

William Shakespeare's  
**Machbeth**  
Level 4





# The Battle for Scotland



*As the bloody battle raged on, the three witches wait.*

- Preview:**
1. Read the name of the story.
  2. Look at the picture.
  3. Read the sentence under the picture.
  4. Read the first three paragraphs of the story.
  5. Then answer the following question.

You learned from your preview that the three witches wanted to

- ☐ a. start a storm.
- ☐ b. watch the battle.
- ☐ c. fight in the battle.
- ☐ d. meet Macbeth.

*Turn to the Comprehension Check on page 10 for the right answer.*

**Now read the story.**

Read on to find out what the witches tell Macbeth.



# The Thane of Cawdor

"Where did they go?" Banquo asked after the witches disappeared.

"Into the air; and what seemed real, melted, as breath into the wind," Macbeth said. "I wish they had stayed!"

Banquo couldn't think of the witches as human. "Were those things really here, or did something make us both imagine them?"

"Your children shall be kings," said Macbeth.

"You shall be King," replied Banquo.

"And Thane of Cawdor too," said Macbeth. They heard voices behind them. Two of the king's thanes, Rosse and Angus, were following them.

"Duncan heard about your success in battle," Rosse said to Macbeth. "Messenger after messenger brought word of how you won over two armies in one day. To thank you, Duncan has named you Thane of Cawdor."

Banquo remembered what the witches said. Surprised by this news, Banquo thought to himself, *Can evil speak the truth?*

"But, the Thane of Cawdor is alive," said Macbeth. "To call me by his name is like dressing me in borrowed robes."

"The old thane tried to betray the king and will be punished," said Angus. "Duncan has chosen you to take his place."

"The witches that made me Thane of Cawdor promised your children would be future kings," Macbeth whispered to Banquo.

"Sometimes evil wins our trust by telling the truth," said Banquo, "then evil betrays us over more important matters."

Macbeth stood alone while Banquo spoke with Rosse and Angus. *The witches came to tempt me*, thought Macbeth. *This*

*cannot be good. I am Thane of Cawdor. But now I am tempted to do something awful. I imagine myself killing Duncan. My heart beats with a fear I never felt in battle. Now I can't see what is around me, only what might be.*

The others thought Macbeth was caught up by feelings over Duncan's reward to him. Macbeth noticed they were waiting for him. He tried to forget his evil thoughts.

*If chance will have me King, why, chance may crown me without my help*, thought Macbeth. *It is out of my hands.*

While Macbeth and the others made their way across the rocky hills, Duncan waited at his palace. Malcolm, Duncan's older son, told the king that Cawdor had been killed.

"I trusted him completely. There is no way to judge a man's thoughts from his face," Duncan replied sadly. Just then, Macbeth and the others arrived at the palace. "Macbeth! I will never be able to pay you back for all you have done for me," said Duncan.

"All I need is to serve you," said Macbeth. "I will always be loyal to you. You deserve the same from all of us."

Duncan wiped his eyes. "Don't think I am crying from sadness. It is my joy to tell you I have chosen my son Malcolm to be King after I die. I will also reward the loyal thanes who helped me. Greatness, like stars, shall shine on all who deserve."

Macbeth was disappointed. Now Malcolm was in his way of becoming King. *My eyes must hide my black and deep desires.*

At Macbeth's castle, Macbeth's wife received a letter from him about the witches. **THEY KNOW THINGS BEYOND THE HUMAN WORLD**, the letter read.

*Macbeth is Thane of Glamis and Cawdor, and he will be king!* thought Lady Macbeth, as her mind and heart began to fill with evil and greed. *But Macbeth has been fed with too much milk of human kindness. He wants success, but he won't do anything bad to get it faster. Hurry home, Macbeth, so my words can clear your way to the crown!*

A messenger came into the room. "The King comes to visit tonight," he said.

"Isn't Macbeth with the King? He would have let me know if the King were coming."

The messenger explained Macbeth was on his way to the castle and then left the room.

*Duncan will never leave this castle*, Lady Macbeth thought. "Come, you spirits, enter my body! Fill me from the crown to the toe with evil!" she cried out. "Make me strong so I can do what I need to do without worry of human kindness to hold me back. Come, thick night, do not let heaven peep through the blanket of dark to cry 'Hold, hold!'"

Lady Macbeth heard her husband come into the room. "Oh Macbeth, your letters take me beyond the present. I feel the future now!"

"My dearest love, Duncan is coming tonight," said Macbeth.

"And, when does he leave?"

"Tomorrow," said Macbeth.

"Oh, the sun will never see that day!" said Lady Macbeth. "Your face, my thane, is a book every man can read. To fool the world, welcome the King and his men here. Look like the innocent flower, but be the snake hiding under it. Leave all the rest to me. Let me plan for tonight. And, tomorrow you will be King!"

# A Dagger in the Night

## COMPREHENSION CHECK

Choose the best answer.

**Preview Answer:**

a. King Duncan.

- ① Macbeth left the feast because he
  - ☐ a. felt tired.
  - ☐ b. was scared.
  - ☐ c. wasn't hungry.
  - ☐ d. felt guilty about his evil plan.
2. One reason Macbeth did not want to kill Duncan was because
  - ☐ a. his wife didn't want him to do it.
  - ☐ b. Banquo wanted to do it.
  - ☐ c. he was too tired.
  - ☐ d. justice turns evil plans back on the people who do evil.
3. Macbeth decided to go forward with his plan to kill Duncan because
  - ☐ a. Banquo told him to.
  - ☐ b. Lady Macbeth talked him into it.
  - ☐ c. Fleance was going to do it anyway.
  - ☐ d. a floating dagger came to him.
4. Lady Macbeth and Macbeth could get into Duncan's room after the servants
  - ☐ a. cleaned up after the feast.
  - ☐ b. put King Duncan to bed.
  - ☐ c. drank wine and fell asleep.
  - ☐ d. got the dagger.
5. What did Macbeth say would make the servants look *more* guilty?
  - ☐ a. To cry and scream when they found out about Duncan's death
  - ☐ b. To keep a false face
  - ☐ c. To leave the castle
  - ☐ d. To use the servant's dagger and cover their hands with blood
6. Fleance is
  - ☐ a. Macbeth's son.
  - ☐ b. Lady Macbeth's messenger.
  - ☐ c. Banquo's son.
  - ☐ d. Lady Macbeth's servant.
- ⑦ Macbeth says, "The false face must hide what the false heart knows." He means
  - ☐ a. his love for Lady Macbeth is not true.
  - ☐ b. he has many faces.
  - ☐ c. he loves many women.
  - ☐ d. even though he knows his evil deeds, he must look innocent.
8. Macbeth says that when he has success, he will honor
  - ☐ a. Lady Macbeth.
  - ☐ b. Banquo.
  - ☐ c. Fleance.
  - ☐ d. King Duncan.
- ⑨ Another name for this story could be
  - ☐ a. "A Feast for King Duncan."
  - ☐ b. "The Evil Plan Begins."
  - ☐ c. "The Sleeping Servants."
  - ☐ d. "Lady Macbeth Meets Duncan."
- ⑩ This story is mainly about
  - ☐ a. the evil plan to kill King Duncan.
  - ☐ b. Banquo's frightening thoughts.
  - ☐ c. the King's feast.
  - ☐ d. Banquo's dream about the witches.

Check your answers with the key on page 67.

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