

Name _____



The True King

In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare explores what makes a good and rightful king. The play presents two very different rulers: King Duncan, who is fair and just, and Macbeth, who takes the throne by force and rules through fear. Through these characters, Shakespeare shows that a true king must lead with wisdom, honesty, and care for his people.

At the beginning of the play, King Duncan is loved by his people. He rewards those who serve him well, including Macbeth, for their bravery in battle. Duncan is kind and trusting, which makes his murder even more shocking. However, his goodness also makes him an example of what a rightful king should be.

When Macbeth takes the throne, he does not rule with kindness. Instead, he is full of fear, always worrying that someone will take his power away. Because of this, he orders the murder of Banquo, his best friend, and later attacks Macduff's family. He no longer cares for his people—only for keeping his crown. The longer Macbeth rules, the more Scotland suffers. People live in fear, and the land falls into chaos. Shakespeare shows that a king who rules through cruelty will never be a true leader.

In contrast, Malcolm, the son of Duncan, represents the qualities of a good king. He is wise and careful. Before returning to Scotland, he tests Macduff's loyalty to make sure he is not being tricked. Unlike Macbeth, Malcolm does not seek power for himself—he only wants to restore peace. When he finally defeats Macbeth, he promises to bring order back to the kingdom.

By the end of the play, Shakespeare makes it clear that rightful kings are not made through force but through good leadership. A true king must care for his people, rule with fairness, and not let ambition turn into greed. Through Macbeth's downfall, the play warns against the dangers of power without justice.