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Embroidering Her Truth: Mary, Queen of Scots and the Language of Power
By: Clare Hunter

ISBN-13: 9781529346282

I felt that Mary was there, pulling at my sleeve, willing me to appreciate the artistry, wanting me to understand the dazzle of the material world that shaped her. At her execution Mary, Queen of Scots wore red. Widely known as the colour of strength and passion, it was in fact worn by Mary as the Catholic symbol of martyrdom. In sixteenth-century Europe womens voices were suppressed and silenced. Even for a queen like Mary, her prime duty was to bear sons. In an age when textiles expressed power, Mary exploited them to emphasise her female agency. From her lavishly embroidered gowns as the prospective wife of the French Dauphin to the fashion dolls she used to encourage a Marian style at the Scottish court and the subversive messages she embroidered in captivity for her supporters, Mary used textiles to advance her political agenda, affirm her royal lineage and tell her own story. In this eloquent cultural biography, Clare Hunter exquisitely blends history, politics and memoir to tell the story of a queen in her own voice.

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Coût **324 USD ($)**

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