

ON TOUR



# Macbeth

## ON TOUR

### **MACBETH**

**Written by**

William Shakespeare

**Adapted and Directed by**

H. Brian Humphrey

**Play Guide**

**Prepared by**

Lara Marsh

Alan Klem



## About This Guide

Shakespeare On Tour celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2020 and we at Nebraska Shakespeare have never been more appreciative of your support and engagement with our work. We have seen the powerful impact and influence this program has on students and audiences across the region. Again and always - thank you.

Shakespeare's plays were created to be experienced through performance. From the stage of the Globe Theatre in London to a school classroom on the plains of Nebraska, Shakespeare's work was meant to be actively engaged on a personal and relatable level. It is only by experiencing Shakespeare's insightful genius through the delivery of performance, no matter how polished or rehearsed, can we truly uncover the humanity, honesty, and humor of his text.

With the health challenges of COVID-19 pandemic, Nebraska Shakespeare is putting the safety of students, educators and our artists first. This means that an alternative to our live version of the *Macbeth* Tour is necessary for 2020. Beginning in October, a Nebraska Shakespeare professional, abridged video production of *Macbeth* specifically staged for students and educators will be available. The 82-minute production will be followed by a live Zoom post-performance discussion with skilled actor/educators creating a customized experience for students and their teachers.

Please contact us with any questions or comments. Your feedback is invaluable to us as we grow our Shakespeare On Tour program in this unprecedented time.

- The staff of Nebraska Shakespeare

# CONTENTS IN THIS GUIDE

PLAY SYNOPSIS	3
MEET THE ACTORS/EDUCATORS	5
ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION	6
CHARACTER MAP	7
VIDEO RESOURCES	8
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE	9
THEATRE IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME	10
SHAKESPEARE'S CANON	12
POST-SHOW DISCUSSION	13
CLASSROOM EXERCISES	14
CONTACT US	17



PHOTO: Roshni Desai after a Shakespeare On Tour performance. (Sarah Lynn Brown)

# MACBETH: PLAY SYNOPSIS



PHOTO: Konrad Case and Bianca Phipps in Shakespeare On The Green's KING JOHN. (Chris Holtmeier)

- After defeating the Norwegian army, Macbeth and Banquo encounter a mysterious sorceress, who prophesizes that Macbeth will be made thane of Cawdor and king of Scotland, and that Banquo will beget a line of Scottish kings, although Banquo will never be king himself.
- The sorceress vanishes, and Malcolm arrives, thanking the two generals for their victory and to tell Macbeth that he has indeed been named thane of Cawdor. Malcolm also informs Macbeth and Banquo that his father, Duncan, the king of Scotland, plans to stay at Inverness, Macbeth's castle, that night. Macbeth writes ahead to his wife, Lady Macbeth, telling her all that has happened.
- When Macbeth arrives at Inverness, Lady Macbeth persuades him to kill the king that very night. While Duncan is asleep, Macbeth stabs him, despite his doubts. Lady Macbeth returns the daggers to the king's chamberlains to frame them for the murder. Macduff arrives to Inverness and discovers Duncan's dead body. Macbeth kills the chamberlains—ostensibly out of rage at their crime—and easily assumes the kingship.
- Duncan's son Malcolm flees to England, fearing that whoever killed Duncan desires their demise as well. Macbeth hires a pair of murderers to kill Banquo and his son Fleance. They ambush Banquo on her way to a royal feast, but they fail to kill Fleance, who escapes into the night.
- Macbeth grows more paranoid upon learning that Fleance escaped. At the feast that night, Banquo's ghost visits Macbeth. When he sees the ghost, Macbeth raves fearfully, startling his guests.

## Who's Who

### Macbeth

A successful general and the thane of Glamis.

### Lady Macbeth

Macbeth's wife, a deeply ambitious and lonely woman.

### The Sorceress

A prophetic being, resembling the mythological Fates.

### Banquo

A noble soldier and Macbeth's best friend.

### King Duncan

The good king of Scotland whom Macbeth, in his ambition for the crown, murders.

### Macduff

The thane of Fife who mistrusts Macbeth's rise to power and leads the crusade to unseat him.

# MACBETH: PLAY SYNOPSIS



PHOTO: Shaan Sharma, Sam Cheeseman, and Hannah Clark in Shakespeare On Tour's OTHELLO. (Chris Holtmeier)

## Who's Who (continued)

### Malcolm

The child of Duncan, who flees after her father's murder.

### Fleance

Banquo's child, who survives Macbeth's attempt to murder him.

### The Murderers

A pair of ruffians hired by Macbeth to murder Banquo, Fleance, and Macduff's family.

### Lady Macduff

Macduff's closest kin.

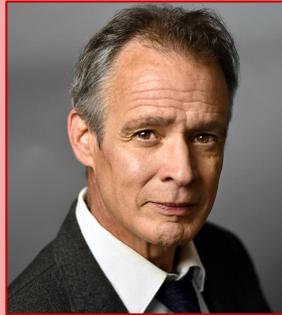
- Frightened, Macbeth goes to visit the sorceress once again. They show him further prophecies: he must beware of Macduff, who opposes Macbeth's accession to the throne; he is incapable of being harmed by anyone born of woman; and he will be safe until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane Castle.
- When Macbeth learns that Macduff has fled to England to join Malcolm, he orders that Lady Macduff and her child be murdered.
- Macduff learns of his family's execution in England and vows revenge. Malcolm has succeeded in raising an army in England, and Macduff joins him as he rides to Scotland to challenge Macbeth's forces.
- Lady Macbeth becomes plagued with fits of sleepwalking in which she bemoans what she believes to be bloodstains on her hands. Before Macbeth's opponents arrive, Macbeth receives news that she has killed herself.
- Macbeth, awaiting Malcolm and Macduff, sees the English army advancing on Dunsinane with boughs cut from Birnam Wood. Birnam Wood is indeed coming to Dunsinane, fulfilling half of the sorceress's prophecy.
- On the battlefield, Macbeth encounters the vengeful Macduff, who declares that he was not "of woman born" but was instead "untimely ripped" from his mother's womb. Macduff kills Macbeth.
- Malcolm, now the king of Scotland, declares his benevolent intentions for the country and invites all to see him crowned at Scone as the sorceress adds Macbeth's severed head to her stable of victims.

# MEET THE ACTORS/EDUCATORS



**Hannah Clark**

Hannah earned her BA in English Literature and Theatre from Chadron State College and MFA from Creighton University's in poetry. She's acted in Shakespearian roles including NE Shakes productions *Much Ado*, *King John*, *All's Well*, *Hamlet*, and the touring *Othello*.



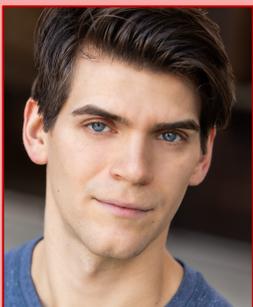
**James FitzGerald**

Jim has been (and is) a professional, regional, actor for 30 years. He is the veteran of over 50 Shakespeare productions, including 8 seasons with the Nebraska Shakespeare Festival.



**Maya Lagerstram**

Maya is a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota/Guthrie BFA Actors Training Program, with a focus on classical theater. She's extremely passionate about Shakespeare and youth theatre.



**Michael Judah**

Michael earned a BA at the University of Nebraska/Omaha and a MFA from the FSU/Asolo Conservatory. He has acted in many Shakespeare shows such as *The Taming of the Shrew*, *As You Like It*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.



**D. Kevin Williams**

D. Kevin Williams is a seasoned actor of over 25 years. His credits are local and regional, including NS and the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival. D. Kevin has an extensive history in leading drama workshops around Nebraska.



**Nadia Ra'Shaun Williams**

An Omaha native, Nadia has been acting since the age of eight. Venues she has performed include the Nebraska Rep, the Union, and the Denver Center.

# ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION

Our production of *Macbeth* was recorded in 2009 in front of a live audience at Marion High School. We thank all performers, designers, the director, sponsors, and of course, Marion High School in assisting Nebraska Shakespeare in accomplishing the telling of this story.



## 2009 Performers

Banquo/Wounded Sergeant

Malcolm/Murderer 2

Sorceress/handmade/Porter/Old Crone

Macbeth

Duncan/Macduff/Murderer 1

Lady Macbeth

Dakotah Brown

Sean Carlson

Sarah Carlson-Brown

Vincent Carlson-Brown

Brian Frederick

Maria Vacha

## 2009 Production Team

Director, Script Adaptation

Stage Manager, Props Master

Fight Choreographer

Set Designer

Costume Designer

Tour Manager

Video Production

A. Bryan Humphrey

Wesley A. Houston

Terry Doughman

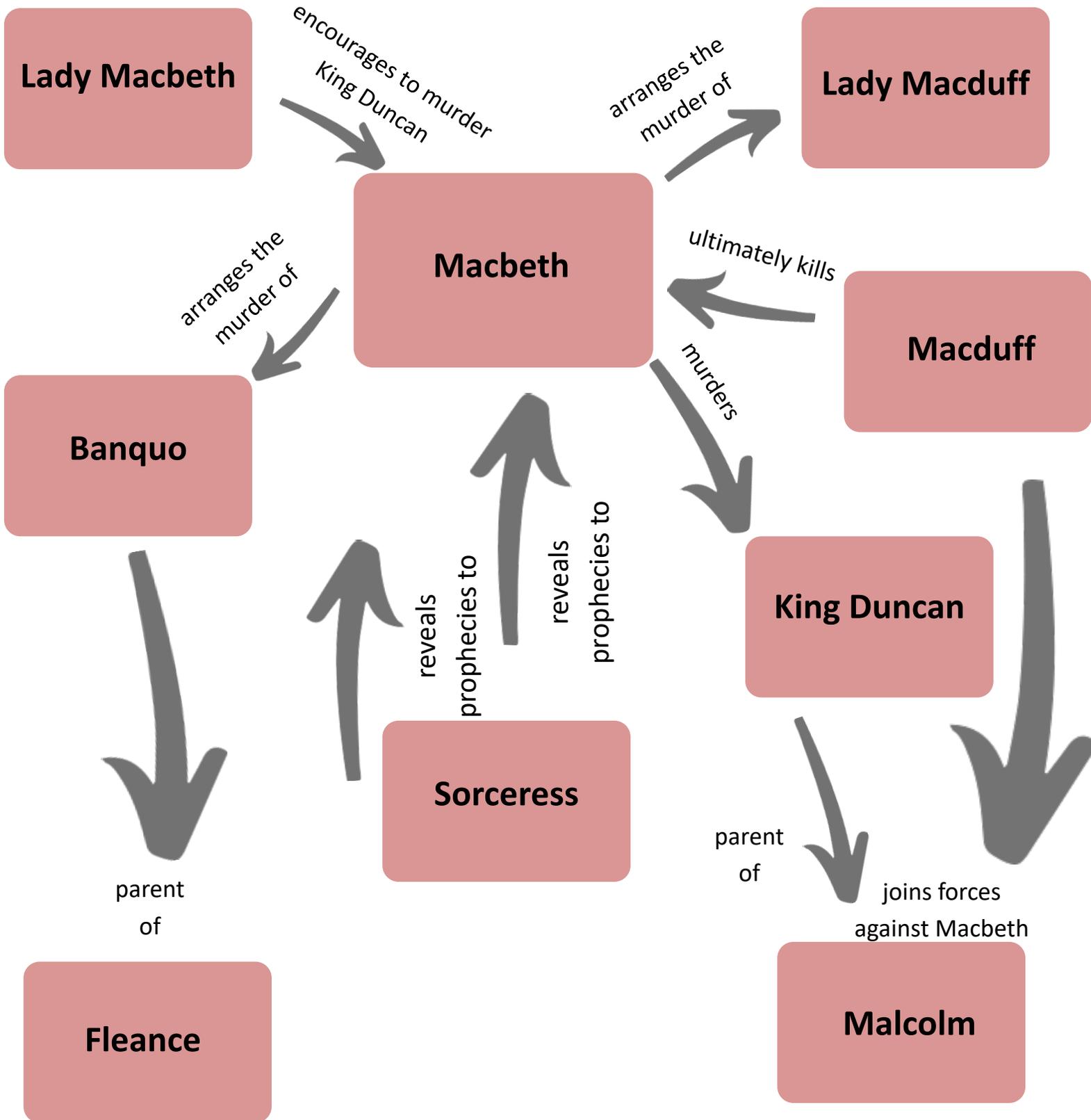
Robbie Jones

Lindsay Pape

Thomas S. Lowe

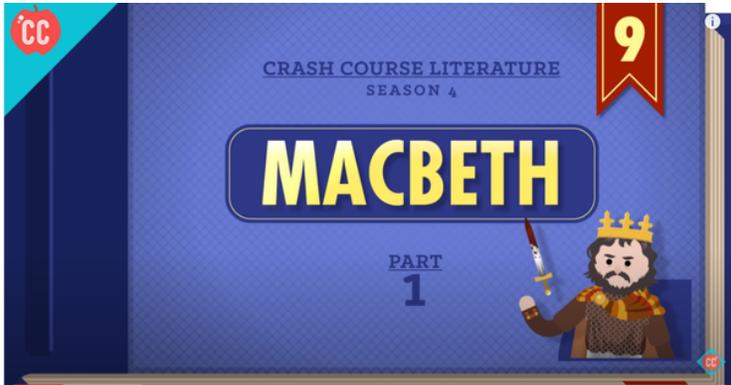
Jason Brandt

# CHARACTER MAP



# VIDEO RESOURCES

Click on the image below for the video link.



## Free Will, Witches, Murder, and Macbeth, Part 1: Crash Course Literature

Young Adult best-selling author John Green (*The Fault in Our Stars*, *Turtles All the Way Down*) discusses the plot of Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* and explores themes of free will and the presence of witches.



## Gender, Guilt, and Fate - Macbeth, Part 2: Crash Course Literature

John Green expands the *Macbeth* discussion to include Lady Macbeth and gender themes. *Macbeth* as the OG anti-hero, and the power of guilt to provoke decision and action.



## Why should you read *Macbeth*?

A beautifully animated exploration of why we continue to read *Macbeth* and the universality of the play's themes. Produced by TED-Ed, the education wing of TEDTalks.



## Lady Macbeth Draw My Life

A visual exploration of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* from the point of view of Lady Macbeth. Drawn and produced by Miss C.

# THE PLAYWRIGHT



## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 to John and Mary Arden Shakespeare and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, in England's West Country.

Much of the information about him comes from official documents such as wills, legal documents and court records. There are also contemporary references to him and his writing. While much of the biographical information is sketchy and incomplete, for a person of his class and as the son of a town alderman, quite a lot of information is available.

Young Shakespeare would have attended the Stratford grammar school, where he would have learned to read and write not only English, but also Latin and some Greek. In 1582, at age 18, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, and the couple would have three children: Susanna in 1583 and twins Hamnet and Judith in 1585.

After an eight-year gap where Shakespeare's activity is not known, he appeared in London by 1592 and quickly began to make a name for himself as a prolific playwright. He stayed in London for about 20 years, becoming increasingly successful in his work as an actor, writer and shareholder in his acting company. Retirement took him back to Stratford to lead the life of a country gentleman. His son Hamnet died at age 11, but both daughters were married: Susanna to Dr. John Hall and Judith to Thomas Quiney.

Shakespeare died in Stratford in 1616 on April 23, which is thought to be his birthday. He is buried in the parish church, where his grave can be seen to this day. His known body of work includes at least 37 plays, two long poems and 154 sonnets.

Originally printed in the Guthrie Theater Play Guide: As You Like It, 2019.

# THEATRE IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME

## THE STAGE

The theatre where audiences watched Shakespeare's company perform many of his plays was called The Globe, situated on the south side of London. It is thought that the stage was several feet above the ground where the people who paid a penny (the groundlings) stood, and that it extended into the audience from the backstage wall.

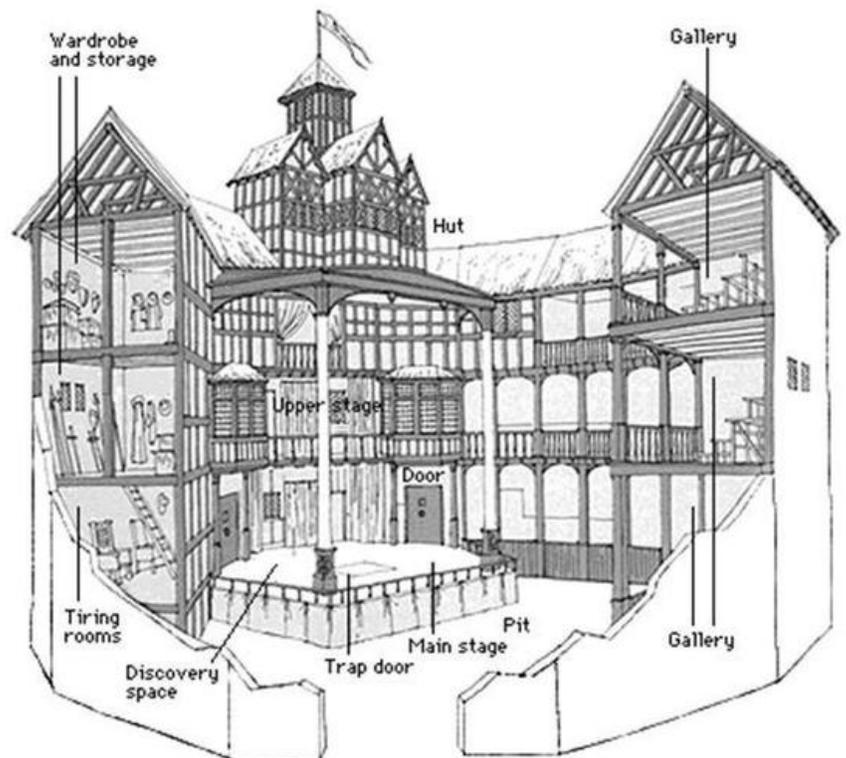
Most Elizabethan theaters were built after the design of the original Globe. Built of wood, these theaters comprised three tiers of seats in a circular shape, with a stage area on one side of the circle. The audience's seats and part of the stage were roofed and much of the main stage and the area in front of the stage was open to the elements. About 1,500 audience members could pay an extra fee to sit in the covered seating areas, while about 800 groundlings paid less to stand in the open area before the stage.

The stage had four possible entrances on the main floor and three entrances on the second floor, so that large groups such as the whole of a King's court could enter and be onstage at the same time. In the floor of the main stage, there were two trapdoors, where ghosts and apparitions could come from below stage, and which could open to reveal other special effects, like the witches in Macbeth.

All the main architectural features in the photo were permanent; some plays added various kinds of staircases to get from the first level of the stage to the balcony, and some plays separate the balcony completely from the main floor, so that actors have to go up or down stairs, which are hidden backstage.

What could change were the curtains or doors at the front of the inner below. They could be of several different colors and could be kept open or closed. They could be doors; plain wood, or decorated, or replaced with iron gates. Various kinds of furniture could be brought onto the stage through this entrance.

Before Shakespeare's time and during his boyhood, troupes of actors performed wherever they could: in halls, courts, courtyards, and any other available open spaces. In 1574, however, when Shakespeare was ten years old, the Common Council passed a law requiring plays and theaters in London to be licensed. In 1576, actor and future Lord Chamberlain's Man, James Burbage, built the first permanent theater called simply The Theatre outside London's city walls. Thereafter, many more theaters sprung up around the city, including The Globe Theatre in which most of Shakespeare's plays were premiered.



# THEATRE IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME



## THE COSTUMES

In Shakespeare's time, acting companies spent almost as much on costumes as they do today for a television series. The costumes for productions in England were so expensive that visitors from France were a little envious. Kings and queens on the stage were almost as well-dressed as kings and queens in real life.

Where did the acting companies get their clothes? Literally "off the rack" and from used clothing sellers. Wealthy middle class people would often give their servants old clothes that they didn't want to wear any more, or would leave their clothes to the servants when they died. Since clothing was very expensive, people wore it as long as possible and passed it on from one person to another with no one being ashamed to wear hand-me-downs. However, since servants were of a lower class than their employers, they weren't allowed to wear rich fabrics, and would sell these clothes to acting companies, who were allowed to wear what they wanted in performance.

A rich king like Duncan from *Macbeth* would wear a gown of velvet, with real fur trim; if he wore a doublet, it might have gold embroidery. *Macbeth* was set in a much more barbaric time than most of his plays, so kilts with furs, leather, and earthy fabrics were often used. Similarly, today's audiences want costumes to be more authentic, so that they can believe in the world of the play.



One important difference between plays written in Shakespeare's time and those written today is that Elizabethan plays were published after their performances and sometimes even after their authors' deaths. The scripts were in many ways a record of what happened on stage during performances, rather than directions for what should happen. Actors were allowed to suggest changes to scenes and dialogue and had much more freedom with their parts than contemporary actors.

Shakespeare's plays were published in various forms and with a wide range of accuracy during his time. The discrepancies between versions of his plays from one publication to the next make it difficult for editors to put together authoritative editions of his works. Plays could be published in large anthologies in folio format (the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays contains 36 plays) or smaller Quartos. Folios were so named because of the way their paper was folded in half to make a large volume. Quartos were smaller, cheaper books containing only one play. Their paper was folded twice, making four pages. In general, the First Folio is considered to be more reliable than the Quartos.

## EARLY PERIOD

- ca. 1587–92 The Two Gentlemen of Verona
- ca. 1589–90 Titus Andronicus
- ca. 1590 Henry IV, Part II
- ca. 1590–91 Henry IV, Part III
- ca. 1591 The Taming of the Shrew
- ca. 1592 Henry IV, Part I; Richard III
- ca. 1594 The Comedy of Errors; Love's Labour's Lost

## MIDDLE PERIOD

- ca. 1595 Richard II; Romeo and Juliet
- ca. 1596 A Midsummer Night's Dream; King John; The Merchant of Venice
- ca. 1598 Henry IV, Part I; Henry IV, Part II; Much Ado About Nothing
- ca. 1599 Henry V; Julius Caesar
- ca. 1600 As You Like It; The Merry Wives of Windsor
- ca. 1601 Twelfth Night
- ca. 1602 Troilus and Cressida
- ca. 1602–04 Hamlet
- ca. 1604 Othello; Measure for Measure
- ca. 1605–06 All's Well That Ends Well; King Lear; Macbeth

## LATE PERIOD

- ca. 1606 Timon of Athens; Antony and Cleopatra
- ca. 1608 Pericles; Coriolanus
- ca. 1609–11 The Winter's Tale
- ca. 1610 Cymbeline
- ca. 1611 The Tempest
- ca. 1613 Henry VIII
- ca. 1613–14 The Two Noble Kinsmen

Authorship and dating of Shakespeare's plays is a subject of much academic debate. These dates are speculative, but are the "most probable" dating from [The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works](#).

# POST-SHOW DISCUSSION

You are invited to participate in a live, virtual post-show discussion with Nebraska Shakespeare actor/educators after you watch the production. Students are welcome to ask any questions they had about the show including acting, design, the theatre profession, education, etc. Please use the following prompts to help students formulate questions and discussion topics for the conversation.

## **THEATRE & ACTING**

Did you go to school to study acting/theatre?  
When did you start working in theatre?  
Why did you decide to make it your career?  
What is some advice for someone interested in this career?  
What are the different careers in the theatre?  
How did you discover different character choices?

## **MACBETH: THE PLAY AND THE PRODUCTION**

What is your favorite part of this production?  
What has been the most challenging part?  
What aspect of Shakespeare's text do you enjoy the most?



# CLASSROOM EXERCISES

## THE SORCERESS

Watch footage of the Sorceress in Act 1:

- [2014 featuring Billy Boyd](#)
- [2018 from the Royal Shakespeare Company](#)

Reflect on how the Sorceress speaks and is portrayed in these productions. How would you describe her? What do you see and hear and feel?

Compare the footage with how the Sorceress is portrayed in Nebraska Shakespeare's production. What are the similarities (beside the text)? What are the differences?



## LADY MACBETH

Macbeth receives the news that Lady Macbeth has died in Act 5, Scene 5. Plan and write an obituary for Lady Macbeth.

Suggested structure for your obituary:

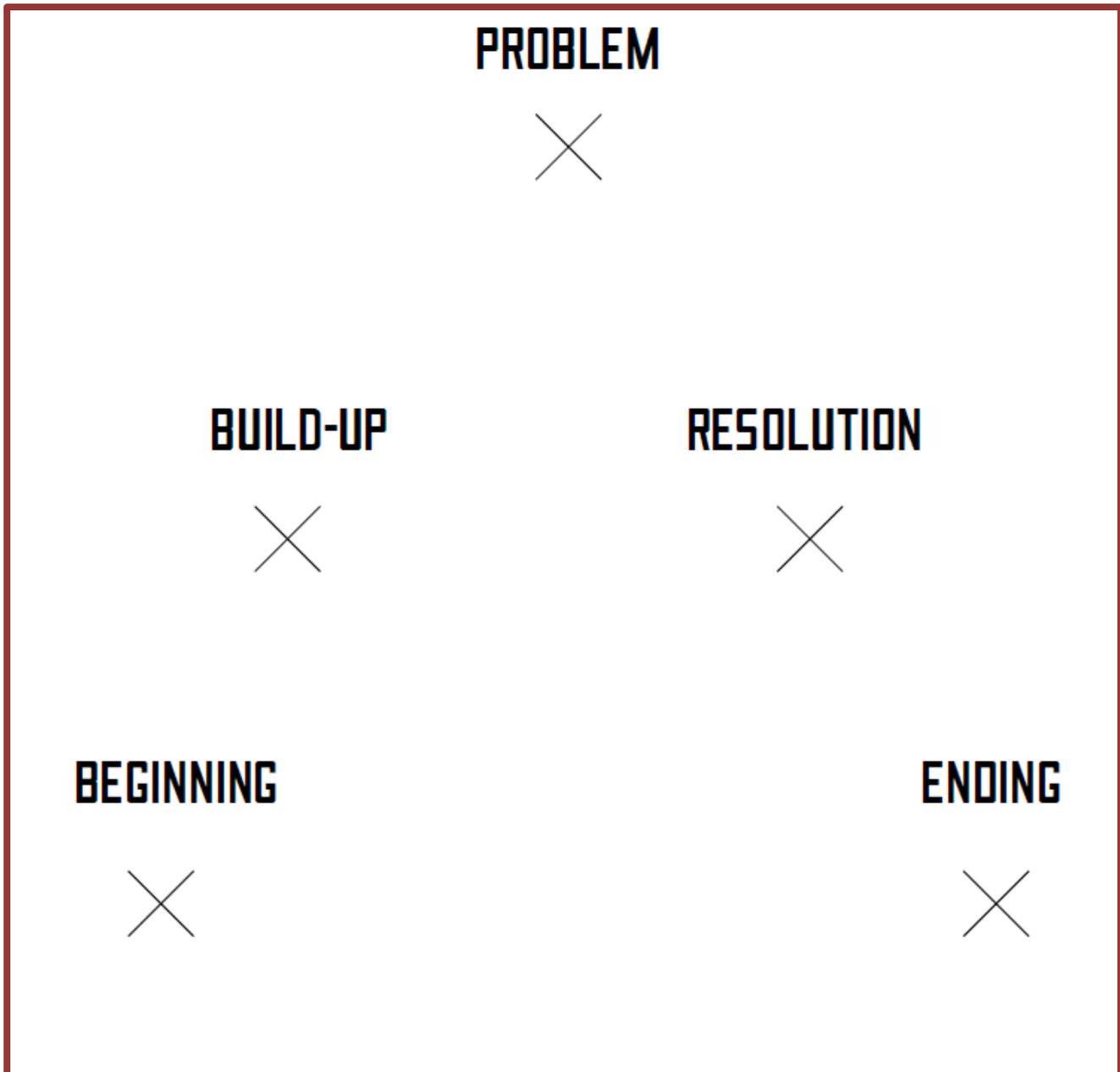
- a simple title and a longer sub-title (you could use a quotation from the play here)
- an opening paragraph informing readers of her death and describing her early life
- a middle paragraph that goes into more detail about her later life and mentions any family that survive her
- a short final paragraph about funeral arrangements/where she has been buried

# CLASSROOM EXERCISES

## STORY MOUNTAIN

Below is a story mountain template which reflects the arc of Macbeth and other narratives: beginning – build-up/rising action – problem – resolution/falling action - ending. Using the Plot Synopsis on pages 5-6 of this Study Guide, place major plot points in the correct order on the story mountain.

\*\*Created by Shakespeare's Globe, 2016. they wanted in performance.



# CLASSROOM EXERCISES

## THE LANGUAGE OF DECISION

Compare Macbeth's language in these two passages from Act I and Act IV. Look for examples of Macbeth being 'indecisive' and 'decisive' in the two extracts. What can we say about the differences between Macbeth in the two extracts? How is his character developing and changing? How do you explain this?

### **MACBETH. ACT I, SCENE 7**

*If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly. The King's here in double trust;  
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,  
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,  
Who should against his murderer shut the door,  
Not bear the knife myself. I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition-*

*Enter LADY MACBETH*

*How now! what news?*

### **MACBETH. ACT IV, SCENE 1**

*Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits:  
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:  
The castle of Macduff I will surprise;  
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword  
Her coz, her babe, and all unfortunate souls  
That trace her in her line. No boasting like a fool;  
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool.*

**INDECISIVE**

**DECISIVE**

# CONTACT US



Nebraska Shakespeare creates entertaining, challenging productions as well as immersive educational experiences that connect our diverse community to Shakespeare's exploration of what it means to be human. On stage, in the classroom, and through collaborative partnerships, we CREATE, ENGAGE, and INSPIRE.

## WRITE

Send us a letter with your thoughts on the show – or a postcard with information about your upcoming productions!

## Mail to:

Nebraska Shakespeare On Tour  
2500 California Plaza  
Omaha, NE 68178

## Connect and Follow

Website: [www.nebraskashakespeare.com](http://www.nebraskashakespeare.com)

Social Media: @nebraskashakespeare on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, & Twitter



**Joan and  
Don  
Wurster**

**Susan and  
Jim Tracy**



This production is part of Shakespeare in American Communities, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest. To learn more, visit:

<https://www.artsmidwest.org/programs/shakespeare>