



# Mary Queen of Scots: In My End is My Beginning

*James Mackay*

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## **Mary Queen of Scots: In My End is My Beginning** James Mackay

*In My End Is My Beginning* is the story of Mary Queen of Scots (1542–87), the tragic heroine *par excellence*. Queen of an unfamiliar and troubled nation when she was a week old, it was her misfortune to be a pawn in the game of international politics throughout her life. Even in the brief period from 1561 to 1567 when she was ruler of Scotland in fact as well as in name, she was beset with problems that would have defeated a much stronger, more experienced monarch. A talented poet and a charismatic leader, she contended with a treacherous, self-serving nobility, the religious ferment of the Reformation, and the political ambitions of larger and more powerful neighbours.

With little real authority and few resources, Mary's reign was successful, until her disastrous marriage to the dissolute Darnley set in motion the events that brought about her downfall. For the last 20 years of her life she was a prisoner in the hands of her cousin, Elizabeth I of England, and the subject of treacherous plots and conspiracies. A hostage to fortune, she represented a threat and a rallying-point for English Catholics. Her tragic end was inevitable. Yet her life, with all its adventurous, failures and disasters, produced the son – James – who ultimately brought about the union of Scotland and England.

*In the End Is My Beginning* uncovers the true facts of Mary's life in the context of Anglo-Scottish relations and shows why, after more than 400 years, she remains arguably the greatest character in popular Scottish history.

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