

2019-2020 Theatre Season

Heroes and Villains

Blinn College Division of Visual/Performing Arts and Kinesiology
Brenham Campus

William Shakespeare's **Macbeth**



Resource Guide

This resource guide serves as an educational starting point to understanding and enjoying *William Shakespeare's Macbeth*. With this in mind, please note that the interpretations of the theatrical work may differ from the original source content.

Performance Dates

February 20 & 21
February 22 & 23

7 p.m.
2 p.m.

High School Preview Performances

February 20 & 21

1 p.m.

**Dr. W.W. O'Donnell Performing Arts Center
Brenham, Texas**

*Tickets can be purchased in advance online at www.blinn.edu/BoxOffice,
by calling 979-830-4024, or by emailing BoxOffice@blinn.edu*

Directed by

Brad Nies

Technical Theatre Direction by

Kevin Patrick

Costume, Make-up & Hair Design by

Jennifer Patrick



TCCSTA Play Festival Entry

William Shakespeare's Macbeth is Blinn College-Brenham's entry to the 2020 Texas Community College Speech and Theatre Association Play Festival. This state-wide organization has been actively enriching the lives of Texas Community College students since 1922. The annual Play Festival celebrates the art of theatre in an atmosphere of friendliness and respect and provides an opportunity for two-year colleges to share their work in a festival setting, receiving awards and important feedback from educated theatre critics.



Synopsis of William Shakespeare's Macbeth

When an honored and ambitious Scottish general receives a prophecy from three witches that he will be crowned as the King of Scotland, Macbeth and his villainous wife devise a plot to murder the current king and claim the throne. What unfolds is a story of ambition run amok, the occult, and a couple's tragic descent into paranoia and madness.

Written by William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-Upon-Avon in 1564. His father was a successful local business man, and his mother was a landowner's daughter. When he was 18 years-old, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, and together they had three children. By the 1590s, Shakespeare had moved to London to find work in the theatre, and in the early 1600s he began to write his well-known tragedies. After retiring to Stratford-Upon-Avon, he died on his birthday in 1616.

Adapted by Jim Devenport

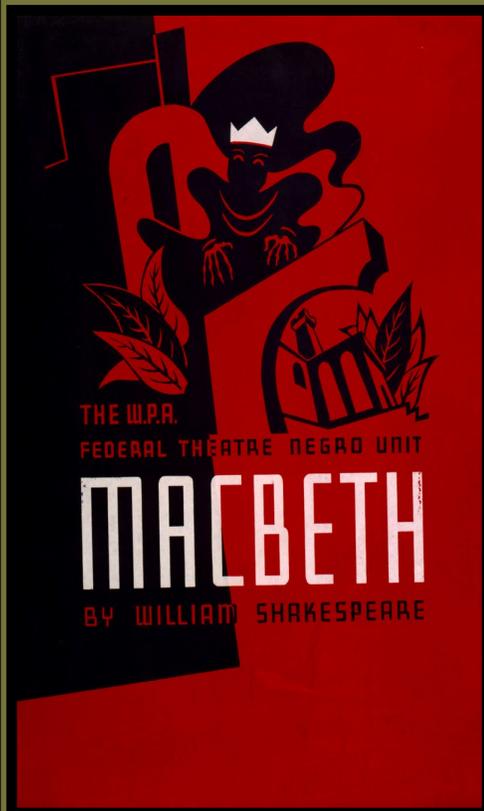
Jim Devenport was born on May 6, 1954. After graduating from Midwestern State University, he taught English and Speech at various schools throughout Texas. As his passion was adapting and directing one-act plays, Devenport was a state qualifier for his presentations of *Scenes and Revelations*, as well as *Children of a Lesser God*. After retiring from Needville ISD, Devenport moved to Wichita Falls, Texas where he resided until his death on December 8, 2016.

The Story of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in Film

J. Stuart Blackton's *Macbeth* (1908)
Orson Welles' *Macbeth* (1948)
Joe MacBeth (1955)
Throne of Blood (1957)
Siberian Lady Macbeth (1962)
The Damned (1969)
Roman Polanski's *Macbeth* (1971)
A Performance of Macbeth (1979)
Men of Respect (1990)
Scotland, PA (2001)
Maqbool (2003)
Bill Shakespeare in Hollywood (2011)
Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth* (2015)



Notable Performances of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* on Broadway



Macbeth at the Astor Place Opera House, May 7, 1849: This production sparked the infamous Astor Place Riot that left approximately 30 people dead and more than 120 injured.

Macbeth at the Lafayette Theatre, April 9, 1936: This production was set in the West Indies and recruited an entirely African American cast. It came to be known as the 'Voodoo Macbeth.'

Macbeth at the Belasco Theatre, November 12, 1986: This production was performed with three other plays as part of the *Shakespeare on Broadway for the Schools* program.

Macbeth at Ethel Barrymore Theatre, April 21, 2013: This production was set in a modern-day psychiatric unit where a lone patient, portrayed by Alan Cumming, relives the story and portrays all of the characters.



Theatrical Superstitions



Theatre-types are a superstitious lot, and some of them are very strict in following rules that ensure each performance is a good one. With this in mind, here are some creepy superstitions you may have seen an actor or a stage technician adhere to:

Never Say Macbeth in a Theatre-As the play contains the occult, as well as incantations designed to call up evil spirits, it is bad luck to reference 'the Scottish play' in a theatre. Another story suggests that the first actor to play Macbeth died tragically while performing the role, thus, forever cursing the show.

Never Wear Green on Stage-Green has always been considered a 'bad luck' color for actors. This belief stems back to the 19th century when lime-lights were used for theatrical productions, and the unlucky actors wearing green would run the risk of blending into the scenery rather than being noticed by the theatre critics.

Peacock Feathers on Stage are Bad Luck-This superstition is inspired by the pattern on a peacock's feather that looks like the Evil Eye. No production is willing to risk having anything 'evil' on stage while actors are performing.

Mirrors on Stage are Bad Luck-This old superstition connotes that mirrors serve as a gateway for evil spirits to cross into the living world. (Ever stand in front of a mirror in a dark bathroom and say 'Bloody Mary' three times?)

Beware the Ghost of Belasco-Theatre impresario David Belasco is said to haunt the famous New York City theatre named after him. According to the legend, Belasco has been seen sitting alone in the balcony, or wandering throughout the lobby after evening performances.

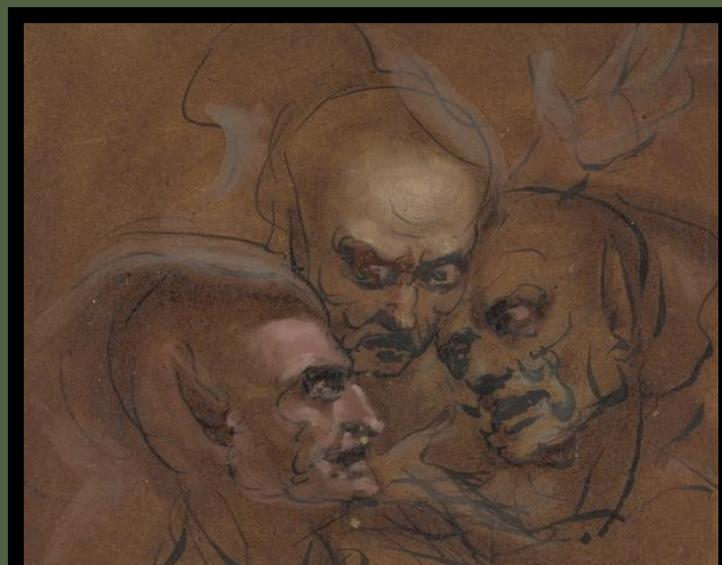
Flowers Stolen from a Graveyard are Good Luck-After a show closes, it is considered good luck to give the director flowers stolen from a grave. This superstition goes back to the time when actors did not make much money, and stolen flowers were the only ones that some could afford.

Never Wish an Actor 'Good Luck'-Saying 'break a leg' rather than 'good luck' comes from the old belief that mischief-making spirits could bring bad tidings on any actor willing to give their luck away, and wishing bad luck onto another actor was a way to successfully confuse the spirits.

Did Macbeth Really Exist?

A king named Macbeth actually did rule Scotland during the 11th century. However, this brave leader bears little resemblance to the murderous villain in William Shakespeare's famous tragedy.

Prior to the 11th century, Scotland was divided into four kingdoms. As such, Scottish clans regularly engaged in war with one another. In 1018, Malcolm of Scotia defeated the Angles of Lothian in the Battle of Carham and was crowned King of Scotland. After successfully uniting Scotland's four kingdoms into one nation, Malcolm died in 1034. His grandson, Duncan, became king. In doing so, however, Duncan proved to be a weaker character than his grandfather, as well as a terrible leader. Meanwhile, Duncan's cousin, Mac Bethad mac Findlaich, translated to English as Macbeth, also had a claim to the throne through his mother. After forming an alliance with the Earl of Orkney, Macbeth defeated and killed Duncan near Elgin in August of 1040. Later the same month, Macbeth led his troupes to Scone, the capital of Scotland, where he was crowned king. Macbeth's seventeen year ruling was marked by a highly efficient government, a strong encouragement of Christianity, and his brave leadership. In 1054, Macbeth was challenged by the Earl of Northumbria who felt that Duncan's son and his nephew, Malcolm, should be restored to the throne. Although the Earl's attempts to restore his nephew were unsuccessful, Macbeth was eventually killed by Malcolm during the Battle of Lumphanan in Aberdeen three years later. As a result, Malcolm III was crowned king in 1058 and ruled for 35 years.



Some Biblical References in William Shakespeare's Macbeth

A morality play is defined as a work with a clear distinction between right and wrong. William Shakespeare's Macbeth could very well fall into that genre, as 'The Bard of Avon' employed several biblical allusions to help tell his story.

King Duncan as Jesus Christ: King Duncan, a man of great dignity and honor, is murdered by Macbeth after Lady Macbeth urges him to do so. Some theorists believe that this deed symbolizes of the killing of Jesus Christ.

Lady Macbeth as Pontius Pilate: After Duncan's murder, Lady Macbeth tells her husband, "A little water clears us of this deed." After allowing the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Pontius Pilate washed his hands before a crowd of people and claimed, "I am innocent of this man's blood."

Lord Macbeth as Lucifer: Macbeth is a loyal servant to Duncan, but decides to kill him in order to gain power. In the Bible, we learn that Lucifer was an angel who was loyal to God but fell out of grace to become the devil.

A Reference to Judas Iscariot: During a drunken rant, a porter at Macbeth's castle mentions a farmer who hanged himself on the expectations of many people. Like the mentioned farmer, Judas Iscariot hung himself after betraying Jesus Christ.

The Witches as Prophets: The three witches in the play tell Macbeth that he will be crowned King of Scotland. In doing so, these three hags represent the chosen prophets in the Bible who made proclamations regarding Jesus Christ.



Hey, Teachers!

This theatre is a proud member of the Theatre Collective of the Brazos Valley. This organization has been kind enough to develop the following rules of theatre etiquette. Please review these rules with your students to assure that all audience members enjoy the show!

1. Be on time by being in your seat 10 minutes before the performance is scheduled to begin. Live theatre begins at the published performance time with a darkened theatre and actors frequently in the aisles ready for entrances. Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the theatre and in locations chosen by the theatre.
2. Remain seated until intermission and until curtain calls are completed to allow performers free access to the exits. If an emergency requires leaving your seat, please remain outside the theatre until allowed to return by the theatre's volunteer staff.
3. Finish and/or discard all food and drinks before entering the theatre. Community theatres in the Brazos Valley use volunteers to clean debris from the theatre and restrooms. Please be respectful of these volunteers by disposing of your own trash.
4. Silence or turn off all electronic devices, including cell phones, beepers, and watch alarms. You are encouraged to share your theatre experience via social media, but you must refrain from sharing or texting during the performance. The glow from all media is easily discernable in the dark theatre and is distracting to your neighbors and the actors.
5. Video and flash photography of live performances is not allowed. Community theatres in the Brazos Valley do not purchase the rights to tape live performances. Actors will generally be available for photographs after the show.
6. Tickets and programs will be provided for all students who need to receive credit for attending theatre performances. The Theatre Collective of the Brazos Valley provides a stamp for proof of attendance after every performance.
7. To allow all patrons easy access to theatre seating, saving more than one seat for a latecomer or volunteer is not allowed.
8. Please refrain from talking during the performance.
9. Your courtesy is much appreciated as it allows for the ultimate experience of theatre productions for all our patrons.



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