

# *Inside* OUT

National Theatre Conservatory: An Education Department of the Denver Center for the Performing Arts

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**MAGBETH**

**Written by  
William Shakespeare**

**Directed by  
Rick Barbour**

**April 8-25**

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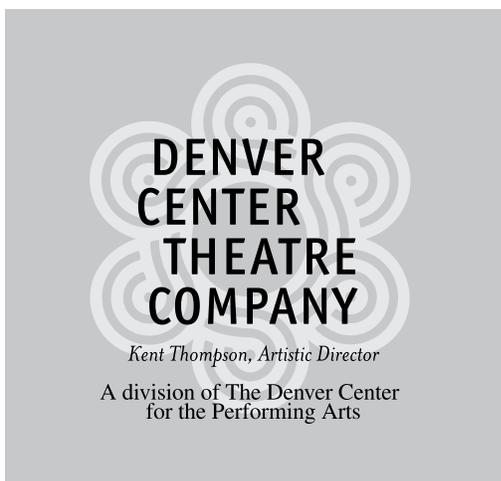
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# InsideOUT

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## SYNOPSIS

Shakespeare's "Scottish" play is a story of ambition. Macbeth, Thane of Glamis, is a victorious warrior who, with Banquo, has succeeded in turning back an invasion and putting down a rebellion against King Duncan. At the same time the King is informed of the traitorous actions of the Thane of Cawdor. The King immediately sentences Cawdor to death and confers that title upon Macbeth, sending Ross to tell Macbeth of the new honor.

Macbeth and Banquo in route to the King come across three witches. They prophesy that Macbeth shall become the Thane of Cawdor and later on King. They further predict that Banquo's descendants shall be Kings. Confirmation that Macbeth has been made Thane of Cawdor soon arrives. This new title and the prophecies of the witches launch a chain reaction of bloody events.

The scene switches to Macbeth's castle, where his wife, Lady Macbeth, is reading a letter from her husband detailing the witches' prophecies and their accuracy thus far. She sets her sights on becoming queen and plans to murder the King when he visits her home; she calls on the power of evil to help her stifle weakness and spur Macbeth to action.

On the night of the King's visit to their home, Lady Macbeth drugs the grooms guarding Duncan's door and Macbeth uses their daggers to kill the King. Macbeth kills the grooms before they revive and can claim innocence. The King's son Malcolm flees the country fearing for his own life. However, his flight casts suspicion on his possible role in the

killings, and Macbeth is crowned King of Scotland.

Soon, Macbeth's fear of the prediction that Banquo's children are to inherit the throne becomes too great to be tolerable and he arranges for the murder of Banquo and Banquo's only son, Fleance; Fleance, however, manages to escape the attack and flees.

Distraught over this news, Macbeth is haunted by the appearance of Banquo's ghost at a banquet. His hysterically incriminating remarks break up the feast and further raise the suspicions of Macduff, a Scottish noble already suspicious of Macbeth's quick rise to power. In desperation, Macbeth consults the witches again and learns more about his destiny. They warn him to beware of Macduff and reaffirm that Banquo's descendants will rule Scotland. However, they also assure him, that no man born of a woman can harm him and that he will not be defeated until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane.

Macbeth is momentarily reassured, but soon learns that Macduff has fled to England, whereupon, his paranoia increasing, he orders the murder of Lady Macduff and her children. The highly distraught Macduff joins with Malcolm to raise an army against Macbeth. At home, Lady Macbeth becomes completely overcome by remorse and guilt and goes mad. The invading army covers its advance with branches cut from the trees of Birnam Wood and marches on Macbeth at Dunsinane Castle, and Macduff, who "was from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd," and Macbeth meet to settle the score on the field of battle.

# PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

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**Macbeth:** Initially a brave and loyal general in the army. He holds the title of Thane of Glamis before the play begins and is named Thane of Cawdor for his valor on the battlefield. Enticed by a dangerous prophecy, his ambition drives him to murder when he sees his way (helped by his wife, Lady Macbeth) to becoming King of Scotland.

**Lady Macbeth:** In contrast to her husband, who initially resists his murderous impulses, Lady Macbeth, possessed by driving ambition seems to embrace them immediately. However, guilt and remorse eventually drive her mad.

**Duncan, King of Scotland:** Murdered by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, he is the father of Malcolm. Duncan was a good King under whom the Kingdom apparently flourished until his life was cut short.

**Malcolm:** The eldest son of King Duncan, he flees Scotland after his father's murder, placing suspicion initially upon himself until he returns to avenge his father's death.

**Banquo:** A faithful general in the Scottish army, Banquo is a good friend of Macbeth, but becomes an object of Macbeth's wrathful obsession. He is murdered because the witches prophesy his children will be Kings.

**Fleance:** Son of Banquo, who must flee to England or risk assassination like his father.

**Macduff:** A Scottish nobleman, Macduff becomes increasingly suspicious of Macbeth, eventually mounting an uprising against him and killing Macbeth in the battle.

**Lady Macduff:** The wife of Macduff, she and all her children are killed by the now-ruthless Macbeth.

**Ross:** A Scottish nobleman faithful to Duncan and Macduff.

**Seyton:** An officer attending on Macbeth

**Witches:** Referred to as the "weird sisters," witches, and sometimes old hags, these mysterious beings plant the seeds of wrongful ambition and murder in Macbeth, when they prophesy that he will be King.

# THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PLAY

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Day 1 Act I, Scenes 1-3

Day 2 Act I, Scenes 4-7

Day 3 Act II, Scenes 1-4

***Interval of a week or two***

Day 4 Act III, Scenes 1-6

Day 5 Act IV, Scene 1

Day 6 Act IV, Scene 2

***Interval of a week or two***

Day 7 Act IV, Scene 3

Act V, Scene 1

***Interval of a few weeks***

Day 8 Act V, Scenes 2-3

Day 9 Act V, Scenes 4-8

# SHAKESPEARE'S WORDS

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**L**anguage changes all the time. People spoke differently 400 years ago in Renaissance England than we do today. We live in a very visual era. Images that convey information and ideas seem to pass faster and faster across movie, television and computer screens. Shakespeare wrote in a verbal era. Visual images did not depict the scene, so it was described with words. Words, therefore, were important and knowing how to use them was an essential skill in social circles. Shakespeare used the rich vocabulary of his day within his plays. When reading Shakespeare, read the line in the context of the action and the scene. Try translating the lines into your own words, using today's vernacular.

**Hurly-burly:** commotion, uproar

Witch: "When the Hurly-burly's done, When the battle's lost and won."

When the war is over.

**Chaps:** jaws, like our usage of chops

Sergeant: "Unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps."  
Split him open, from his belly-button to his head.

**Aroint thee:** be gone, go away

**Rump-fed:** well-fed, pampered

**Ronyon:** a trash eater

Witch: "Aroint thee, witch! The rump-fed ronyon cries."  
Get out of here! The pampered garbage-eater screams.

**Thane:** Scottish nobleman

Macbeth: "I know I am Thane of Glamis"  
I know I am the mayor or leader of Glamis.

**Soliciting:** inciting, persuading

Macbeth: "This supernatural soliciting cannot be ill."  
This persuasion from another world cannot be bad.

**Harbinger:** forerunner, one who goes before

Macbeth: "I'll be myself harbinger and make joyful the hearing of my wife."  
I'll go ahead before you and tell my wife who will be so happy.

**Incarnadine:** make blood-red

Macbeth: "No! This, my hand, will rather the multitudinous seas in incarnadine, making the green one red."

The blood on my hand would make all the green seas of the world blood-red.

**Prate:** chatter, noise

Macbeth: "Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts."  
As I walk, the noise of my feet on the rocks reveals where I am.

**Marshall'st:** directs, leads

Macbeth: (speaking to the dagger) "Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going."

You tell me which way I'm going.

**Weird:** also spelled weyard, from Old English "wyrð" meaning fate  
Witch: "The Weird sisters, hand in hand, posters of the sea and land."

The Fates (like the Fates, Furies and Muses of Greek mythology) or the sisters that know of fate.

**Physic:** cures, having to do with physicians or doctors

Macbeth: "Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it."  
Throw away doctors and worrying about petty cures, I'm invincible! (Also, I am in so deep I am not concerned with any cure.)

**Play the Roman fool:** commit suicide the way the Romans did

Macbeth: "Why should I play the Roman fool."  
Why should I kill myself?

**Knell:** funeral bell

Macbeth: "Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell. That summons thee to heaven or to hell."

Don't listen, Duncan, for the funeral bell summons you to your death.

**Missives:** messages

Lady Macbeth: "Came missives from the King."  
messages (Letters) came from the King.

Continued from page 4....

## Figurative Language

Shakespeare uses figurative language as he speaks with metaphors, similes, and personification.

For example: Macbeth grows excited about the prophecies coming true and compares his becoming King to a play: “Two truths are told as happy prologues to the swelling act of the imperial theme. . . . I thank you!”

The play is also full of examples of comparing humans to various animate and inanimate objects:

“Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it.”

“Your face, my Thane, is a book where men may read strange matters.”

“I have begun to plant thee, and will labor to make thee full of growing.”

# THE STORY ACCORDING TO HOLINSHED'S CHRONICLES

In 1606, when Shakespeare was commissioned to write *Macbeth*, he turned in three major historical works for his sources:

1. *The Chronicles of Rafael Holinshed* (1577)
2. *De Origine, Moribus et Rebus Gestis Scotorum* (1578) by John Leslie, Bishop of Rome and a defender of Mary, Queen of Scots
3. *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (1582) written by George Buchanan, tutor to both Queen Mary and her son, King James.

In these works, Shakespeare found a history of Scotland, as well as a “strange, bleak, haunted world where savage beings fulfill the passionate cycle of their dreadful lives as if in enchanted compulsion.”<sup>1</sup>

According to Holinshed, King Duff, while a guest at Donwald’s castle was murdered by four of Donwald’s servants at the behest of their master. Later, Duncan became King of Scotland after Malcolm II. He was said to be a weak ruler who allowed law-breaking to go unpunished and his incompetence led to civil war. Even with the aid of Macbeth and Banquo, he barely managed to save Scotland from rebels, who were in league with the Norwegians and the Danes.

During this war, Macbeth and Banquo met “three women in strange and wild apparel, resembling creatures of the elder world.”<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare took the witches’ prophecies—that Macbeth would become Thane of Cawdor and then become King and that Banquo would father Kings—almost word

for word from Holinshed. Holinshed, however, drew a different picture of the prophecies’ effect on the two men. Both men joked about the prophecy and did not take it seriously until Macbeth was made Thane of Cawdor. Still, Macbeth might have done nothing at all if Duncan had not named his young son Malcolm, as his heir. Macbeth wanted to be King; the witches had told him he would be King and his wife was “very ambitious, burning in unquenchable desire to bear the name of queen.”<sup>3</sup> So, according to Holinshed, Macbeth and Banquo killed King Duncan in a fair battle at Elgin; the play however, diverges from this history and Macbeth murders King Duncan while Duncan is his guest.

From Holinshed one learns that Macbeth was a good King for approximately ten years. What puzzled and intrigued chroniclers, historians and Shakespeare was that after such a benevolent reign, Macbeth became a tyrant. Shakespeare resolved this enigma in his play by ignoring the ten good years and focusing on Macbeth’s tyranny. Holinshed says the reign was “counterfeit—and conscience caused him ever to fear the same fate that happened to his predecessor.”<sup>4</sup> Buchanan and Leslie agree with this rationale, while Buchanan adds, “the murder of the King hurried his mind into dangerous precipices, so that he converted his government into a cruel tyranny.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, the murders of Banquo and the Macduff family ensued.

# BACKGROUND

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The 16<sup>th</sup> century was a period in which extraordinary changes affected the whole of Europe. The Renaissance (rebirth) had begun in Italy around 1300 AD and had spread throughout Europe in the 1400s and 1500s.

When the Renaissance began, the way of life consisted of great feudal estates owned by wealthy noblemen. Most people were serfs who farmed land for their feudal lords. Almost every part of life centered around religion and members of the Catholic Church had become temporal (earthly) rulers. They acted like kings, but claimed to have spiritual power as well as earthly power. The Church brought in revenue through the sale of “indulgences” offered to the people in order to pay off purgatory for both the living and the dead. The offices of the bishop and cardinal could be bought and sold, and the common people were heavily taxed. The abuses were recognized and resented but went uncorrected for a long time.

As the Renaissance advanced, kings and princes took over the feudal lands and built strong national governments. Trade and commerce increased. The printing press was in use from 1450 on and there were 60 universities in the Western world. Education

began to flourish beyond the clergy and include more religious thought and study. Inevitably, educated people began to question accepted religious beliefs.

The Protestant Reformation weakened the Catholic Church. In 1517, at the age of 34, Martin Luther, a German priest, denounced the sale of “indulgences.” What began as a protest against Church practices soon became a challenge to Church doctrine. In Switzerland, under Zwingli and Calvin, it took a different form. Calvin’s influence spread from Geneva across France to the Netherlands and Britain, where it was most strongly felt in Scotland.

The Reformation brought change. In Southern Germany, scores of thousands died in this religious conflict. The Catholic Church in Rome was strengthened by this Counter Reformation, which was a heart-searching Catholic revival. England and France survived scarred and shaken, but each united. A new bond of unity developed between England and Ireland. Germany dissolved into principalities. The Netherlands split into Holland and Belgium. By the middle of the century the Calvinists were the spearhead of the Protestant attack; the Jesuits the shield and sword of Catholic defense and counter-attack.

## THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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In the early 1500s, the heir to the English throne died and the title passed to his younger brother, Henry. In order to solidify his claim to the throne and continue the English alliance with Spain, Henry married his brother’s widow, the Catholic Princess Catherine (or Katharine) of Aragon. He became Henry VIII. Henry was 17 years old and Catherine was 23. After 20 years, their marriage produced a daughter but no sons to succeed Henry. Henry publicly asserted this was a punishment from God for marrying his brother’s widow. Privately, his assertion was convenient because he was having an affair with the Queen’s serving maid, Anne Boleyn. Henry petitioned Rome to annul his marriage to Catherine. When the Pope refused his royal request, Henry broke all ties with the Catholic Church and founded the Church of England with himself at the head; he promptly granted his own divorce while

blessing his marriage to Anne Boleyn.

Although Henry had four more wives, he produced only three surviving children and one son who ruled briefly after Henry. The son was succeeded by his sister Mary (Bloody Mary) who was Catherine’s daughter and a Catholic; she tried to re-establish the Catholic Church in England through a series of trials and executions, hence her *sobriquet* (nickname). She was vastly unpopular and at her death after just five years’ rule, public sentiment strongly favored her half-sister Elizabeth (daughter of Anne Boleyn, a Protestant and in the eyes of many the true heir of Henry VIII).

Queen Elizabeth I died 51 years later; she never married and never produced an heir. But shortly before her death, she placed the inheritance of the throne into the hands of James VI of Scotland, a distant cousin. He became James I of England and united the two thrones.

# KING JAMES I AND MACBETH

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Upon the death of Queen Elizabeth I, King James VI (1566-1625) of Scotland was declared King James I of England on March 24, 1603. This union of two crowns deprived foreign enemies of an ally or foothold on the island. The King had been James VI of Scotland since he was a year old, when his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, was forced to abdicate. Long viewed as a romantic, tragic, wronged queen who was imprisoned in the Tower of London by Elizabeth, Mary was actually a manipulator and possible murderer who conspired in the death of her husband so that she could marry her lover.

Although his mother had been Catholic, James was subjected from his youth to a rigid Calvinistic upbringing and ruled Scotland as a boy king under the tutelage of regents. He was kidnapped by rivals at the age of 16 and saw his mother executed at 20. He was apprehensive and devious, but he was also something else: a true intellectual and a lover of theatre. Well educated in languages, especially Latin, James had an insatiable curiosity. He haunted the library at Oxford University and at 18 wrote his first book, *Essays of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poetry*. In 1604, he convened a conference at Hampton Court to discuss a new translation of the Bible. It appeared seven years later (1611) as the *Authorized* or *King James* version.

James was impractical and unwise in political matters. He believed in his own divine right to rule and quarreled with Parliament. He defended the doctrine that declares that kings are appointed by God to rule, but also declared that God holds kings responsible for their actions. He was intolerant of Protestant dissenters. He had come to England with a closed mind. However, England had changed. No longer was there strict obedience to a dynasty. *Macbeth* was written to appeal to the intellect of King James. The King had taken Shakespeare's company under his patronage as The King's Men; he doubled the fee they received for Court performances and also doubled the number of such performances. *Macbeth* was performed at Hampton Court when James entertained his brother-in-law, Christian IV of Denmark, during a state visit in

August, 1606. Not above petty flattery, Shakespeare provided James with a whole line of ancestors in the character of Banquo and is assured that his line will continue "to the crack of doom."

But, there is evidence that James was not pleased with the play. Unknown to Shakespeare, the King was squeamish about swords and here was a play with many deaths, stabbings, murders, fights and battles. In addition, Elizabethan audiences liked grossness and realism in their plays, so blood and guts from a butcher's shop were spilled over the stage in large quantities.

Shakespeare would probably have been aware of the King's concern about witchcraft and it is possible he had read James' *Daemonologie* (1597). The King had good reason to be wary of witches, for he had been the object of a plot to destroy him by melting his image in wax; it failed, as did the attempt of another witch to harm him with toad's venom. Still, James had scholarly objectivity in writing *Daemonologie*; he was skeptical about witchcraft but did not wholly dismiss it.

The realism and authenticity of the witches' scenes undoubtedly upset him and the murder of Duncan would have been an unfortunate reminder of his own perilous existence because regicide (the killing of kings) had been and would continue to be a popular pastime for fanatics. In 1605, Guy Fawkes and a party of Catholic zealots attempted to blow up the King and Parliament for their anti-Catholic sentiment. The result was the hanging of Fawkes and a long trial of the Jesuits implicated in the Gunpowder Plot. (often referred to as "The Plot".)

Royal disfavor had one immediate effect on the play – it was banned for five years from 1606-11. In 1611 it was performed at the Globe Theatre with added music and dancing and *Macbeth* and Banquo on horseback. After 1611, the play vanished from the repertoire for 50 years. In 1667, it reemerged – rewritten as a musical.

# THE WITCHES

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Although accusations of witchcraft reached epidemic proportions in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe, witchcraft beliefs exist in many societies and are one way of “asserting distinctions,” according to Shakespeare scholar Peter Stallybrass.<sup>6</sup>

For example, they can be used to account for the “unnatural” ambition of the rival or the “unnatural” power of a woman. In doing so, such beliefs legitimize “the natural” or normal. In short, beliefs in witchcraft are less a reflection of real “evil” than a social form from which we can learn more about the accuser than the accused—and more about social institutions that tolerate or encourage such accusations.

The English government has, since 1300, been concerned with witches because they might attempt to kill the king. James became interested in witchcraft in Scotland in 1590 when 300 people were alleged to be witches. Confessions were extorted with the aid of torture and they pointed to a conspiracy directed by the Earl of Bothwell. James attended Bothwell’s trial out of curiosity and the desire to be in the intellectual vanguard. Though the “witch craze” was a remnant of medieval superstition, it also was a topic of research by some of the foremost intellectuals of the day. Finally, as James was King, his interest in witchcraft became even more intense. If the King was God’s representative on earth, then who could be a more likely victim of the demonic arts than he?

Shakespeare used references to witchcraft in many plays because Renaissance audiences were fascinated by them. Some scholars think the witches are the product of Macbeth’s over-active imagination, but the witches of 1606 are central to this and other Gunpowder plays and they have a political role. Witchcraft was part of the ideology of the Gunpowder treason, according to Garry Wills’ *Witches and Jesuits*. Wills noted that there was a rash of “Gunpowder” plays in 1606 that referenced “The Plot (an attempted or accomplished destruction of a king).

Wills also states that charges of magic, idolatry and witchcraft had long been leveled at the Jesuits in England because of their use of healing relics, icons and exorcism. Thus, when it was learned that planning of “The Plots” took place at a Black Mass, where the Devil’s aid was secured by sacrilegious oaths and

rites, the reason was denounced as “diabolic.”<sup>7</sup> And no sooner was the Jesuit superior Henry Garnet executed for “The Plot,” than Jesuits claimed miracles were worked by his blood... more acts of diabolism.

Finally, when we first meet *Macbeth’s* witches they bustle onto a battle field, there to collect the vital ingredients for witches’ work—dead body parts. This exploration of dead bodies was called necromancy and this is the act the witches will perform in Act IV for Macbeth when they conjure up the visions of Macduff’s armed head, the bloody babe and the kingly child with a tree of fertility. These arguments “make nonsense of the claim that Shakespeare’s witches are just emanations of Macbeth’s inner state.”<sup>8</sup>

But what other use do the witches have in the play?

Shakespeare writes of Macbeth as a “man who has free will, insofar as the choice of good or evil is concerned and who, in choosing evil, creates for himself physical misfortunes and a spiritual hell on earth.”<sup>9</sup> The witches have a power over Macbeth, but it is limited. They are supernatural agents of evil and as such, they reveal the capacities and incapacities that the Christian tradition has given to devils. They tempt Macbeth to do evil and tempt him with great subtlety, because they know that desire and ambition lurk within him. But they do not force him to do it.

They speak in equivocations, a sort of reversible, back and forth reality. The day is fair and foul; Malcolm is vicious and virtuous; morning is night; promises are true and false; and “nothing is/but what is not.” (I, iii, 141-142). But they reveal no fate of evil-doing for Macbeth and never, even by suggestion, bind him to commit murder. By their “imperfect speaking,” they tempt him to commit crimes for which he has to assume full moral responsibility—not just for the crime, but also for the thought of each criminal deed.<sup>10</sup>

They summon up visions that he is to beware Macduff, that he will not be vanquished until Birnam Wood come to Dunsinane and that Banquo’s descendants will bring forth a line of Kings. These visions give Macbeth the fear and rash confidence to stir him to undertake murder once again, the most heinous of all being the slaughter of Macduff’s wife, children and servants. This act the witches neither suggest nor foretell.

# MACBETH AND THE NATURE OF EVIL

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Sir Peter Hall, former director of the Royal National Theatre and founder of the Royal Shakespeare Company, says that *Macbeth* “is the most thorough-going study of evil that I know in dramatic literature. Evil in every sense: cosmic sickness, personal sickness, personal neurosis—blood leading to more blood.”<sup>11</sup> Irving Ribner, a Shakespeare scholar, would agree; in his essay on evil, he says, Shakespeare “set himself to describe the operation of evil in all its manifestations: to define its very nature, to depict its seduction of man, and to show its effects upon all the planes of creation once it has been unleashed by one man’s sinful moral choice.”<sup>12</sup>

From the beginning, Macbeth is fully aware of the evil he commits. A sin conceived in pride and ambition was considered the worst of the medieval seven deadly sins. In the neatly ordered universe conceived by Renaissance man, this aspect stood for a rebellion against the will of God and against the order of nature. Macbeth, through self-love, sets his will against that of God, for “the ambitious man will strive to rise higher on the great chain of being than the place which God has ordained for him.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, Macbeth repudiates nature and defies God. In addition, his choice of evil closes the way of redemption for him for in denying God and nature, he cuts off the source of salvation and forgiveness.

When Macbeth murders Duncan, the crime is both ethical and political, for Macbeth kills not only his kinsman and guest, but his King as well. The physical universe is thrown out of balance as shown in Lennox’s speech immediately following the murder: “The night has been unruly: where we lay. Our chimneys were blown down...Some say the earth was feverous and did shake.” (II, iii, 54-61)

The order of nature is reversed; the sun blotted out like night. And most horrible of all, Duncan’s horses “turned wild in nature and broke their stalls... as if they would make war against mankind.” (II, iv, 14-18)

Publicly, Macbeth’s actions unleash the greatest evil Shakespearean audiences could conceive of: tyranny, civil war and an invading foreign army. The cruelty of Macbeth’s reign contrasts Shakespeare’s description of the gentility and justice of Duncan’s rule. Privately, the relationship between Macbeth and his wife steadily deteriorates. At first, their marriage is portrayed as close and intimate; he calls her “my dearest partner in greatness.” (I, v, 11). The very terror of the murder scene also emphasizes their closeness. But this evil severs Macbeth from the rest of humanity; it loosens and finally breaks the bond with his wife. Macbeth lives within himself with his own fears and she cannot intrude as the banquet scene illustrates. She is not able to see the ghost of Banquo who torments her husband.

It is to the disintegration of Macbeth himself that Shakespeare gives most attention. He is painted at the beginning as a man of great stature, a hero and a savior of his country, full of the “milk of human kindness” (I, v, 17). He has natural feelings for his fellow man and feels revulsion for the crime his ambition prompts him to do. But once the crime is committed, these feelings are gradually destroyed until at the end of the play, he is a symbol of the unnatural man, completely cut off from humanity and God. His desire to live is gone and he sinks into despair and apathy, which is the surest evidence of his damnation.

# QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

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## Discussion Questions

### Pre-Performance Questions

1. Does a desire for power reside in each of us? What happens to us when we get power?
2. Why is the violence in Shakespeare's plays considered more acceptable than perhaps the violence of a modern playwright?
3. How does Shakespeare use the supernatural in this play?

### Post Performance Questions

1. Were there design elements (costume, set, lights) that were particularly effective in telling the story?
2. In Shakespeare's time, women were not allowed on stage. The director made some choices about casting the parts of Banquo and Malcolm as women. What effect did this choice have on the play?
3. Were Macbeth and Lady Macbeth justified in their quest for the crown?
4. What are the major themes of the play?
5. Which character do you relate with and why?
6. If you read Macbeth in class, what differences did seeing the play make? Did certain things seem different?
7. Shakespeare productions generally have large casts. How did only having eight actors in the production change the story? Did this scaled down concept work?

## Activities

### Contemporizing *Macbeth*

Material Needed: Pen and paper

1. Pick a scene from the play *Macbeth* to contemporize.
2. The production of Macbeth takes place in an earlier time than the present. Either individually or in small groups, pick a scene from Shakespeare's play. By utilizing stage directions and dialogue, create/adapt a new scene that sets the scene in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
  - a. Discuss what changes from the production that you saw. How do the costumes change? How do the underlying themes change in your version?
  - b. How does your scene differ from the scene from the play?
3. After writing the scene, have different students read the parts of the scene.
  - a. How can you improve the scene to make it easier to understand?
  - b. How does the scene change by updating the scene?
  - c. Explain what the adapters did to contemporize the scene without changing Shakespeare's original scene.

### Colorado Model Content Standards

**Reading and Writing 5: Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources.**

# QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

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## Perspective Writing

The other characters in *Macbeth* only have a partial view of what is happening during the play. The members of the audience are the only ones who see all the facets of the story. Write a short narrative from the perspective of a chosen character. For example, Lady Macbeth receives a letter from Macbeth about the encounter with the witches. Write a short narrative explaining why she begins to plot the murder of Duncan.

Write a narrative from each character's point of view about the same encounter. For example, both Macbeth and Banquo meet the witches. Write a short narrative from Banquo's perspective about this meeting. Explain why you made the choices. Are they based on hints from the play, your imagination or both?

## Colorado Model Content Standards

**Reading and Writing 2: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.**

**Reading and Writing 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.**

## Hand of Power

1. Students are to pair up and stand two feet from each other. Student A places the palm of his/her hand six to eight inches from Student B's face. **THE STUDENTS ARE NOT TO TOUCH AT ANY TIME** and the exercise should be performed in total silence. The students are to pretend that a string runs from the palm of Student A to the nose of Student B.
2. Student A explores the space with his/her palm by moving it back and forth or up and down and around and B must follow so the imaginary string will not break. Start by having students mirror each other but then encourage movement in the space without collisions. Have a Student A manipulate Student B into grotesque shapes and images.
3. After the initial exploration, switch positions. Student B now leads Student A.

Discuss

How did it make you feel when you were the person leading or the person following? What do you think would happen if you add another person and had to follow and lead at the same time?

## Colorado Model Content Standards

**Civics 2.2: Students know how power, authority, and responsibility are distributed, shared, and limited.**

**History 5.3: Students know how political power has been acquired, maintained, used and/or lost throughout history.**

## Character Shield

After the play, pick a character and create a character shield or coat of arms. Each shield should be divided into four sections and a picture drawn for each of the following:

1. The character's desire,
2. The character's worst fear,
3. The character's essential nature in symbolic form, preferably as an animal,
4. A quote representing the character.

## Colorado Model Content Standards

**Visual Art 4: Students relate the visual arts to various historical and cultural traditions.**

**Visual Art 5: Students analyze and evaluate the characteristics, merits, and meaning of works of art.**

## Notes

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|----|----------------------|-----|-----------------|
| 1. | Tate, p. 3.          | 8.  | Wills, p. 37.   |
| 2. | Tate, p. 4.          | 9.  | Farnham, p. 61. |
| 3. | Tate, p. 4.          | 10. | Farnham, p. 62. |
| 4. | Tate, p. 4.          | 11. | Hall, p. 231.   |
| 5. | Tate, p. 5.          | 12. | Ribner, p. 245. |
| 6. | Stallybrass, p. 190. | 13. | Ribner, p. 246. |
| 7. | Wills, p. 35.        |     |                 |

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