

**Handout 20.3.** Solve the Mystery

**Why would a man who was a hero in battle, who enjoyed the trust and loyalty of many good friends, who became king of all of Scotland, be overthrown and killed by his own noblemen? And why would a woman who suddenly got all she ever wanted, who was made queen of Scotland, go mad and kill herself?**

Here are the circumstances:

Eleventh-century Scotland was a violent and troubled country. Feuding families and clans fought to control trade and territory. The castle was the power base of each rival war-lord (thane). Political murder and revenge killings were commonplace. Marauding Vikings and Norsemen raided constantly.

Macbeth was born into this violent world in 1005, son of the great family that ruled Moray and Ross. His own father was murdered by his cousins. Macbeth married Gruach, granddaughter to a High King of Scotland. They had no children of their own. (Gibson 1993)

*Imagine that you are a part of this world, too. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are dead, and you are asked by the new king to investigate their deaths. You are asked to report not only how they died but also why. The new king wants to learn from the mistakes of Macbeth to avoid the same violent end. It is your job to solve the mystery of this terrible tragedy.*

Each day as we read scenes in class, we will reveal clues. Your job is to keep track of these clues in your reading “detective’s journal” (a steno pad), take notes on the analysis that we talk about with each one, and use them to solve the mystery of the deaths of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Good Luck, super sleuths!

**Work Cited**

Gibson, Rex, ed. (1993). *Macbeth: Cambridge School Shakespeare*. New York: Cambridge University Press.