Activities

1. Pretend that you are a psychiatrist who has had several sessions with Macbeth. Share some pages of your notes about this man's personality, and develop an analysis of his character from what you have learned.

2. Imagine yourself as the best friend of Lady Macbeth. Share the contents of a letter she wrote to you after her husband became king.

3. You have just been hired to produce a new film version of Macbeth. Which movie stars would you use? Why? Outline some of the scenes from your film, and explain how you envision the settings, costumes, etc.

These questions come from the book "King, Lovers, and Fools" by Johanna Johnston, published by Scholastic Book Service.

VOCABULARY

abstemious beggar fiend haggard haughty
remorse suckess vacuity
vainness because vacuous
large enmity partake
portend
avert
deuce
impassible
prevaricate
prosper
true
guile
kneel

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why does the play begin with three witches on stage? How does it set the mood for the play?
2. Lady Macbeth discusses the conditions that would allow her to murder Duncan. Why would Lady Macbeth want to commit the murder?
3. In Act 1, Shakespeare makes sure to describe the kingdom under Duncan's rule. What has been happening in the kingdom? Why would Macbeth feel like he would be a better king?
4. There are many references to "natural" and "unnatural" occurrences throughout the play. Are they real to the play? Are they in the Bible? How does this reflect the nature of Macbeth?
5. Macbeth says, "If he do not seem to mourn then the bent he gave up and moved once Macbeth becomes king?"
6. Is Act 4 a turn of events that will reflect what the witches and Macbeth. What does each represent? How do we view an audience respond to them? Do we believe in spirits as much Macbeth did?"
7. What are the overall themes of the play?
8. Is Macbeth a good king? What was his reign like? How does he compare to Duncan as a king?
9. How has killing Duncan changed Lady Macbeth?
10. How are the women portrayed in this play?
11. Describe the relationship between Lady Macbeth and Macbeth. How does Duncan's ghost come to the banquet? What does the banquet symbolize?
12. How do the characters in Macbeth die? What do their forms of death symbolize?
13. What does Macbeth mean when he says, "If I know my heart, it will be pricked, but never a hair's breadth?"
14. What does Macbeth 's dagger "dagger of the mind'?"
15. Who killed Duncan and why?
16. Do you think Macbeth justified his involvement in Duncan's death?
17. How does Macbeth maintain his rule in the murder of Duncan?
18. Who killed Macbeth's wife and children? Why?
19. Is Macbeth a definite contrast between England and Scotland in this play. How does this differ from Shakespeare's theme of a virtuous or a virtuous one? What do you think?
20. Why does Macbeth mean nothing for his wife?

EXERCISES

• The Proverb Sketch. Discuss the parts of the sketch and what their appropriate might have been (the time of Shakespeare's play). Decide where the actors might have been located and have several verses of the scene was used.

• Using your knowledge of history, imagine that you are living during the time of Macbeth. Think of the positive and negative aspects of that period. Now write a typical entry which may have been written to a diary or journal of that time.

• Write a eulogy for one of the characters who died in Macbeth. Imagine you are the besotted defending Macbeth at his murder trial. Write the speech you would make. Others can pretend they are the prosecutor at the trial. What would you say to them?"

• Write a letter to Lady Macbeth inviting her to visit in Macbeth's generation. Share what you plan to do and how the author's generation would feel about you. Write a letter addressing to future generations.

• The Secret of Macbeth. Compare the sense of the study and the effect of the effect of the characters on the audience. Why would they respond to Shakespeare's play in the way they did? How do you think that would differ from how we would respond to it today?