

# MARY STUART PLEADS

(A Dramatic Monolog based on Schiller's drama)

Arranged by Mary Ann Porterfield



## Wetmore Declamation Bureau

Box 2695  
Sioux City, IA 51106

[www.wetmoredeclamation.com](http://www.wetmoredeclamation.com)  
Email: [speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com](mailto:speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com)

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This is a one character arrangement from the reading with which Mary Ann Porterfield won first in the National Contest of the National Forensic League, 1935.

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Queen Mary of Scotland, endowed with beauty, brains and charm, had always ruled with love and gentleness, and her cousin Elizabeth, crafty, sharp and subtle, feared, hated and envied her.

Fearing the usurpation of her throne by Mary, Elizabeth plotted to destroy her name by means of lies and false accusations. Although Mary was innocent in all implications, appearances were against her. Elizabeth's tricks succeeded and Mary was believed guilty. After twenty long years in an English prison, Mary has sought an audience with the queen to plead for her life. As Elizabeth enters her cell, Mary speaks:

Is this Elizabeth?—Oh, God, from out these features there speaks no heart.

Farewell high thoughts, and pride of noble mind; I will forget my dignity, and all my sufferings, I will fall before her feet who hath reduced me to all this wretchedness. (Turns to Elizabeth)

Heaven, oh cousin, seems to have declared itself on thy side and has graced thy happy head with victory. I bless the power that thus hath raised you. (Bows) But in your turn be merciful, my sister. Let me not lie before you thus disgraced. Stretch forth your hand, your royal hand, to raise your sister from the depths of her distress.

Oh, for God's pity, stand not so estranged and inaccessible, like some tall cliff. Open thy arms, extend in mercy to me thy royal hand and raise me from my fearful fall. You have done your worst to me. You have blighted me in my youth and broken my spirit.

Oh, how shall I begin? Thou turnst such icy looks upon me that my soul doth sink within me. Elizabeth, toward me thou hast been neither merciful nor just. I am thine equal and yet thou hast made of me a prisoner. All I ask now is my freedom that I may bare my heart in the presence of my people and prove that I am innocent.

Ah, now I see your hand outlaid. Would you dare, regardless of shame, to lay my crowned head upon the fatal block? I turned to thee for aid and thou, trampling on the rights of a nation and of hospitality, hast cruelly treated me, abandoned me and finally exposed me to a trial. But no more of the past. We are now face to face. Display thy heart. Tell me the crimes of which I am accused.—

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