Macbeth – Act 1 Reading Questions

**Act 1, Scene 1**

1. Why do you think the Witches are planning to meet Macbeth?

**Act 1, Scene 2**

2. A bleeding Captain in King Duncan’s army tells Duncan about how Macbeth fought bravely against the traitor Macdonwald (Thane of Cawdor). If you were Duncan, how would you reward Macbeth?

**Act 1, Scene 3**

3. Macbeth and his friend are met by the three witches. They predict that Macbeth will become the new Thane of Cawdor, and “king hereafter”. Considering that messengers from the king give Macbeth the title of Thane of Cawdor immediately after, do you imagine that the crown will also just fall into Macbeth’s lap?

4. The witches also predict that Banquo’s children will become kings. What does this suggest about Macbeth’s potential reign as king?

**Act 1, Scene 4**

5. After Duncan greets and congratulates Macbeth and Banquo on their success in battle, Duncan names his successor as king. Who does he say will be king after he dies?

6. Macbeth then contemplates killing Duncan to take the crown. If you were Macbeth, what would *you* do about this?

**Act 1, Scene 5**

7. Lady Macbeth gets a letter from her husband telling her about the witches, their predictions, and Macbeth’s new title. She then calls upon supernatural agents to fill her with cruelty, and pushes Macbeth towards the murder of Duncan. Is she being selfish, or is she looking out for her husband?

**Act 1, Scene 6**

8. Lady Macbeth welcomes Duncan to the castle, and acts very hospitable, even though she plans to kill him. Is she scary or what?

**Act 1, Scene 7**

9. Macbeth hesitates, but his wife pushes him more toward committing the murder. What arguments does she use? If you were Macbeth, would *you* do it?

Macbeth – Act 2 Reading Questions

**Act 2, Scene 1**

1. Macbeth tells Banquo that hasn’t really thought about the three witches. Why do you think he lies?

2. After Macbeth and Banquo wish each other goodnight, Macbeth sees an intangible dagger in the air that leads him toward Duncan. Do you think the dagger is of magical origin, or a hallucination?

**Act 2, Scene 2**

3. Macbeth returns to his wife after killing Duncan. After hearing one of the guards say, ‘God

bless us,’ Macbeth wants to say, ‘Amen’ but is unable to, and this worries him greatly. Why do you suppose he can’t say it?

4. Who seems to be the most collected and capable after the murder, Macbeth or Lady Macbeth? Why do you say so?

**Act 2, Scene 3**

5. Macduff and Lennox come knocking early to visit the king, and the murder is discovered. Do you think Macbeth does a good job of pretending not to know about it? Why or why not?

6. Do you think Lady Macbeth does a good job of pretending not to know about it? Why or why not?

7. Malcolm and Donalbain get scared and run off to England and Ireland, respectively. Do you think this is the right thing for them to do?

**Act 2, Scene 4**

8. Macduff and Ross discuss strange happenings in the night with an old man. Macduff and Ross then also escape, leaving their families at home. Is this the right thing to do? Why do you think so?

Macbeth – Act 3 Reading Questions

**Act 3, Scene 1**

1. Macbeth speaks with Banquo and they discuss Banquo’s plans for the day. Neither one says what he really thinks. What is Banquo thinking?

2. What is Macbeth thinking?

3. Macbeth then convinces two murderers to kill Banquo and Fleance. In your mind, who is more important for Macbeth to kill? Why?

**Act 3, Scene 2**

4. Lady Macbeth talks with her husband. She, again, encourages him to act cheerful in front of his guests. Macbeth chooses not to tell Lady Macbeth about the arrangements he has made to have Banquo and Fleance killed. Why do you suppose he does this?

**Act 3, Scene 3**

5. The murderers attack and kill Banquo, but Fleance escapes. How does this relate to the witches’ prophecy?

**Act 3, Scene 4**

6. At dinner, Macbeth gets a report about Banquo’s death and Fleance’s escape. He then sees Banquo’s ghost at Macbeth’s place at the table. No one else sees the ghost. Lady Macbeth compares this to the dagger Macbeth saw. Is Banquo’s ghost really here, or is Macbeth seriously going nuts?

7. Does Macbeth know how to ruin a party or what?

**Act 3, Scene 5:**

8. The witches’ boss, Hecate, makes plans to trick Macbeth even more. Would you say that their plan is going as they wanted it to so far?

**Act 3, Scene 6:**

9. We learn from Lennox that Macduff is in England with Malcolm, and most people now suspect that Macbeth is Duncan’s and Banquo’s murderer. I don’t have a question for this scene; I just wanted to tell you that.

Macbeth – Act 4 Reading Questions

**Act 4, Scene 1**

1. The witches meet Macbeth and give him three prophecies. Should Macbeth trust them, believing that they’ll tell the truth? Why, or why not?

2. What is the warning of the armed head?

3. What does the bloody child tell Macbeth?

4. What does the crowned child say?

5. Macbeth asks if Banquo’s children will be kings. What is the answer?

**Act 4, scene 2**

6. Macbeth kills Macduff’s family. Why? What advantage does he see in it?

**Act 4, scene 3**

7. In England, Macduff and Malcolm prepare to attack Macbeth with help from Siward and the English army. Predict who will win the battle.

Macbeth – Act 5 Reading Questions

**Act 5, Scene 1**

1. In this scene, Lady Macbeth is seen sleepwalking. She keeps trying to wash her hands, but says she can’t get the blood off. Do you think the cause of her disturbance is supernatural, or psychological? Why do you say so?

2. In your opinion, how has Lady Macbeth changed since the beginning of the play?

**Act 5, scene 2**

3. The army rebelling against Macbeth marches toward Birnham wood to meet Malcolm and the English army.

4. Which is the best way to usurp a throne, Macbeth’s method (murder in the night), or Malcolm’s (full army battle)?

**Act 5, scene 3**

5. How do you think Macbeth feels about his chances of winning?

**Act 5, scene 4**

6. Malcolm orders his army to cut down branches to carry, using the trees in Birnham wood. Does this remind you of anything?

**Act 5, scene 5**

7. Describe Macbeth’s reaction to the news that Lady Macbeth has died.

**Act 5, scene 7**

8. Wow. That’s a pretty crazy battle, eh?

**Act 5, scene 8**

8. What terrifying thing does Macbeth learn about Macduff?

9. Will Malcolm be as good a king as Macbeth?