

Macbeth: Act III 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.

posterity: future generations

cide: kill (Shakespeare uses *parricide*, which means the act of killing one's **parents**.) Also, think about regicide, patricide, matricide

naught: nothing

jovial: jolly; cheerful

muse: to think about in silence

mirth: joy

ruby: red

blanch: turn pale white

wayward: turned away (perverted) from what is the expected norm; resistant to guidance or discipline

II. Background Info:

Mark Antony & Octavius (Augustus) Caesar: after Julius Caesar was assassinated, Antony and Octavius joined forces to defeat Cassius and Brutus (co-conspirators in the assassination of Julius Caesar). The two joined forces with a third man (Lepidus) to rule Rome. Accounts have Antony and Octavius being friends early on, but later Octavius turns on Antony and defeats him to take supreme rule of Rome.

Acheron: a river in Hades (underworld) over which the souls of the dead were ferried. Similar to Styx. The word often comes to represent Hades altogether. The dictionary defines it as hell. In Dante's *Inferno*, the river borders hell.

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.

apostrophe: (Etymology = **apo** [away] + **strophe** [turn]) When a character makes an apostrophe, or apostrophizes, that character turns away and speaks to nothing. They may speak to someone who is absent, dead, or something that is not human, e.g., Fate. An apostrophe is a type of speech similar to *soliloquy* and *aside*.

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

Scene 1:

1. According to Banquo, how did Macbeth get all that the weird women promised?
2. What has Macbeth invited Banquo to do?
3. Where will Banquo be between now and this evening?
4. What does Macbeth say has been learned of Malcom and Donalbain?
5. Who will Banquo take with him?
6. Macbeth says, "For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered." Who is he talking about? What is bothering Macbeth in this soliloquy?
7. In a previous speech, what did Macbeth try to convince the murderers of?
8. What do the murderers say about their own lives and their willingness to do what Macbeth want them to do?
9. Besides Banquo, who else does Macbeth want dead?

Scene 2:

10. Lady Macbeth voices concern about getting what one desires but not being "content." What does she say is "safer" to be?
11. What reasons does Macbeth give for why Duncan is better off than he?
12. How does Macbeth instruct Lady Macbeth to act toward Banquo?
13. What does Lady Macbeth say that provides comfort to Macbeth?

14. Macbeth says, "Be innocent of the knowledge." Who should be innocent? _____ What knowledge is Macbeth talking about?

Scene 3:

15. Who hired the third murderer?

16. The murderers are about a mile away from the palace gate. What do most men usually do from this place?

17. How successful were the murderers?

Scene 4:

18. What is happening at the beginning of this scene?

19. What is the first thing Macbeth tells the murderer?

20. What does Macbeth mean when says, "There the serpent lies. The worm that's fled / Hath nature that in time will venom breed, / no teeth for th' present"?

21. Macbeth says that he hopes he can "challenge," or accuse, Banquo of _____ rather than pity him for _____.

22. Macbeth says, "Which of you have done this?" What is Macbeth looking at when he says this? _____. What is Macbeth referring to when he says "done this"?

23. What does Lady Macbeth say is the problem?

24. Lady Macbeth tell the lords not to do what because it enrages Macbeth in these fits?

25. She tells them to ignore rank and do what?

26. What behavior of Macduff does Macbeth find unnerving?

27. Macbeth says, "There's not a one of them but in his house I keep a servant fee'd." What does this mean?

28. Who does Macbeth say he will go visit?

Scene 5:

29. What does Hecate accuse the Weird Sisters of?

30. Where does Hecate tell the Weird Sisters to meet her in the morning?

31. What does Hecate say she will spend the night planning?

32. What does Hecate say is mortal's worst enemy?

Scene 6:

33. What is Lennox's thoughts on what has been happening in Scotland?

34. What does Lennox say he has heard about Macduff?

35. According to the Lord, where is Macduff?