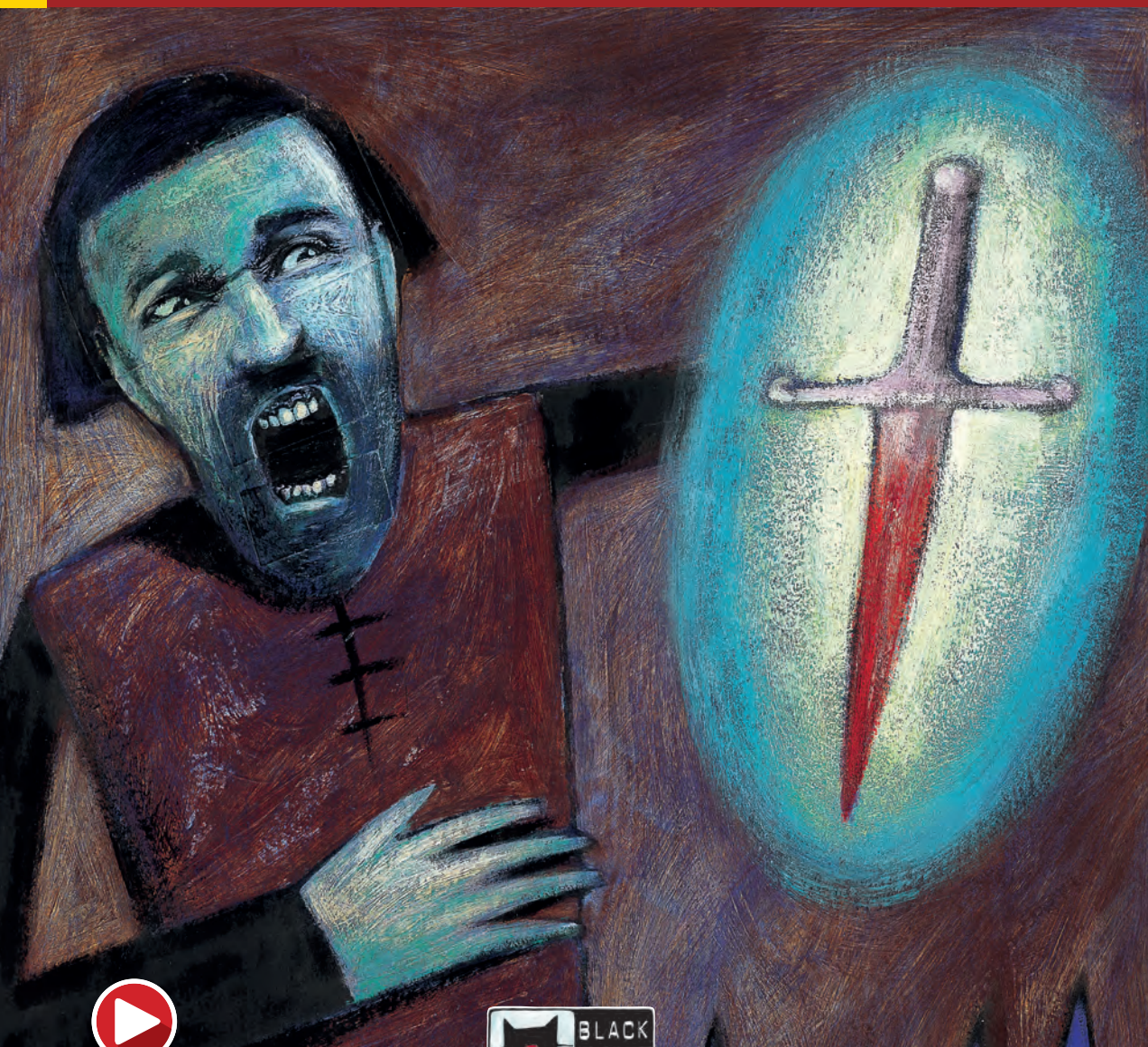


William Shakespeare

Macbeth



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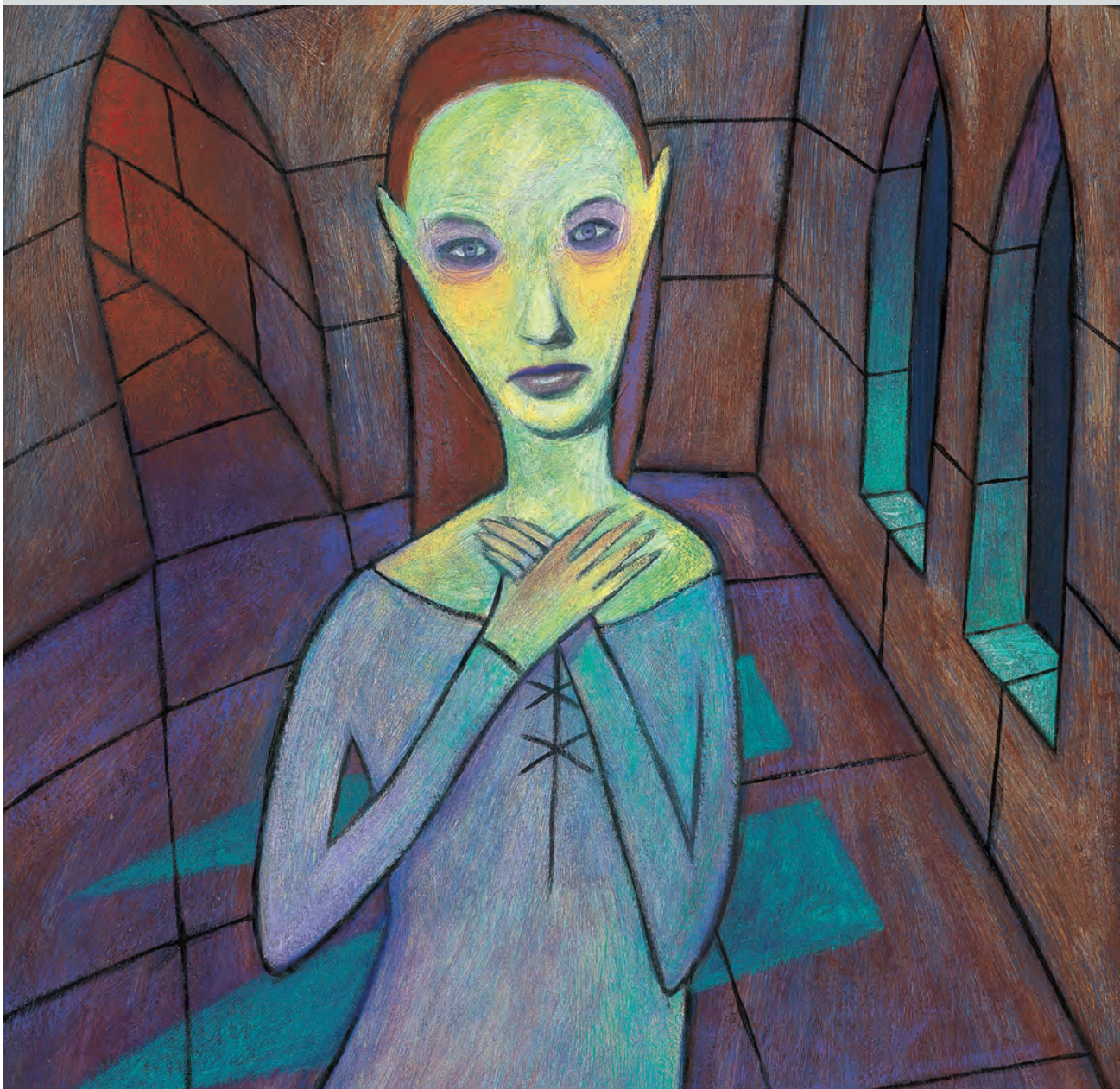
William Shakespeare

Macbeth

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These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the passages linked to the listening activities.



A portrait of **William Shakespeare** by an unknown artist. It is a copy made in the early 19th century of a portrait that was in the Folio edition of the plays of Shakespeare, which was published in 1623. This copy is called the **Flowers portrait** because it was owned by a family called Flowers.

The Life of *William Shakespeare*

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, a small town in central England. The exact date of his birth is not known, but many people like to believe that he was born on 23 April. This is St George's Day, the day of the patron saint of England.

William Shakespeare's father made and sold gloves.¹ He was involved in local politics in Stratford-upon-Avon, and became the town mayor.² It is likely that William Shakespeare was educated at the grammar school in Stratford-upon-Avon, where boys were taught Latin and Roman history.

When he was eighteen Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, who was eight years older than himself. They had three children: a daughter, Susanna, and twins, Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet died young, at the age of eleven.

We do not know what Shakespeare did immediately after marriage, and there are a lot of stories about what have been called the 'missing years'. It is known,

1. **gloves** : you wear these on your hands.

2. **mayor** [meə] : the head of the government of a town or city.

however, that he later went to London, where he became one of the owners of a theatrical company called the Lord Chamberlain's¹ Men. It seems he was an actor before he began to write plays. He wrote thirty-eight plays, as well as poetry. After his death, some friends of Shakespeare collected his work and published it in 1623.

In 1599, Shakespeare's company built one of the most famous theatres in London, the Globe Theatre. The company changed its name to the King's Men in 1603, when James I became king, and from 1609 its main theatre was the Blackfriars. Shakespeare became rich and successful and retired to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1613. He died there on 23 April 1616.

Visitors to Stratford-upon-Avon today can see many of the buildings associated with Shakespeare's life, including the house where he was born and Anne Hathaway's cottage. They can also visit the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and go to performances of Shakespeare's plays.



The modern reconstruction of the **Globe Theatre** in London, very near the site of Shakespeare's Globe, which was destroyed by fire in 1613.

1. **Lord Chamberlain** : a very important official at the royal court.

1 Comprehension check

Answer the questions.

- 1 Why do people like to think that Shakespeare was born on 23 April?
- 2 What kind of school did Shakespeare go to?
- 3 What are the 'missing years'?
- 4 Where did Shakespeare work when he went to London?
- 5 What did Shakespeare do before he started writing plays?
- 6 How many plays did Shakespeare write?
- 7 Who were the King's Men?
- 8 When and where did Shakespeare die?

INTERNET PROJECT

Present a more detailed report about some part of Shakespeare's life :

- ▶ childhood
- ▶ school
- ▶ marriage
- ▶ early plays, mature plays and last plays
- ▶ retirement

To find out about his life go to the Internet and go to www.blackcat-cideb.com or www.cideb.it. Insert the title or part of the title of the book into our search engine. Open the page to *Macbeth*. Click on the Internet project link. Scroll down the page until you find the title of this book and click on the relevant link for this project.



Films of Macbeth

Many film directors have been attracted to Shakespeare's tragic story of the rise and fall of the ambitious 11th-century Scottish warrior Macbeth. In fact, there are to date a total of 51 films: 32 made for the big screen, 16 made for television, two for video release and one television series.

Below are four interesting film versions of the Scottish play.

***Macbeth* (1948) directed by Orson Welles**

This starred Orson Welles as Macbeth and Jeanette Nolan as Lady Macbeth.

Welles was so keen to make the film that he agreed to shoot it in only 23 days in a B-movie studio which was normally used for cowboy films. Despite the obvious limitations of the film because of its minimal budget, many critics have admired its surrealistic qualities. Welles also eliminated large parts of the play and even added a new character.



Macbeth, played by **Orson Welles**, has just seen the ghost of Banquo.



King Duncan (right) and some of his thanes, from the film directed by **Roman Polanski**.

***Macbeth* (1971) directed by Roman Polanski**

Starring Jon Finch and Francesca Annis, this was Polanski's first film project after the horrifying murder of his pregnant wife Sharon Tate, and perhaps this personal tragedy helps explain the brutality and cruelty which appears throughout the film. Additional scenes that are not shown in Shakespeare's play were added, such as the execution of the Thane of Cawdor and the murder of Duncan. Also, some dramatic soliloquies are presented as voice-overs to make them seem more realistic. Some critics complained about the violence of the film, but others praised it as an original interpretation of Shakespeare's tragedy.

***Scotland, Pa* (2002) directed by Billy Morrisette**

Morrisette moved *Macbeth* from the 11th century to the 20th century, and from Scotland, the nation, to Scotland, a small town in Pennsylvania (the 'Pa' of the title). Macbeth and his wife now work in a fast food restaurant called 'Duncan's Café'. The story of this film is certainly based on the original tragedy, but the result is a dark comedy. However, Shakespeare's original language can be heard sometimes in this film – in the background coming out of a radio.

***Macbeth* (2006) by Geoffrey Wright**

Australian director Geoffrey Wright also updated Macbeth. He set his version in present-day Melbourne, Australia. Macbeth works for a gangland boss named Duncan. The actors all speak with Australian accents. The violence is as vivid as any other film about criminal gangs. However, the words spoken are mostly those composed by Shakespeare himself. The director says he chose this play because the characters have very strong motivations for their actions. He also liked the ideas about evil in the play. 'I wonder,' he said, 'if evil knows it's evil, or whether it thinks, "We're just fighting for what we believe in."'

1 Comprehension check

For questions 1-10, choose from the films (A-D). There is an example at the beginning.

A Orson Welles's *Macbeth*

C Roman Polanski's *Macbeth*

B Billy Morrisette's *Macbeth*

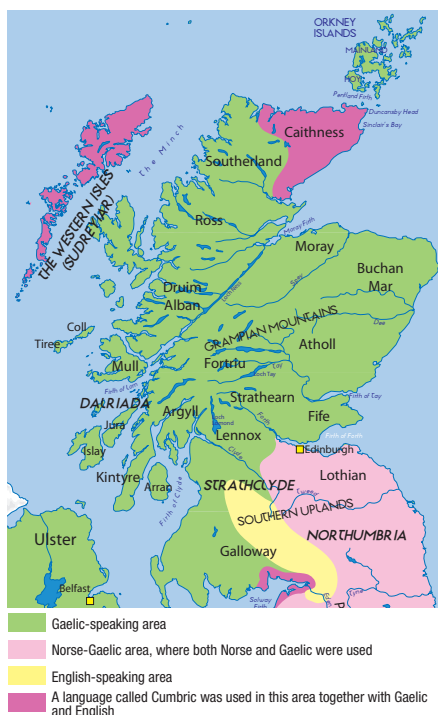
D Geoffrey Wright's *Macbeth*

Which film(s)

has additional scenes added to it?	0	B	.....
has the director also playing the main role?	1	.....	
is not a tragedy?	2	.....	
has actors speaking in an Australian accent?	3	.....	
seems to reflect the life of the director?	4	.....	
are in a 'modern' setting?	5	.....	6	.....
was made with very little money?	7	.....	
has a criminal setting?	8	.....	
has very little scenery and props?	9	.....	
was filmed in a studio where westerns were normally made?	10	.....	

The Scotland of Mac Bethad, (the real Macbeth), the Lord of Moray

Here is a map of Scotland in around 1100, the time when the real King Macbeth (1005-1057) lived. The real Macbeth lived at a time when the Scottish rulers in the south established strong contacts with the Norman-French rulers of England in Northumbria. Macbeth himself began as the Lord of Moray in the north. Also, notice that Gaelic was the main language; English was spoken in Northumbria on the border, and Norse, the language of the Vikings, who began invading Scotland in the late 8th century, in the north.



The Characters

Duncan	King of Scotland
Malcolm	} his sons
Donalbain	
Macbeth	Thane of Glamis, later of Cawdor, later King of Scotland
Banquo	Friend of Macbeth
Macduff	} Thanes of Scotland
Lennox	
Ross	
Lady Macbeth	Wife of Macbeth
Fleance	Banquo's son
Seyward	Earl of Northumberland
Porter of Macbeth's castle	
Doctor	
Young Seyward	
Three witches	
Hecate	goddess of the witches

Before you read



1 Listening

track 02



You will hear about Macbeth's victory against his king's enemies and Macbeth's strange meeting with some witches.

(You will hear the word 'thane', which is the old Scottish word for 'lord'. So, the Thane of Cawdor is the Lord of Cawdor.)

- 1 At the beginning of his war against the King of Scotland, the Thane of Cawdor
 - A ☐ lost many battles.
 - B ☐ won many battles.
 - C ☐ was more or less equal to the King of Scotland.
- 2 The Thane of Cawdor was helped by
 - A ☐ the Thane of Glamis.
 - B ☐ the King of Norway.
 - C ☐ most of Duncan's thanes.
- 3 Duncan, the King of Scotland, wanted to make Macbeth the new Thane of Cawdor because
 - A ☐ Macbeth had done so much for him in the war.
 - B ☐ the old Thane of Cawdor had died in the war.
 - C ☐ Macbeth had asked to become the Thane of Cawdor.
- 4 At first, Banquo and Macbeth thought that the strange figures could be men because
 - A ☐ they could not see them well.
 - B ☐ they did not dress like women.
 - C ☐ they had beards.
- 5 Banquo thought that the witches called Macbeth the Thane of Cawdor because
 - A ☐ they were confused.
 - B ☐ they had talked with Duncan.
 - C ☐ they were predicting the future.
- 6 Macbeth believed the witches when he heard that
 - A ☐ Banquo was the new Thane of Cawdor.
 - B ☐ Banquo's children would be kings of Scotland.
 - C ☐ he was the new Thane of Cawdor.



PART ONE

Macbeth and the Witches

Duncan, the King of Scotland, was a good king, who was liked by most of his lords, or thanes. The Thane of Cawdor, however, wanted to kill Duncan and become king. He asked the King of Norway to come to Scotland with a great army.



track 02

At first everything went well for the King of Norway and the Thane of Cawdor. Their army was strong, and they had some victories against the Scottish.

Then King Duncan's army fought against the army of the King of Norway and the Thane of Cawdor. There was a desperate battle to save Scotland. One of Duncan's loyal thanes was called Macbeth. He was Thane of Glamis.¹ Macbeth fought very hard in the battle against the Thane of Cawdor, and he defeated the enemy. Duncan was very pleased with Macbeth, and wanted to reward² him for his loyalty. He called one of his Thanes.

1. **Glamis** : pronunciation [gɫamz].

2. **reward** : something given in return for service or merit.

Macbeth and the Witches

‘Ross,’ Duncan said, ‘I want you to do something for me. I have decided to execute ¹ the Thane of Cawdor because he is a rebel who tried to kill me and become king. I want you to go to Macbeth and to tell him that he will be the new Thane of Cawdor. It is my reward to him for his courage and loyalty.’

‘Yes, sir,’ said Ross. ‘I’ll go immediately and tell Macbeth.’

Macbeth and his friend, Banquo, were both tired after the battle. They were walking together, and they were talking about the events of the day. They were both excited and pleased that Duncan had won the battle. Suddenly Banquo stopped.

‘Look!’ he cried. ‘Look at them!’

Macbeth looked, and saw in front of them three very strange figures. It was difficult to tell if they were men or women. They looked like old women, but they had beards and they were very ugly. They were standing around a fire, and there was a cooking-pot on it. There was a horrible smell coming from the cooking-pot.

‘Are you women, or are you spirits?’ Banquo asked them.

‘Answer him,’ Macbeth said. ‘Are you women or are you spirits?’

The first witch looked at Macbeth, and said,

‘Welcome Macbeth, Thane of Glamis.’

The second witch looked at Macbeth, and said,

‘Welcome, Macbeth, Thane of Cawdor.’

The third witch looked at Macbeth, and said to him,

‘Welcome, Macbeth, King of Scotland.’

Macbeth was very surprised at what the three witches had told him, and he did not say anything. Banquo then asked the witches a question.

‘You tell my friend that he will be Thane of Cawdor, and then King of Scotland, but you say nothing to me. If you can really see into the future, tell us something about my future. What will happen to me?’

One of the witches replied,

‘You will be less than Macbeth, but more than Macbeth.’

The second witch told him,

‘You will be less lucky than Macbeth, but you will be more lucky.’

1. **execute** : kill as a punishment.



The third witch told Banquo,

‘You will never be king, but your children’s children will be kings.’

After making these predictions, the witches suddenly disappeared.

‘It’s very strange!’ Macbeth said to Banquo. ‘They say that I will be Thane of Cawdor, and then king — and your children’s children will be kings! I don’t believe it, though. I don’t know who they are, or what they are, but what they say makes no sense.’

‘I don’t know what to think,’ said Banquo. ‘Perhaps — ’

Just as Banquo was speaking, Ross appeared.

‘I have come from King Duncan,’ he told Macbeth. ‘I have a message for you from the king. He wants to reward you because he is very pleased with your courage and loyalty. He gave me a message to bring to you. You are the new Thane of Cawdor.’



Macbeth and Banquo looked at each other in astonishment.¹

‘The witches told the truth!’ Macbeth said to Banquo.

‘Be careful, my friend,’ Banquo replied. ‘They also told you that you’d be king, but perhaps the witches were bad spirits. I have heard that such spirits try to make men do wicked² things by making them promises.’

Macbeth said nothing to his friend, but he could not stop thinking about what the witches had said. He had always been loyal to Duncan, but now he began to question his loyalty for the first time. ‘The witches told the truth,’ he thought. ‘They said I would be Thane of Cawdor, and now I am Thane of Cawdor. Perhaps I’ll also be king one day!’ He was excited about the idea of becoming king, but he was also frightened. ‘I want to be king,’ he thought, ‘but Duncan is my friend — I don’t want to hurt him.’

1. **astonishment** : great surprise.

2. **wicked** [wɪkɪd] : bad.



end

The text and **beyond**

1 Comprehension check

Answer the following questions.

- 1 Why did the King of Norway fight against Duncan?
- 2 How did Macbeth feel after the battle?
- 3 Why was the king pleased with Macbeth?
- 4 How did Duncan reward Macbeth?
- 5 Describe the three witches.
- 6 What did the three witches tell Macbeth and Banquo?
- 7 What advice did Banquo give Macbeth about the witches?
- 8 What did Macbeth think about the witches?
- 9 Why were Macbeth and Banquo so astonished at Ross's message?

2 Discussion

What do you think the witches mean when they say 'You will be less lucky than Macbeth, but you will be more lucky.'? (bottom of page 13).


3 Speaking: some good advice

You are a good friend of Macbeth's, and your partner is Macbeth. Discuss what Macbeth should do after hearing the predictions of the witches. Explain your choices. The person playing Macbeth should also explain why he/she will follow or not follow the friend's advice.

- A He should do nothing.
- B He should begin planning to become king.
- C He should wait and see what Banquo will do after hearing the prediction.
- D *Your idea: ...*

FCE 4 A weird fate

For questions 1-7, read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each space. There is an example at the beginning (0).

In the original *Macbeth*, Shakespeare called the witches the 'weird sisters'. Nowadays, when (0)  English speakers hear about 'weird sisters', they probably (1) that these sisters are strange, maybe supernatural and that they might (2) you an uneasy feeling. But in Shakespeare's time the word 'weird' was connected with 'fate' and 'destiny'. In fact, the section on the life of Macbeth in Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577), an early English history book (3) was Shakespeare's source for his play, presents the weird sisters (4) goddesses of

fate. In Nordic mythology these goddesses of fate were called Norns. Three important (5) keep alive Ygdrasil — the Tree of Existence. One of these Norns governs the past, another the present and another the future. There are (6) other Norns — one of these goddesses governs the life of every person according to Nordic mythology.

Shakespeare, though, combined Nordic Norns, witches and classical goddesses of the underworld to make his weird sisters. In the end, the new meaning of 'weird' first (7) in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.



The three witches as painted by the Swiss Romantic painter Johann Heinrich Füssli (1741-1825).

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 0 A native | B born | C natural | D resident |
| 1 A consider | B judge | C think | D regard |
| 2 A offer | B bring | C take | D give |
| 3 A what | B who | C that | D whose |
| 4 A like | B similar | C as | D for |
| 5 A individuals | B ones | C others | D singles |
| 6 A lots | B plenty | C many | D number |
| 7 A comes | B arrives | C shows | D appears |



5 Listening

track 03

You will hear two short extracts from the original Shakespeare's play. However, before you listen, read them and try to fill in the gaps with the words from the box. Then listen and check your answers.

Speak Thane greater happier Cawdor Banquo king Hail

Extract One

Macbeth (*to the witches*): Speak if you can! What are you?

First Witch: All hail, ¹ Macbeth! Hail to thee, ² (1)..... of Glamis!

Second Witch: All hail, Macbeth. Hail to thee, Thane of (2)..... !

Third Witch: All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be (3)..... hereafter! ³

1. **hail** : welcome.

2. **thee** : you.

3. **hereafter** : after this time.

Extract Two

Banquo: (4)..... then to me, who neither beg¹ nor fear
Your favours,² nor your hate.

First Witch: Hail!

Second Witch: Hail!

Third Witch: (5)..... !

First Witch: Lesser than Macbeth, and (6)..... .

Second Witch: Not so happy, yet much (7)..... .

Third Witch: Thou³ shalt get⁴ kings, though thou be none.

So all hail, Macbeth, and (8)..... !

Now, using a dictionary, rewrite Extract One in modern English.

FCE 6 Writing

Imagine you are Banquo. Read this part of a letter from a friend. Write a letter in 120-180 words in an appropriate style.

*Tell me about your meeting with the witches.
What were they like?
Did they tell you anything about the future?*

7 Speaking: the future today

In Shakespeare's time some people were convinced that witches existed and had the power to see the future. With your partner prepare a short report on how people predict the future today. Use the list of ways of predicting the future and the following questions to help you.

Which of the following do you believe in?

Which don't you believe in?

Which ones do people in your society believe in?

Which ones are the most popular?

Ways of predicting the future

- weather reports
- astrology
- reading tea leaves
- tarot cards
- reading palms
- statistics
- opinion polls for elections
- any others?

1. **beg** : ask.
2. **favours** : good services.
3. **thou** : old-fashioned, poetic, or religious word for 'you'.
4. **get** : (old-fashioned use), be the father of.