

Act IV, Scene i

Synopsis

The witches brew up a spell for Macbeth in a cauldron. Macbeth enters and demands to have his questions answered. This time, the prophecies are given by apparitions. The prophecies are as follows:



- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

The witches vanish. Lennox enters the cave and tells Macbeth that Macduff has fled to England. Macbeth is furious and swears to kill Macduff's family.

Questions

- 1) Read the opening of the scene, prior to Macbeth's entrance. What do you think is the purpose of this part of the scene?

- 2) Look carefully at the three prophecies. In what ways does each encourage a sense of false security in Macbeth?

Act IV, Scene ii

Synopsis

An unidentified messenger arrives at Lady Macduff's castle in Fife to warn her of danger, but he is too late. Murderers burst in, stab her son, and pursue the screaming Lady Macduff.

Questions

- 1) Why do you think Shakespeare includes a scene showing the relationship between Lady Macduff and her son?

- 2) This is the first murder to be committed on stage. What effect does this have on the audience? Why do you think Shakespeare deems it necessary to create this effect at this particular point in the play?

Act IV, Scene iii

Synopsis

Malcolm tests Macduff's loyalty to Scotland by trying to convince Macduff that he is not a worthy ruler, only to tell Macduff that he has been 'just kidding.' Ross arrives from Scotland and tells of the state of the country under Macbeth's rule. Macduff is finally notified that his family has been murdered and is determined to seek revenge.

Questions

- 1) Why does Malcolm need to test Macduff's loyalty to Scotland?

- 2) What do Ross's comments suggest about the state of Scotland under Macbeth's rule?
