the Protestant Lords** → *If successful, Mary would be a Catholic Queen of Scotland with a claim to the English throne*
- **She could hand Mary back to the Protestant Lords** → *This may have led to the death of her own cousin which Elizabeth would be partially responsible for*
- **She could allow Mary to go abroad to Europe** → *She might gain the support of Catholic powers abroad*
- **She could keep Mary in England** → *Her presence in England could inspire her own Catholic subjects to rebel and damage Elizabeth's position*



Timeline of Mary's life



Glossary

Legitimate - when something is valid or has justification with evidence

Treaty of Edinburgh - An agreement between Elizabeth and the Protestant Lords that Mary, Queen of Scots would not claim to be the heir to the English throne

Abdicate - When a monarch steps down from the throne



Questions - let's test your understanding!

1. Why did Mary, Queen of Scots have a legitimate claim to the English throne?
2. How was Mary, Queen of Scots, connected with France?
3. Why was Mary, Queen of Scots's relationship difficult with Scotland?
4. Why was Mary, Queen of Scots, forced to abdicate in 1567?
5. On Mary's arrival in England, why was Elizabeth put in a difficult position?

Challenge yourself: How would you judge Elizabeth's decision to keep Mary in captivity in England? Was this the best solution?

