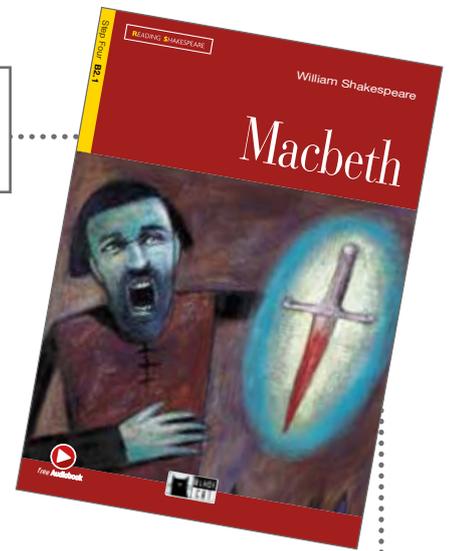


level
B2.1

READING ACTIVITY 1/6



MACBETH

INTRODUCTION

The tragedy of *Macbeth* is one of William Shakespeare's (1564-1616) most powerful and unforgettable plays. It has inspired films, paintings and even an opera: Giuseppe Verdi's *Macbeth*.

The tragedy is set in 11th-century Scotland during the reign of King Duncan. Macbeth is one of the king's most trusted thanes, or lords, and he is a very ambitious man. While returning from a successful battle Macbeth meets three witches who prophesy some strange things about his future. His friend Banquo warns him that witches are evil spirits and they make men do bad things. However, Macbeth tells his wife, Lady Macbeth, about the witches prophecies. Lady Macbeth, who is even more ambitious than her husband, begins to make terrible plans inspired by the prophecies. Their ambitions stop at nothing at all—not even murder!

PREDICTION – WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

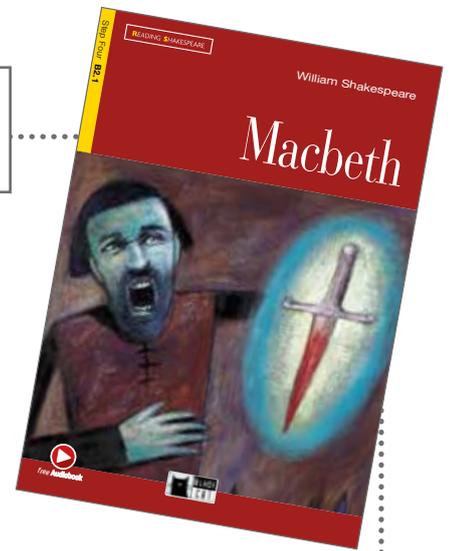
1. Macbeth will listen to Banquo's advice and forget the prophecies. T F
2. Macbeth will return to the three witches to learn more about his future. T F
3. Lady Macbeth will make terrible plans, but Macbeth will not listen to her. T F
4. In the end, Lady Macbeth will kill her husband, Macbeth. T F

Mark your answers and when you finish reading the story, check them to see if your predicted correctly.



level
B2.1

READING ACTIVITY 2/6



PART 1

Read the excerpts from *Macbeth*, Part Two, The Murder of the King, and then do the activities below.

Macbeth has just killed King Duncan and he is coming out of the soldiers' room.

Lady Macbeth saw her husband when he came back out of the soldiers' room.

'Well?' she asked him, 'Did you do it?'

Macbeth was very pale.

'Duncan is dead,' he told her. It's a terrible thing I've done. Afterwards, I heard a voice. It said, "There will be no more sleep. Macbeth has murdered sleep". It was a frightening voice.'

Lady Macbeth looked at him. Even she was frightened for a moment.

'Did it say anything else?' she asked.

'The voice was very loud,' Macbeth said, 'It cried out, "Macbeth has murdered sleep—Macbeth will never sleep again". I thought everyone in the castle would hear the voice.'

'You're like a child!' Lady Macbeth told him angrily. 'There was no voice, it was only your own fear which you heard. Go and wash the blood from your hands.' Then she noticed the knife in Macbeth's hand.

'But the knife, why are you carrying the knife? you should have left it with the soldiers! Take it back.'

'I can't go back in there,' Macbeth said. 'I'll never go back in there!'

'Give me the knife,' Lady Macbeth ordered. 'I'm not afraid to go in there.'

Lady Macbeth took the knife and went into the soldiers' room. They were still sleeping. She covered the soldiers with the king's blood, and left the knife in their room. When she came out of the room, she saw that Macbeth was looking at his hands. They were red with blood.

'I'll never be able to wash the blood away,' he said sadly. 'I have done a terrible thing.'

'Look at my hands,' Lady Macbeth told him scornfully.¹ 'They're red like yours—but I'm not afraid like you! A little water will remove the traces of our crime.'

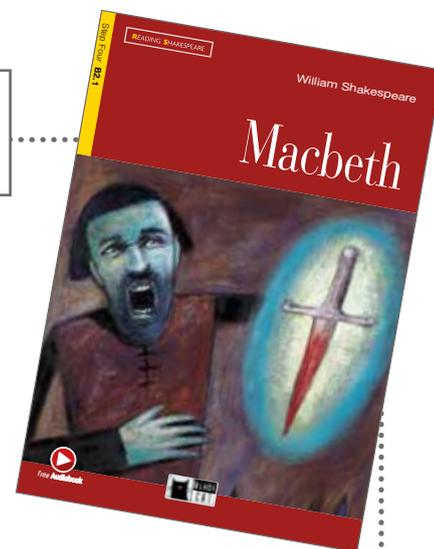
1 **scornfully** : with contempt



level
B2.1

READING ACTIVITY

3/6



1. Choose the correct answer, a, b or c.

- When Macbeth came out of the soldiers' room
 - he was shaking and frightened.
 - he was very pale.
 - he was satisfied with what he had done.
- Where did the loud voice come from?
 - It came from inside the castle.
 - It came from the soldiers' room.
 - There was no voice; it was Macbeth's own fear.
- What* had Macbeth murdered?
 - sleep
 - King Duncan
 - the soldiers
- Where did Lady Macbeth leave the knife?
 - She left it in the king's room.
 - She left it on the king's bed.
 - She left it in the soldiers' room
- What did Lady Macbeth tell her husband?
 - She told him that he was afraid.
 - She told him that he was stupid.
 - She told him that he was brave.

QUICK QUIZ

2. Choose the correct word: who or which.

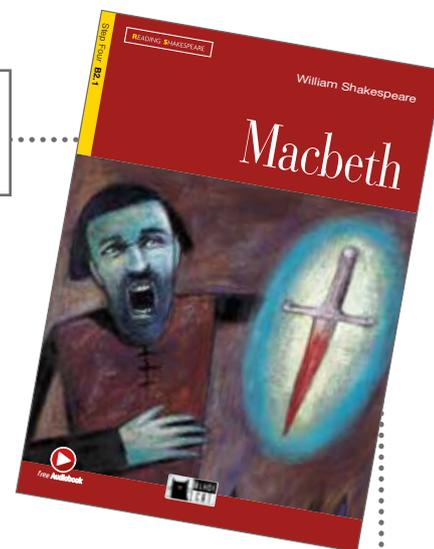
- She saw the two soldiers were sleeping near the king.
- He was holding the long knife was covered with blood.
- King Duncan's castle was built on a mountain, was difficult to reach.
- The witches were old and ugly stood near the fire.
- 'I'm lost!' said the soldier. ' is the right road to the castle?'



level
B2.1

READING ACTIVITY

4/6



PART 2

People at the castle said that Macbeth's Queen, Lady Macbeth, had gone mad. Others said she was very ill. One of the Queen's servants went to talk to the doctor.

Just then they heard a noise from the Queen's room and the door opened. Macbeth's wife came out.

'You see,' the servant said. 'She's walking, but she's asleep.'

'But she's doing something,' the doctor said. 'She seems to be rubbing her hands.'¹

'She always does that,' the servant told him. 'It's as if she were washing her hands. I've seen her do that before.'

The Queen began to speak to herself.

'I'll clean these hands—I must clean these hands—Don't be afraid, Macbeth—No one will know it was us—what a lot of blood Duncan has!'

The doctor was very excited. he touched the servant's arm.

'Did you hear that?' he whispered. 'I wonder what that means.'

The Queen went on talking in her sleep.

'Macduff had a wife—Where is she now?—These hands of mine, they'll never be clean.'

'One thing is certain,' the servant said to the doctor. 'She has done terrible things, this Queen of ours.'

'I can't help her,' the doctor said. 'She is ill in the mind, and I can do nothing to help her.'

'She will soon go to bed,' the servant said.

The Queen continued to look at her hands. Then she spoke again. 'Banquo is dead—He can't hurt you—My hands! My hands—Who will wash my hands?'

Then the Queen returned to her room.

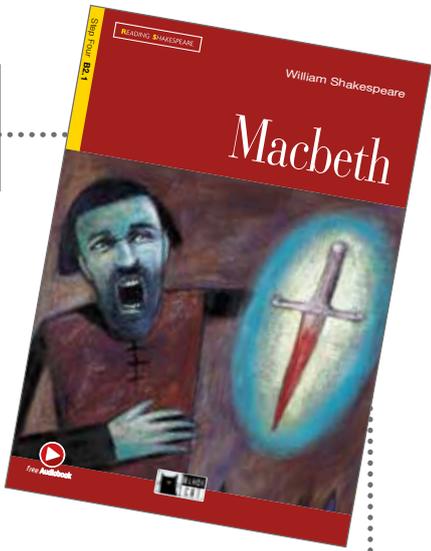
The doctor thought about what he had seen.

1 **rubbing her hands** : moving one hand against the other



level
B2.1

READING ACTIVITY
5/6



ODD ONE OUT!

3A. Choose the word that does not belong to the group.

- 1. doctor neighbour servant soldier
- 2. mad insane crazy sane
- 3. comfort hurt injure wound
- 4. shout cry scream whisper
- 5. excited delighted pleased dissatisfied

3B. Use the odd words to complete the sentences.

- 1. The teacher was with the results of the students' tests.
- 2. The mother tried to the child who was crying.
- 3. She made friends with the next door.
- 4. Don't ! I can't hear you!
- 5. The doctor was the only person in the mental hospital.

QUICK QUIZ!

4. Complete the table with the adverb form of the noun.

NOUN	ADVERB
1. scorn
2. anger
3. courage
4. innocence
5. hunger

