

WU?@therep

MACBETH by William Shakespeare Directed by Paul Mason Barnes

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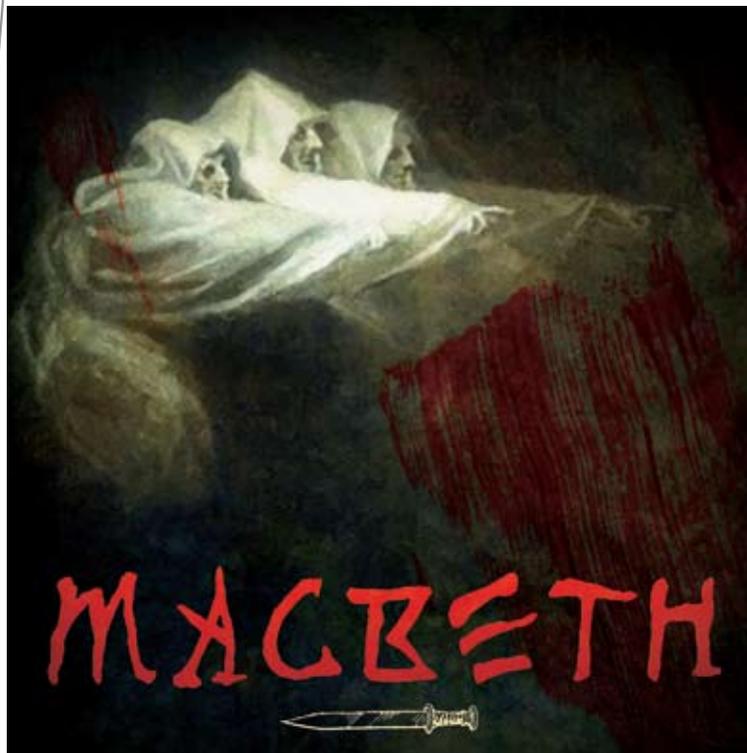
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the 411

At The Rep, we know that life moves fast—okay, really fast. But we also know that some things are worth slowing down

for. We believe that live theatre is one of those pit stops worth making and are excited that you are going to stop by for a show. To help you get the most bang for your buck, we have put together **WU? @ THE REP**—an IM guide that will give you everything you need to know to get at the top of your theatergoing game—fast. You'll find character descriptions (**A/S/L**), a plot summary (**FYI**), biographical information (**F&F**), historical context (**B4U**), and other bits and pieces (**HTH**). Most importantly, we'll have some ideas about what this all means **IRL**, anyway.

CU@therep!



The Teacher's Lounge

In an effort to make our educational materials more accessible to students and easier for educators to incorporate into the classroom, our study guide is written in a student-oriented format. We hope that you will circulate this guide among your students in the weeks preceding your visit to The Rep, encouraging them to browse it before and after class and as time allows, using it as a launch point for both pre- and post-performance discussions. You may also want to visit our website, www.repstl.org, for additional information including educational games, activity suggestions and behind-the-scenes information. Any materials, either from this guide or from our website may be reproduced for use in the classroom. As always, we appreciate your making live theatre a part of your classroom experience and welcome your feedback and questions.

NEATO!

Show Me Standards: CA 2, 3, 5, 7; FA 2, 3, 4, 5; SS 2, 6
and Illinois Learning Standards: 1, 2, 5, 15, 16, 18, 25, 27.

WELCOME!

The desire to learn, insatiable when awakened, can sometimes lie dormant until touched by the right teacher or the right experience. We at The Rep are grateful to have the opportunity to play a role supporting you as you awaken the desire for learning in your students.

If Shakespeare did, indeed, write the soap operas of his time, *Macbeth* is the one that best speaks to the issues of young people. Peer pressure, destructive self-involvement, violent solutions to problems, betraying friends and breaking trust—these are issues that your students face to varying degrees on a regular basis. *Macbeth* vividly shows them a downward spiral that ends in disaster for all. It is a wonderful opportunity for your students to observe the escalating consequences of bad choices and to discuss how one can “stop the madness.”

It would be a good idea to take a minute on the bus to give your students these quick theatre etiquette reminders:

- This show has an intermission; there will be time for bathroom breaks before the show and partway through.
- The actors can hear the audience and appreciate the laughter, gasps and quiet attention to action. However, talking, moving around and eating is very distracting to others and can dampen the energy of what is happening on stage.
- Pictures, phone calls and texting are not allowed at any time during the performance.

Live theatre won't allow your students to take a passive role—they must work with us to create the experience which takes the learning deeper. Our unique ability to fuse words and images onstage allows your students to explore new ideas as well as excites their imaginations. We will do our part so your students will be stirred to understandings and self-awareness while delving into new and familiar worlds. You are doing your part by using The Rep to extend your intellectual and aesthetic curriculum. Thank you!

Marsha Coplon
Director of Education

A/S/L

Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble—watch out for the **THREE WITCHES** or the **WEIRD SISTERS**! While you can never be sure what is actually in their cauldron, you can rest assured they're cooking up trouble!

As the King of Scotland, **DUNCAN** is always on the lookout for traitors and tyrants. He seems to have taken a particular liking to Macbeth (and his military successes) as of late.

MALCOLM and **DONALBAIN** are both sons of Duncan, with Malcolm being heir to the throne. With all these traitors running around, it's best for these two to watch their backs!

Originally an honored general in Duncan's army and Thane of Glamis, **MACBETH** seems to have larger, more royal aspirations. He seems to be acting a little weird since he visited with the Three Witches.

LADY MACBETH is Macbeth's wife and supporter of his grand ambitions. She does feel, however, that Macbeth is often too nice of a guy to actually pursue his dreams ... perhaps she can help him along?

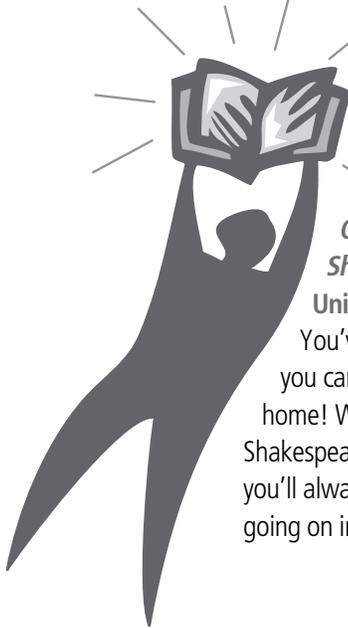
As a dear friend of Macbeth and fellow great general, **BANQUO** recognizes that Macbeth may be acting a little strangely lately, but what's a best bud to do?

MACDUFF, the Thane of Fife, also smells something amiss with Macbeth. In this time of war, he had best watch out for his family—**LADY MACDUFF** and his **CHILDREN**!

It always seems like **ROSS**, **LENNOX**, **ANGUS**, **MENTEITH** and **CAITHNESS** (all Scottish Thanes) are hanging around, whether they're with royalty or military men.

FLEANCE is Banquo's son. As no one seems safe, even the son of a great general needs to beware.

READ MORE ABOUT IT



We encourage you to explore the following books and websites for more information.

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. Oxford School Shakespeare. Oxford University Press. 2009.

You've seen the play, now you can read it and enjoy it at home! With the Oxford School Shakespeare and its textual notes, you'll always know exactly what's going on in the story.

Shakespeare, William. *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*. Penguin Classics, 2002. Did you like *Macbeth*? Want to see more? Check out Penguin's complete collection of Shakespeare's work, including his plays and poetry.

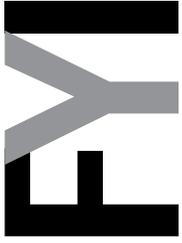
<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/>
Can't afford the complete works of Shakespeare? Go online and find them at MIT's website where you can read them all, in their entirety!

<http://absoluteshakespeare.com/>

Want to know more about the Bard? Check out this website for info, pictures, quizzes and so much more!

<http://www.pangloss.com/seidel/Shaker/>

Bullies getting you down? Take the high road and issue your retorts Shakespearean style.



SPOILER ALERT

AS THE PLAY OPENS, something is rotten in the state of Scotland. Traitors have been banding together against King Duncan and the land is locked in the turmoil of war. Thunder and lightening rain down on three witches as they plot their next meeting—with Macbeth.

BACK ON THE FRONT LINES, Duncan and his attendants receive a wounded sergeant. He shares the good news that Macbeth and Banquo have triumphed over the traitor Macdonwald and the combined forces of Norway and Ireland. It seems that finally Scotland can return to normal.

AFTER THEIR TRIUMPH on the battlefield, Macbeth and Banquo discuss the strange weather and the war. They are met on a heath by the three witches, who share with the two men a series of prophecies. They tell Macbeth that in addition to his title of Thane of Glamis, he shall soon be Thane of Cawdor and then King of Scotland. They tell Banquo that he shall father a line of kings though not be one himself. As the men attempt to question the witches in disbelief, the witches disappear. Just then, Ross enters and tells Macbeth the king is delighted with his heroics on the battlefield. Ross also shares that as a reward, Duncan has named Macbeth the Thane of Cawdor.

MACBETH BEGINS to wonder—are the witches and their prophecies genuine? He writes a letter to his wife, Lady Macbeth, informing her of the fortune-telling. She begins hatching a plan to help him secure the throne, to which he reluctantly agrees.

KING DUNCAN CAN'T seem to get enough of Macbeth, insisting upon visiting for dinner and staying the night in Macbeth's castle. It is on this fateful night that Lady Macbeth's plan is put into action—she wants her husband to kill the king. After everyone has eaten and Duncan has gone to bed, Macbeth approaches Duncan's chambers to

carry out the plan. Lady Macbeth has taken care of distracting the guards, but Macbeth is stopped outside the chamber by a vision of a bloody dagger floating in the air before him. Though it haunts him and seems to foretell misfortunes to come, he still enters the chamber and kills the king.

AFTERWARDS, MACBETH IS so shaken he can't carry out the second part of the plan—planting the evidence on the king's guards (thereby framing them). He's really losing it now—hearing things and seeing things—so Lady Macbeth has to pull it all together and take care of the guards herself. The bloody pair slips to bed as there is a knocking somewhere in the castle.

MACDUFF AND LENNOX arrive at the castle, and are taken with Macbeth to the king's chambers. Macduff finds Duncan's body, and in a fit of feigned rage Macbeth kills the guards before they can tell their side of the story. The king's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, have fled (for their safety), though their disappearance makes the others suspect them as newly turned traitors. Though Macduff privately suspects something isn't quite right with Macbeth, he doesn't say anything when Macbeth is named king.

NOW THAT HE'S KING, Macbeth's mind has not eased. He worries constantly about the witches' prophecy that Banquo will father a line of kings, and immediately seizes an opportunity to kill him and his son as they return for a banquet (he hires murders to carry out the deed for him). At the feast that night, Macbeth makes a scene as he sees the ghost of Banquo. No one else can see the ghost, so it appears Macbeth is insanely shouting at an empty seat.

EVERMORE UNHINGED, Macbeth visits the three witches for further guidance. They conjure up three apparitions (ghosts or ghostlike images) with three pieces of advice and reassurance for the king. The



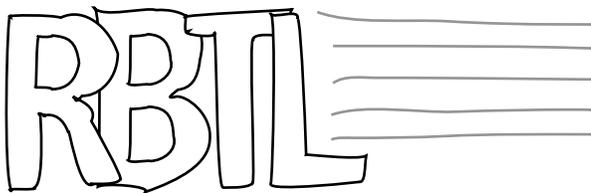
first apparition tells Macbeth to beware of Macduff. The next informs him that no man born of woman can harm the king. And finally, the third apparition foretells that Macbeth will never lose his kingdom until the forest of Birnam Wood marches to high Dunsinane Hill against him.

BACK AT MACBETH'S CASTLE, Lady Macbeth has become overwhelmed with guilt. She stumbles around in a sleepwalking stupor, continually attempting to wash the blood from her hands. Meanwhile, Macbeth wastes no time in attempting to eliminate Macduff. Macbeth's murderers arrive at Macduff's castle too late however, as he has departed for England, but they do kill his wife and children.

IN ENGLAND, Macduff and Malcolm meet to try and figure out what to do next. After Ross shares the news of the slayings of Macduff's family, they decide

to gather up forces (including the Earl of Northumberland's army) to take Scotland back from Macbeth. The army plants itself in Birnam Wood, each soldier camouflaging himself by tying a bough (a branch of a tree) to himself. As they march on Dunsinane Hill, it appears as though Birnam Wood is marching on Dunsinane Hill.

SHAKEN BY THE fulfillment of the prophecy but not entirely deterred, Macbeth takes to the battlefield under the assurance that no man born of woman can harm him. As the battle comes to a head, he meets Macduff, who tells him that he was not born of woman. Rather, Macduff was ripped from his mother's womb (like a modern day C-Section). Far too late, Macbeth realizes he has misread the prophecies. The battle ends with Macduff beheading Macbeth, and the throne being restored to Malcolm.



AMBITION

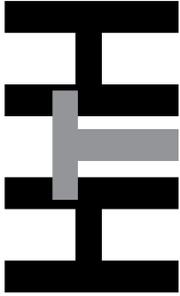
In the beginning, Macbeth was a successful guy—winning battles for the royal army and running his territory as Thane of Glamis—but when the three witches presented him with the prophecy, he began to chase after larger dreams. Was Macbeth wrong to want more than he had? Or was the problem with how he pursued his dreams? If you were Macbeth, what would you have done differently? Could he still have achieved his dreams without his extreme means?

THE STATE OF SCOTLAND

While Macbeth isn't the most moral of men, what do you think of the world he lives in? In the beginning of the play, traitors threaten the sanctity of the nation. Throughout the story, nobody seems to really trust anyone, and when they do (like Duncan trusting Macbeth) it ends in disaster. In order to achieve anything, someone has to kill someone else. What does the state of Scotland seem to reflect for the world of *Macbeth*? Do you think leaders should behave this way? How do you think an ideal leader would carry him or herself?

THE SUPERNATURAL

Throughout the play, there is an eerie otherworldly influence. From the onset, thunder and lightning seem to mirror the disorder on stage. The three witches conjure evil prophecies and apparitions to tempt Macbeth into wrongdoing. Ghastly images haunt Macbeth throughout the play, punishing him for his ill-begotten ways. What do you make of the supernatural in this play? Do you think things like this are real? Or are they just silly? Do you have any superstitions? Are you afraid of the dark or being alone? Why?



HURLYBURLY: noisy confusion or tumult

ERE: before

HEATH: an area of open uncultivated land with characteristic vegetation of heather and coarse grasses

GRAYMALKIN: an old or evil-looking female cat

PADDOCK: (noun) a small field or enclosure where horses are kept or exercised, (verb) to keep or enclose a horse in such a small field or enclosure

ANON: soon, shortly

KERNS: a light-armed Irish foot soldier

GALLOWGLASSES: an elite class of mercenary warriors from the Highlands of Scotland

VALOR: great courage in the face of danger, especially in battle

SOOTH: truth

THANE: a man who held land granted by the king or by a military nobleman, ranking between an ordinary freeman and a hereditary noble.

SIEVE: a utensil consisting of a wire or mesh held in a frame, used for straining solids from liquids, for separating coarser from finer particles, or for reducing soft solids to a pulp

PROPHETIC: accurately describing or predicting what will happen in the future

CORPORAL: of or relating to the human body

PROLOGUES: an event or action that leads to another event or situation

REPENTANCE: feeling or expressing sincere regret or remorse about one's wrongdoing

WANTON: deliberate and unprovoked

HARBINGER: a person or thing that signals or announces the approach of another

METAPHYSICAL: of or relating to abstract concepts such as being, knowing, substance, cause, identity, time and space

COMPUNCTIOUS: causing a feeling of guilt or regret

PALL: gloom, heaviness or fear

BEGUILE: to charm or enchant someone, sometimes in a deceptive way

MARTLET: a bird depicted on an emblem like a swallow without feet

SURCEASE: relief or consolation

QUELL: put an end to a rebellion or other disorder, typically by use of force; also to suppress

PALPABLE: able to be touched or felt

HECATE: Greco-Roman goddess associated with magic and crossroads; the goddess of witches

MURTHUR: murder

SURFEITED: to desire no more of something as a result of having consumed or done it in excess

EQUIVOCATE: to use ambiguous language to conceal the truth or avoid committing oneself

SCRUPLE: a feeling of doubt or hesitation with regard to morality or propriety of a course of action

PARRICIDE: the killing of a parent or other near relative

JOCUND: cheerful and lighthearted

MALEVOLENCE: having or showing a wish to do evil to others

TOIL: work extremely hard or incessantly

LAUDABLE: deserving praise and commendation

MALADY: a disease or ailment



THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH ... OR THE HISTORY OF MACBETH?

YOU KNOW that Shakespeare wrote tragedies (plays in which the hero dies at the end), comedies (plays in which everything ends happily, usually in a series of weddings), and histories (plays based on real historical figures and events), right? Which one is *Macbeth*?

IF YOU GO by the title, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, then you would surely call the play a tragedy. It doesn't seem to end well for the play's namesake, there aren't any weddings in the end, and it certainly isn't based on real historical figures or events...or is it?

AS LITTLE OF Shakespeare's work is the creation of something entirely new (he usually adapts or borrows characters and stories from other sources), it should come as no surprise that Macbeth is in fact based on characters who actually lived. Don't be alarmed, though—while Shakespeare's work may not always be 100% original in plot, the way he crafts the story is always inventive, creative and often a complete re-imagination of the source. As such, the real Macbeth wasn't exactly the serial killer Shakespeare paints him to be.

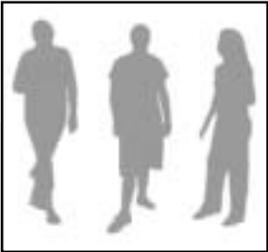
THE REAL MACBETH (Mac Bethad mac Findlaich) lived from 1005-1057, and was Mormaer (think chieftain or earl) of his realm, Moray. He was an important man who inherited his title and wealth from his father, Finlay. In fact, unlike in the play, Macbeth

was actually a descendent of royalty, and was a cousin (on his mother's side) of King Duncan. Because of complicated rules for the passing of the crown, there was some dispute over Duncan's claim to the throne.

Even though Macbeth felt he was the rightful heir to the throne, he instead humbly served in his cousin's royal army. In 1040, after political tensions between northern Celtic sentiments (under Macbeth's leadership) and southern Saxon influence (with Duncan's favor) came to a head, Macbeth killed Duncan on the battlefield in Morayshire. He became king and married Gruoch, also descended from royalty. It seemed his right to the throne was finally fulfilled.



WHILE IN THE PLAY Macbeth carries on with a paranoid blood lust, most of the real-life Macbeth's 14-year rule was actually quite peaceful. He was known for his fair and lawful rule, imposing order and encouraging Christianity. He even made a pilgrimage to Rome for a papal jubilee. Macbeth's end, in a similar fashion to the play, came at the hands of Siward, Earl of Northumbria. Siward's political interests were aligned with Duncan's son, Malcolm (who happened to be Siward's nephew), and in 1054 Siward waged war on Macbeth. Though Macbeth was a brave leader and had quelled two other uprisings, he met his doom on the battlefield in 1057. With the campaign being successful, Malcolm was named the new King of Scotland.



- * Can you name any other plays or movies that are based on real-life events?
- * What can artistic adaptations of actual events teach us? How?



WHO IS THIS GUY?

Just who is William Shakespeare? Such a simple question seems to deserve a simple answer, but just like the theatre and *Macbeth*, the answer isn't quite so simple.

First of all, when you ask the question, "Who is this guy?" you need to be clear on who you're looking for. After all, you may seek the famous football player William Shakespeare who was a halfback and punter for Notre Dame. Or maybe you're looking for the man who mapped the uncharted areas of Northern Arabia for England around the turn of the 20th century, William Shakespeare. Still yet you might be looking for William Shakespeare the inventor, who you can thank for the level-winding fishing reel.

And while each of these fellows has a fame of his own right, none can stack up to the legend known simply as "The Bard," or William Shakespeare—perhaps the greatest playwright to ever live (his work has been translated into nearly every language and is performed more than that of any other playwright).

You might assume that since he was the rock star of playwrights, we'd know everything about The Bard, including his favorite foods and all the scandals he was involved in. Unfortunately, however, if we rewind to Elizabethan England (that is, England from around 1558 to 1603), there was no TMZ, internet or paparazzi, so information about Shakespeare's life is actually pretty limited. In fact, there's even debate as to whether or not he was really the actual author of all 37 plays and 154 sonnets! What little we know about him comes from public record—registrar records, court records, wills, marriage certificates and his tombstone.

BIRTH

While we know that William Shakespeare was baptized on April 26, 1564, no one really knows for sure when he was actually born.

Historians speculate he was born three days earlier (coincidentally St. George's Day), though no hard evidence exists one way or the other.

GROWING UP

Shakespeare was born and grew up in Stratford-upon-Avon, a market town and civil parish in south Warwickshire, England. He was the third of eight children for John and Mary Shakespeare, and one of only five that survived to adulthood. Shakespeare's siblings (in order of birth) were Joan, Margaret, Gilbert, Joan, Anne, Richard and Edmund.

William's father was both a savvy and industrious man, keen as a businessman and good with tanning, leatherwork and whittawering (using white leather to make items like gloves and purses). John was also prominent in politics, being one of 14 town council burgesses (member of governing body). Later on in life, however, John would be mixed up in some shady dealings with wool on the black market, causing him to lose some standing and his position in the town council.

Less is known about Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden. She married John in 1557 and was the youngest daughter of a prominent Warwickshire family. Other than her inheritance (which was much of her father's estate), marriage and children, little else is known about Mary Arden.

John Shakespeare's home, located on Henley Street about 100 miles northwest of London, is believed to be the birthplace and childhood home of The Bard. The home still stands today and serves as a museum and popular visitor attraction.

SCHOOLING

Don't tell your parents (or your teacher!), but we really don't have any proof that Shakespeare ever went to school. It's often presumed and widely accepted that he



attended King's New Grammar School (where all boys in Stratford-upon-Avon went), though we have no conclusive evidence either way. If he did go, his education would have been intensely focused on Latin, grammar and the classics, which would explain his deep knowledge of literature and ability to wield words so well. Don't tell your parents this either, but we have no evidence that William ever went to college.

MARRIAGE

Because of a bond certificate (posted by two neighbors of the bride—Fulk Sandalls and John Richardson—noting there were no impediments to the marriage) we know that Shakespeare was married to Anne Hathaway on November 28, 1582. William was only 18 years old while Anne was 26.

Six months later (May of 1583), Hathaway gave birth to their first child, Susanna. Twin children, Hamnet and Judith, were born in February 1585, though Hamnet died when he was just 11 years old.

THE LOST YEARS

After his marriage and children were born, there is little record of what happened in Shakespeare's life before his theatrical success. It is believed he left his family in Stratford to find work in London, returning little until 1609. While he was in London, legend has it that Shakespeare was a schoolmaster and/or that he minded the horses of theatre patrons in London. Only stories support either claim, no real evidence exists.

THE PLAYWRIGHT ARRIVES

It appears that by 1592, Shakespeare had arrived on the theatrical scene as a playwright in London. He apparently had earned enough notoriety to be called "an upstart crow" by fellow (jealous?) writer Robert Greene. By 1594, the "upstart crow"



Shakespeare's house in Stratford-upon-Avon

was a part owner of the playing company Lord Chamberlain's Men. The company became the King's Men after King James I adopted them in 1603. Shakespeare was also known to be an actor in the company, with many of his works including special direction for actors when such a thing typically did not exist in scripts.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

Public records indicate that The Bard died on April 23, 1616 (which, ironically, eerily coincides with his suspected date of birth—April 23, 1564). He left his second-best bed to his wife Anne Hathaway while giving most of his estate to his daughter Susanna. This isn't actually as bad as it seems, as the best bed was always reserved for guests, while the second-best bed was the marriage bed. William Shakespeare's last words can be found on his tombstone—

Good friend, for Jesus' sake, forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here;
Blest be the man that spares these stones
And curst be he that moves my bones.

AM I A SHAKESPEARE?

While there are those who may have the same name and claim some ancestral relation, William's direct family line ended when his granddaughter Elizabeth died in 1670.

THE SCOTTISH PLAY... AND OTHER THEATRICAL SUPERSTITIONS

Believe it or not, the theatre is a very superstitious place. Many actors in particular have a series of superstitions that they are very serious about. What do you think about these beliefs?

MACBETH, AKA, THE SCOTTISH PLAY

Due to various legends of injuries and deaths in its production history, Macbeth is considered a cursed play. Actors tend to refer to the play as "The Scottish Play" instead of by its title, especially when they are inside a theatre. To say "Macbeth" while in a theatre or rehearsal space for any production is to tempt injury or death of someone in the cast. If an actor does happen to utter the word, one of the "cures" is to exit the building, spin around three times, spit, curse and then knock to be allowed back in.

Where does this superstition come from? Many believe that Shakespeare used actual spells for the witches' chants. For this reason, to speak lines from the play (just like the title) is bad luck, particularly those of the witches. It is also thought that the superstition has arisen from the fact that there is more swordplay in the show than in other plays, opening the door for a greater potential for injury to performers.



BREAK A LEG

While it might seem like a good-spirited notion to wish your best friend good luck before they go on stage, don't do it! It's actually bad luck! Actors always wish one another good luck by instead saying, "break a leg." As with saying "Macbeth," an actor can remedy an accidental "good luck" by going

outside, spinning around three times, spitting, cursing and then knocking to be let back in.

This superstition is also shrouded in mystery and there is much debate as to its actual origin. Some say it is simply that the superstition works in opposite. That is—if wishing good luck is bad luck, then wishing something

bad like breaking a leg should be good luck. Others believe the superstition comes from the notion that Elizabethan audiences (or audiences from Shakespeare's time) would bang their chairs on the ground instead of actually applauding. It stood to reason that if an audience liked the performance well enough, they'd break one of the legs of the chair. Still yet another explanation comes from Vaudeville, where you wouldn't be paid for a performance if you didn't get on stage and complete your act. The side curtains, called legs, needed to be passed through (or broken) in order to get onstage.

Whatever you do, don't presume that anyone performing on a stage wants you to bid him or her "break a leg." For example, never tell a ballerina to break a leg, it's considered bad luck!

DON'T WHISTLE WHILE YOU WORK ... IN THE THEATRE!

Though it may seem odd, it is considered bad luck for an actor to whistle in a theatre. Much like sailors, in the past theatrical riggers used coded whistles to communicate cues for scene changes. If an actor whistled, it could easily confuse a rigger into changing the set or scenery, which could not only result in a botched production but an unsafe situation for performers. While today headsets and cue lights tend to indicate such changes, the superstition persists.

GHOSTS

Along with straight superstitions, theatrical folk also tend to be very afraid of ghosts. In fact, one such superstition is that the theatre should be closed one night a week so that ghosts can have a chance to perform their own plays. You might notice that most theatres are closed (or are "dark," in theatrical terms) on Mondays.

The Loretto-Hilton Center is said to have its own legends involving ghosts, though nothing that seems harmful or mischievous. There are many stories of carpenters and technicians working late at night and sensing an unknown presence, and a few have claimed to even have been aided by ghosts when working up on the cat walks above the stage. Legends tell of individuals half asleep that have nearly fallen while working, only to find themselves mysteriously and inexplicably grabbed and helped back to a ledge when no one else is around.

GHOST LIGHT

Ever seen a theatre completely dark? Maybe if you're in the audience in a blackout after or before a scene you can't see it, but there is traditionally a light downstage center. There is also always some sort of light burning backstage. The reasoning is that the light either wards off ghosts or at least gives

workers enough light to see and not anger them, and it also keeps actors from falling off the stage and injuring themselves.

This superstition isn't hard to get to the bottom of—it's scary in the dark! And, quite frankly, the backstage area can be a hazardous place without some kind of light. There is almost always a dimmed or blue shaded lamp burning backstage so that actors and crew can safely move on and off stage without injury (or running into a ghost!)



THE REAL THING

While the line between real and theatrical is often a blurry one, there are a few superstitions about what can and cannot be real onstage. It is bad luck to use real money, mirrors, flowers or jewelry on stage.

While mirrors have their own superstitions attached to them outside of the theatre (don't break one or it's seven years bad luck!), the beliefs surrounding money and jewelry are actually rooted in something very real—fear of theft! The last thing a performer wants to do onstage is find a crucial prop missing! And flowers? Well, many people are allergic to certain flowers. You certainly don't want one of your actors sneezing his or her way through a performance.

SWDY?

"MACBETH:

*Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme—I thank you,
gentlemen.
This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of
Cawdor.
If good, why do I yield to that
suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at
my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:
My thought, whose murder yet is but
fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that
function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not*

- * After finding out the first part of the witches' prophecy is true, Macbeth is uneasy with what it all might mean. While the first part, becoming Thane of Cawdor, has been a reward he deserved, Macbeth has doubts about whether becoming king can be similarly rewarded. When the opportunity to reap rewards occurs in your life, how do you react? Are you paralyzed by the prospect and believe you don't deserve the reward? Are you inspired by the prospect and pursue the dream in earnest? To what lengths would you go to achieve your ends?

"LADY MACBETH:

*Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and
shalt be
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear
thy nature.
It is too full o'the milk of human
kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst
be great;*

*Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou
wouldst highly,
That would thou holily; wouldst not
play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win."*

- * What does Lady Macbeth think of Macbeth and his drive (or lack thereof) to be king? How do you think Lady Macbeth feels this success can be achieved? Is Macbeth capable and desiring this action? Is Lady Macbeth admirable in her pursuit of her husband's success? Or is she devious?

"MACBETH:

*She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such
a word.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and
to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to
day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief
candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor
player
That struts and frets his hour upon the
stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."*

- * Immediately after hearing about his wife's death, Macbeth gives this famous speech. How do you think he feels about the death of Lady Macbeth? Does this speech echo feelings of regret? Or do you think Macbeth is enveloped in his own evil and unable to feel any such remorse?