***Macbeth***

**Informational Text: The Real Story**

It is interesting to note that Shakespeare’s play *Macbeth* was based loosely on true stories about real people. In fact, it is believed that Shakespeare wrote the play for King James I and VI, who was king of both England and Scotland at the time. Allegedly using the *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587) by Raphael Holinshed as his source of information, Shakespeare set out to create a realistic fictional drama based on a true story.

The real King Duncan I (Donnchad mac Crínáin), nicknamed “the sick” was the King of Scotland (called Alba) from 1034 to 1040. He was the grandson of Malcolm II, who was killed in battle in 1034. Duncan had two sons, Malcolm III, and Donald III. According to records, Duncan was young and weak and was seen as a terrible and ineffective leader. His ascension to the throne at age 17 caused turmoil in the family, as the kingship was to have alternated between the two branches of the royal line. Many believed his cousin, Macbeth (mac Bethad mac Findlaich), should have had claim to the throne through his mother. This cause strife in the family, which would continue for hundreds of years.

After Duncan was killed in battle by Macbeth in 1040, Macbeth took the throne and became King of Scotland. Macbeth reigned successfully for 17 years, and he was said to be a powerful and strong leader. However, Duncan’s son Malcolm wanted revenge against Macbeth, and felt that he should have inherited the throne after his father’s death. In 1054, Malcolm III joined forces with Earl Siward to defeat him at the Battle of Dunsinnan. It was not until 1057 that Macbeth was completely overthrown and Malcolm III took the throne as King of Scotland.

Malcolm III Canmore reigned from 1058 to 1093.