

Het volgende fragment is een hoofdstuk uit het boek Unruly, A History of England's Kings and Queens, geschreven door David Mitchell en uitgebracht in 2023.

38. Queen Mary I

Queen Mary was known as Bloody Mary because of the large number of people she killed. And also because of 3. She was the first properly crowned woman to rule as queen regnant, not just queen consort. You weren't supposed to be able to do this job if you were a woman, so a lot of people didn't like it. That may be why she gets the soubriquet 'bloody' when many of her male predecessors were responsible for more deaths – in battles as well as executions.

That said, if you're going by executions alone, Queen Mary was right up there on the leader board. She had almost 300 Protestants killed, mostly by burning – something else that undermines the 'bloody' thing. Beheadings feel bloody, burnings are more ashy. Or smoky. Smoky Mary would sound quite sexy, like a jazz singer, but from the sound of her, that too would have been inappropriate. Still, considering the form of execution that she favoured, it seems odd to associate her with a non-flammable liquid.

