

Macbeth: Act II Reading and Study Guide

I. Vocabulary: Be able to define the following words and understand them when they appear in the play. Also, be prepared to be quizzed on these words.

largess: large gift or donation

cleave: stick to something; to be faithful to

augment: increase, make larger

repose: rest

palpable: obvious, easily observed; able to be touched

knell: sound of a bell rung to announce a death or a funeral

lest: for fear that

lechery: excessive indulgence in sexual activity

sacrilegious: disrespect toward something sacred or holy

alas: used to express sorrow; regret, or grief

wherefore: why

sovereignty: supreme authority over all things

II. Background Info:

Hecate: in Greek Mythology, she is the goddess of ghosts and witchcraft.

Gorgon: in Greek mythology, a Gorgon is one of three monstrous sisters. The most famous is Medusa. Their hair was a cluster of snakes. Anyone who saw their ugly face would turn to stone.

III. Literary Terms: these will be the terms that we use to discuss this act. Please know them for our discussion and your tests and quizzes.

Pathetic fallacy: Use of nature to reflect emotions

Metaphor: comparison of two things without the use of *as* or *like*. Metaphor is made up of two parts: a **tenor** & a **vehicle**. The tenor is the part of the metaphor that is being compared. And the vehicle is the part that is being compared to. In the metaphor *He is a devil*, *he* is the tenor and *devil* is the vehicle.

IV. Questions: answer the following questions while you read to check your comprehension.

Scene 1:

1. What is part of the largess that is for Lady Macbeth?
2. What does Banquo dream of?
3. What does Macbeth say in response to Banquo's dream?
4. Macbeth tells Banquo that if he sticks ("cleave") with him, he will give him honor. Banquo responds, "So I lose none / In seeking to augment it." What does Banquo mean?
5. What "fatal vision" does Macbeth have?
6. Where is Macbeth going at the end of his soliloquy at the end of Act I, scene i?

Scene 2:

7. What reason does Lady Macbeth give for not killing Duncan herself?
8. What has Macbeth forgotten?
9. What reason does Macbeth give for not returning to Duncan's bed chamber?

Scene 3:

10. Who is knocking on the door?
11. What does the porter say alcohol does?
12. What does Macduff say the King commanded him to do?
13. What does Lennox say about the evening?

14. Macduff uses the metaphor of a Gorgon. What is the tenor of this metaphor? What is Macduff comparing to a Gorgon?
15. What is Macduff's response to Lady Macbeth when she asks what has happened?
16. What does Macbeth say he has done in response to the murder?
17. Macbeth says, "Th' expedition of my violent love / Outrun the pauser, reason." What does he mean and why does he say this?
18. What does Lady Macbeth do at this moment of commotion?
19. What does Banquo say he will fight against?
20. Where do Donalbain and Malcom decide to go?

Scene 4:

21. The Old Man says, "'Tis said they eat each other.'" What is he talking about?
22. What is the thought of Malcolm and Donalbain because they left Scotland?
23. Where has Macbeth gone and why has gone there?