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The Wild Queen: The Days And Nights Of Mary, Queen Of Scots (Young Royals)



Synopsis

Mary Stuart was just five years old when she was sent to France to be raised alongside her future husband. But when the frail young king dies, eighteen-year-old Mary is stripped of her title as Queen of France and set adrift in the harsh world, alone. Determined to reign over what is rightfully hers, Mary returns to Scotland. Hoping that a husband will help her secure the coveted English throne, she marries again, but the love and security she longs for elude her. Instead, the fiery young queen finds herself embroiled in a murder scandal that could cost her the crown. And her attempts to bargain with her formidable sister queen, Elizabeth I of England, could cost her her very life.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Apparently, there's this big world of Carolyn Meyer YA-style historical novels that I've never really known about. I guess I should, considering that I enjoy historical fiction and some YA novels so much, but for some reason I never really knew about these books, and after looking at Meyer's rather long line of bio-historicals surrounding women in history, it seems that this began as a more child-oriented approach but, with the popularity of Philippa Gregory and other historical fiction, it grew into YA historical fiction -or, something like that. Thus, *The Wild Queen* was my first

introduction to Carolyn Meyer. *The Wild Queen* chronicles the life of Mary, Queen of Scots who, interestingly, seems to only get scene time (or, book time) in relationship with her nearly 20-year imprisonment by Queen Elizabeth I. In fact, I'd say that I knew every little about Mary's earlier years before picking up this book. At the age of five, Mary was left as the only surviving heir to the Scottish throne. Fearing for her life (and to secure an advantageous marriage to the Dauphin), Mary is sent off to France. Though she later marries the Dauphin, he unexpectedly dies, and Mary is left to pick up the pieces of her life -and the complex politics that comes with her inheritance. Using little but her own strength and power, Mary must secure her way to the Scottish throne among turmoil, religion and political intrigue -along with her distant claim to the throne of England and uncertain friendship with her cousin Queen Elizabeth I. I wasn't really expecting much from this book, but I was very pleasantly surprised. The writing here is very solid, straightforward and incredibly quick and easy to read. And the research is surprisingly solid and accurate, but yet with enough unique intrigue to keep readers interested (even if they already know Mary's story). I was especially impressed with how Meyer handled the politics and how she portrayed a strong female character triumphing over -and being a victim of -these politics. Honestly, this almost read as an adult historical fiction novel because it became so sophisticated and strong (worthy of *The Other Boleyn Girl* crowd). Yet, what kept it distinctly YA is how Meyer glossed over some of the more horrible (and adult) happenings in Mary's life. I was glad, at least, that she didn't completely leave them out (as they are an important part of Mary's story), but glossed over enough to keep it fairly clean (compared to the adult novels in the genre). After having read so many of those adult novels, I actually found this to be very refreshing and much more readable. Most importantly, Mary's story isn't about romance, it's about a strong young royal trying to survive the wild world that she's been born into. *The Wild Queen* isn't an innovative book, but an incredibly solid entry into the YA historical fiction genre. I'd recommend it for history nerds (such as myself) who like their stories a little bit cleaner. Very polished, very clean and very entertaining. I'll have to pick up some of Meyer's other novels now.

This is a first-person fictional YA biography of Mary, Queen of Scots, part of the author's Young Royals series. Others in the series detail the lives of Marie Antoinette, Catherine de Medici, Catherine of Aragon, and Queen Anne. When King James V dies in 1542, his newborn daughter Mary is crowned queen of Scotland. Betrothed to the dauphin of France, Mary is raised in the French court and, when old enough, marries and becomes the queen of France. In spite of her position, she has very little power and all that she has vanishes the day her husband dies. Determined to claim her rightful place as the queen of Scotland, she returns to Britain. But not

everyone is happy with a female ruler, and not everyone supports her claim to the throne. She is surrounded by traitors and doesn't know whom to trust. Perhaps if she follows her heart, she can make peace with her cousin, Queen Elizabeth of England. I am keenly interested in the history of England and Scotland's monarchs and I love reading about the kings and queens of old. Their lives were often tragic and filled with misery, but it's all very fascinating to me. However, sad to say, I wasn't impressed with this novel and I had to force myself to finish it. First of all, though it's titled, "The Wild Queen: The Days and Nights of Mary, Queen of Scots," this is misleading. The book (and the queen herself) is actually quite tame. Sure, Mary makes a few foolish decisions, but she is hardly the fiery, untamed queen that the title and description implies. And she is not promiscuous in the least. Indeed, she remains a virgin for more than half the book, until she marries her second husband. While some historical accounts suggest she had a passionate affair with her personal secretary, in this novel, she doesn't. But it's okay, because the author assures us repeatedly throughout the book that Mary is quite "wild." My second complaint lies with the fact that the entire book reads like a history textbook, except that it's in first-person, with dialogue. It is a prime example of what not to do when writing a novel. As the expression goes, "Show, don't tell." You're supposed to fill your novel with scenes depicting what happens. Instead, this novel merely tells us everything that happens. For example: "On the December 17, 1566 (sic) the little prince was christened in the chapel royal at Stirling with all the pomp and ceremony and majesty that a prince deserved and the Catholic church could offer. The countess of Argyll stood as Queen Elizabeth's proxy. My son was named Charles, in honor of the king of France, his godfather, and James, in honor of my father and grandfather." Instead of coldly stating these facts, it would have been nice if the author had described the scene. Let us see the priest holding the squirming baby, hear the excited murmurs of the crowd, smell the incense and burning candles, feel the tremors of pride that rush through the queen as she watches her infant son being baptized. What could have been an exciting scene was instead reduced to a few bland sentences. The entire book is written this way: very detached, very distant. Even though it's written in first-person, you never truly get inside the queen's head. You never learn to sympathize with her, or to feel what she's feeling. It's all very dull, like a history book, with lots of recitations of names and dates and events. I had hoped to enjoy this novel, however I cannot give it more than two stars. Not recommended.

Carolyn Meyer's portrayal of Mary Queen of Scots in "The Wild Queen" is a remarkable work of historical fiction. This book digs deep into the thoughts and personality of Mary and her futile struggle to claim the English throne from her "sister" Queen Elizabeth I. Her story is so sad. She

became Queen of Scotland as an infant, Queen of France by marriage, and she coveted the title of Queen of England. However, she ended up on the executioner's block. A dark time in history. Highly recommended.

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