

THEME:

TRUST & BETRAYAL

Curriculum Codes:

LSV.01, LSV.02, LSV.03, LAV.01, LAV.02, LS1.02, LS1.04, LS1.05, LA1.01, LS2.01, LS2.02, LA2.01, LA2.02, WR1.01, WR1.02, WR1.03

In the dog-eat-dog world of Macbeth's Scotland, it seems there is no one to be trusted. Doubt, confusion, paranoia and suspicion reign as ambition and the quest for power blur the line between friend and foe.

**"There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face:
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust."
- Duncan**

King Duncan reflects on the betrayal of the Thane of Cawdor, recently executed for treason.

DISCUSS, or WRITE:

What does Duncan mean by finding "the mind's construction in the face"? Can you think of another way of phrasing this thought?

Have you ever trusted someone that turned out to be undeserving of your trust? In retrospect, were there signs that your trust was misplaced?

Have you ever been guilty of saying one thing and then doing another? What were the consequences?

What can be the results of someone not keeping their word? In personal relationships? In politics? In society at large? What value should we place on duty, honour, reliability?

**"...where we are
There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,
The nearer bloody."
- Donalbain**

In the aftermath of the murder of their father, not knowing who to trust or where to turn, Malcolm and Donalbain fear for their safety; they could be next.

DISCUSS:

Tell the story of a time when you were aware that someone's friendliness masked hostility. What did it feel like?

How did you respond?

The image of "daggers in men's smiles" is vivid and evocative. (Compare this to Macbeth's line "False face must hide what the false heart doth know.") Can you think of another vivid way of expressing the unease that comes from recognizing false friends? "Her eyes were filled with..." "His face was like..." etc.

Brainstorm a list of scenes in which the characters know that they're in the presence of someone who is not to be trusted. Consider books you've read, movies, TV shows and other plays. What are the different ways the characters respond to those moments? Which responses are effective? Why?

**"Cruel are the times, when we are traitors,
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear."**

- Ross

As Scotland becomes an increasingly paranoid and fearful place, Ross laments the loss of certainty.

DISCUSS, or WRITE:

Is it possible to betray someone without even knowing it? Can you think of an example?

Have you ever been unjustly accused or treated badly by someone and had no idea why?

Ross speaks of cruel times. What would it be like to live in a place where no one trusted anyone else or where fear and rumours were rampant? Can you think of examples from our modern world that seems like the Scotland Ross describes here?