

Macbeth: Intro Readings & Geography

CURSE OF MACBETH

The "Curse of Macbeth" is the misfortune that happens during the production of the play.

The theory goes that Shakespeare included actual black magic spells in the incantations of the weird sisters. Those who appear in the play or those who mention the play's name within the confines of a theatre risk having these evils brought down on their heads.

The tragedy of Macbeth is considered so unlucky that it is hardly ever called by name inside the profession. People refer to the play as "that play", "the unmentionable" or "the Scottish play." It is supposed to be bad luck to quote from the play or to use any sets, costumes, or props from a production.

The play partly acquired its evil reputation because of the weird sisters and partly because tradition traces a long line of disasters back to its premier on August 7, 1606.

The boy actor playing Lady Macbeth died back stage on opening night. In 1934, four actors played Macbeth in a single week. In 1937, Macbeth had to be postponed for three days after a change in directors and because of the death of Lilian Boylis.

In 1954, the portrait of Lilian Boylis crashed down on the bar on opening night.

The answer to the curse is lost in folklore; there are three main guesses to why the curse occurs.

The first guess is that there is something mystical about the weird sisters' incantations.

The second guess is that the play has a history of bad luck.

The third guess is that the play's crowd-pleasing popularity made it the stand-by when a show was flopping.

There is a lot of fighting and physical action in Macbeth. It is inevitable that in the long run of the play someone is going to get hurt. After a few of these stories get around, you get the "Curse of Macbeth."

In one production of Macbeth, nothing went wrong until the fight scene between Macbeth and Macduff. Both actors had round "Celtic-style" shields strapped to their forearms of their left arms. The fight was very physical. The actor playing Macbeth made a violent move with his left arm and the shield left his arm and flew like a Frisbee for twenty feet across the stage.

The actor playing Macduff ducked instinctively and the shield hit the ground about sixteen inches from the front of the stage. Sitting in the front row, directly opposite the shield sat two nuns.

The superstition is not so much about doing the play as about naming it. You are not supposed to mention the title in a theatre.

The most interesting theory is that the play contains the devil in the form of the porter.

The most common remedy to get rid of the curse is that the offender must step outside, turn around three times, spit, and say the foulest word he/she can think of, and wait for permission to re-enter the theatre.

"Curse of Macbeth" Questions- Really Brief Answers are Fine

1. As theory has it, what occurs to those individuals who mention the play's name within the confines of a theater?
2. What are the 3 names it is referred to?
3. When was the play's premier performance?
4. Name 3 "bad" things that occurred during the various productions. What is the "remedy" to get rid of the curse?
5. What is the remedy to get rid of the curse?

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The Geography of Macbeth

