

FOLGER BOOK CLUB



Discussion Questions: *Queen Hereafter*

Folger Book Club—March 2026

1. What did you think of this novel? If asked, what would you say this book is about?
2. Were you familiar with *Macbeth* before reading this story? What echoes of Shakespeare's plot did you notice? If you weren't familiar with *Macbeth*, did you feel something was lacking or does the story stand on its own?
3. Gruoch is navigating a patriarchal society, yet is surrounded by strong female characters. What kinds of power are embodied in each? Who do you think was the most influential to Gruoch? Were there any you were particularly drawn to?
4. What is the significance of Ardith? Should Gruoch have abandoned her as she did?
5. Does Gruoch really want to be queen? What are her priorities? What are her values?
6. Gruoch is advised to look like the innocent flower but be the serpent underneath (a reference to Shakespeare's play). Is she successful?
7. *Queen Hereafter* is one of a number of Lady Macbeth novels published in the past few years, but there are comparatively few fictionalized versions of *Macbeth*. What about her seems to make her a more compelling character to contemporary authors?
8. Gruoch's grandmother predicts that Gruoch "will be immortalized" (190). Does this anticipate Shakespeare's play?
9. If you are familiar with Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth, did you read this as a straightforward prequel, with the character being the same as in Shakespeare's work? Or did you read this as the "true" story of a woman Shakespeare dramatized?
10. What do you think happens to Lulach?