

Handout 20.4. Essay: Have You Solved 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.

Now that you have the clues, it's time for you to make your report to the king! In a five-paragraph essay, write an analysis in which you explain the reasons for Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's tragic ends. What lessons can we learn from their tragic story? Use some of your clues as support for your reasons. Be sure to integrate your quotations smoothly into your writing using appropriate lead-ins. Also, you must cite the lines noting the act, scene, and line number. You must turn in a final draft on _____ **to turnitin.com**. As a requirement of this assignment, **you must get feedback on your rough draft** from me (make an appointment, please), a parent, another teacher, or the teacher in the English resource center. You must have that person **sign and date** your rough draft! As in previous assignments, if you use the resource center, you will earn 5 points extra credit. Turn in the rough draft in hard copy on _____ in class.