



## EDUCATOR GUIDE

### ROYAL MURDER

#### The Deadly Intrigue of Ten Sovereigns

by Elizabeth MacLeod

**GENRE:** middle grade non-fiction, history

**THEMES:** military & wars, history; biography, monarchy

**SUITABLE FOR:** Grade 5–7, Ages 10–12

**GUIDED READING LEVEL:** Fountas and Pinnell Z

**LEXILE:** 1130L

#### SUMMARY:

What would you do for absolute power?

For many monarchs throughout history, it was a question that ruled their lives. Step into the world of palatial intrigue, where holding the throne means evading death . . . or causing it.

Some sovereigns were cunning at avoiding their killers. Cleopatra of Egypt once rolled herself into a rug and was carried out past her enemies' noses. Other royals were brutal when dealing with foes. Vlad the Impaler's monstrous methods inspired the legend of Dracula the vampire.

From monarchs murdered at the hands of their subjects to kings killed on the battle field, the stories of ten royals are told:

- Cleopatra of Egypt (69 BCE – 30 BCE)
- Vlad III the Impaler of Wallachia (1431 – 1476)
- Richard III of England (1452 – 1485)
- “Bloody Mary” I (1516 – 1558)
- Mary, Queen of Scots (1542 – 1587)
- Elizabeth I (1533 – 1603)
- Louis XVI (1754 – 1793)
- Marie Antoinette (1755 – 1793)
- Elisabeth of Austria (1837 – 1898)
- The Romanovs of Russia (1872 – 1918)

A final section offers examples from the 20th century, from assassination attempts in England to a royal massacre in Nepal.

Please remember that the suggested questions and activities within this educator guide are meant to serve as a starting point. Educators are encouraged to select items from each part of the guided inquiry process that work best for their style of teaching and will help them meet their goals when covering the topics in this book. Activities and prompts should be tweaked and/or reformatted to best fit your students, context, and community to ensure equity and inclusion.

## Classroom Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Find out more about Julius Caesar, Cleopatra's first husband. What made him such a great commander and leader? As well, discover what happened to Caesarion, Cleopatra and Caesar's son. Did he get to India, as his mother hoped?
2. One reason Vlad the Impaler gained such a bad reputation was because he lived at the time of the invention of the printing press and printers needed stories to print. Research the printing press and discover how else it has changed people's lives.
3. Imagine that you're Richard III. Write a letter describing how you feel about your nephews in the Tower of London, about Shakespeare and how he ruined your reputation, and about being king of England.
4. Mary I, or "Bloody Mary," was the first queen of England in more than 400 years — if you don't count Lady Jane Grey. Find out more about this sovereign, nicknamed the "Nine Days Queen," and her bloody end.
5. There are many old and current movies about Elizabeth I. Watch one, then discuss how it differs from history. Why do you think the movie is different?
6. Although Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I never met in real life, they might have spoken over the telephone, if it had existed in their lifetimes. With a friend, write a script for a conversation between these queens and perform it for your class.
7. Louis XVI of France lived with his family in the beautiful palace of Versailles. Create a travel brochure for the site as if you are trying to entice people who lived during Louis's reign to visit it.
8. Paris, France, has long been the world's fashion capital, including when Marie Antoinette was on France's throne. Research how she changed fashions, such as clothing, hair styles and makeup.

9. When Empress Elizabeth of Austria and Hungary was assassinated she was out on a street in Geneva, Switzerland. Pretend you're a news reporter who has arrived on the scene just moments after her murder.
  
10. The bones of the two young people found near the Romanovs's original graves have now been identified. Find out whose they are and the latest information about the scientific investigation of the bones.