



**TPAC Education's  
Humanities Outreach in Tennessee  
Presents the  
Nashville Shakespeare Festival's**

# MACBETH

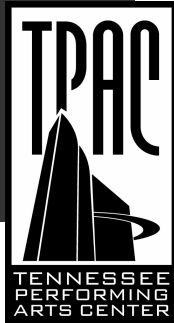
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**By William Shakespeare**

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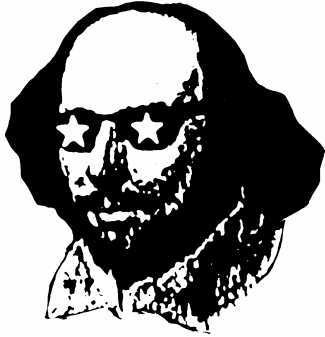
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**METROARTS**

Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission





## DEAR TEACHERS,

The Nashville Shakespeare Festival is excited to share this newly imagined production of *Macbeth* with you and your students. The artists involved are all based in Tennessee. Our designers are world class and our actors are all fully professional. For this production, we have preserved the poetic form and tightened the language; the TPAC production will run 90 minutes without an intermission. We are setting *Macbeth* in a new world where aspects of different global cultures may be recognized. The sword play, costumes and music will have an Asian influence, which will lend grace and simplicity to the production. By casting a new light on the characters and plot, we hope to reveal the themes anew and make familiar lines sound fresh. Our Macbeth will be portrayed younger than usual, as will our Lady Macbeth. In this tragedy, we see a man in dire struggle: he is not evil, he is unwise and ambitious. She is addicted to immediate gratification and does not consider the consequences to her greedy and impulsive actions. Although the play will be set "long ago and far away," these characters will seem quite familiar, as these same issues continue to provide our daily headlines.

We believe that creating meaningful experiences in the classroom is just as important as creating excellent work on stage, and relevance to our community is a guiding principle for us. We would be thrilled to help you enrich your students' understanding and appreciation of the world's greatest playwright through his masterpiece, *Macbeth*. We hope you will consider the advantage of bringing our actors into your classroom to either prepare the students to see the show or review it with them after they've seen it.

Sincerely,

*Denice Hicks*

Artistic Director  
Nashville Shakespeare Festival

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### TEACHERS!!

We encourage you to preview *Macbeth* this summer. Nashville Shakespeare Festival presents this production free in the park for evening performances Thursdays through Sundays, August 10 - September 10. For more information, visit <http://www.nashvilleshakes.org/> There will be small differences when the production is brought inside to the TPAC's Polk Theater to accommodate the space change and also a smaller cast as NSF's high school apprentice company returns to school.

This guidebook was prepared by TPAC Education with contributions from Lattie Brown, Kristin Dare-Horsley, Madeline Cohen,Carolynn Lavender, David Brown Parish, and Norma De Jarnette.

# PLOT SYNOPSIS

After a rigorous battle, King Duncan's victorious generals – Macbeth and Banquo – are visited by three Weird Sisters, who prophesy that Banquo's sons will be kings and that Macbeth will be made Thane of Cawdor and then become King.

The Weird Sisters disappear, and soon after Macbeth and Banquo are met by King Duncan's men. They tell Macbeth that he has been named Thane of Cawdor in gratitude for his military victory. King Duncan plans to rejoice with Macbeth at his castle.

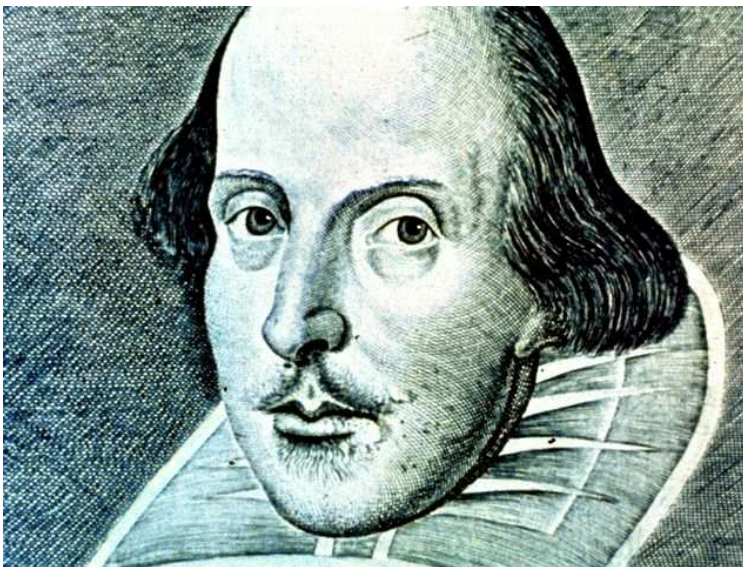
Before returning home, Macbeth writes to his wife of the Weird Sisters' prophecy and his newly appointed title, Thane of Cawdor. Lady Macbeth promises to help her husband fulfill the remainder of the prophecy and become King.

King Duncan arrives, and after a celebration in their castle, while everyone is asleep, Macbeth murders Duncan. Macbeth becomes the King, as Duncan's son – Malcolm – flees the country, fearing an attack on his life.

Paranoid and beginning to lose control, Macbeth secretly arranges for Banquo and his son, Fleance, to be murdered. In the ambush, Banquo is killed but Fleance escapes. That night, at a banquet for the new King, Macbeth is visited by the ghost of Banquo which only he can see. Lady Macbeth attempts to calm both her husband and the suspicious guests, but cannot.

Guilt-ridden and sleep-deprived, Macbeth visits the Weird Sisters for guidance. The Sisters offer three prophecies: Beware Macduff (a soldier who opposes Macbeth's kingship); no man born of woman shall harm Macbeth; and until the nearby forest comes to Macbeth's castle, he will be safe.

While Macduff has fled the country to join Malcolm, who is organizing a military revolt against Macbeth, Macbeth orders the murder of Macduff's family, and they are all killed.



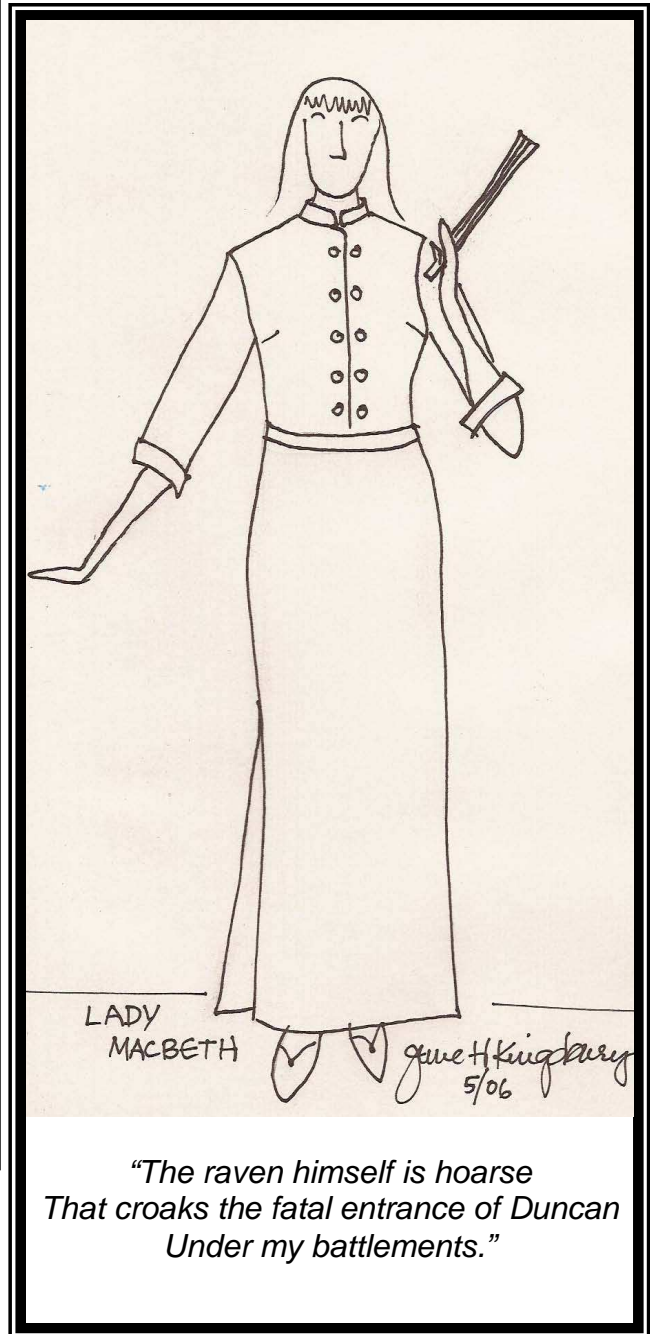
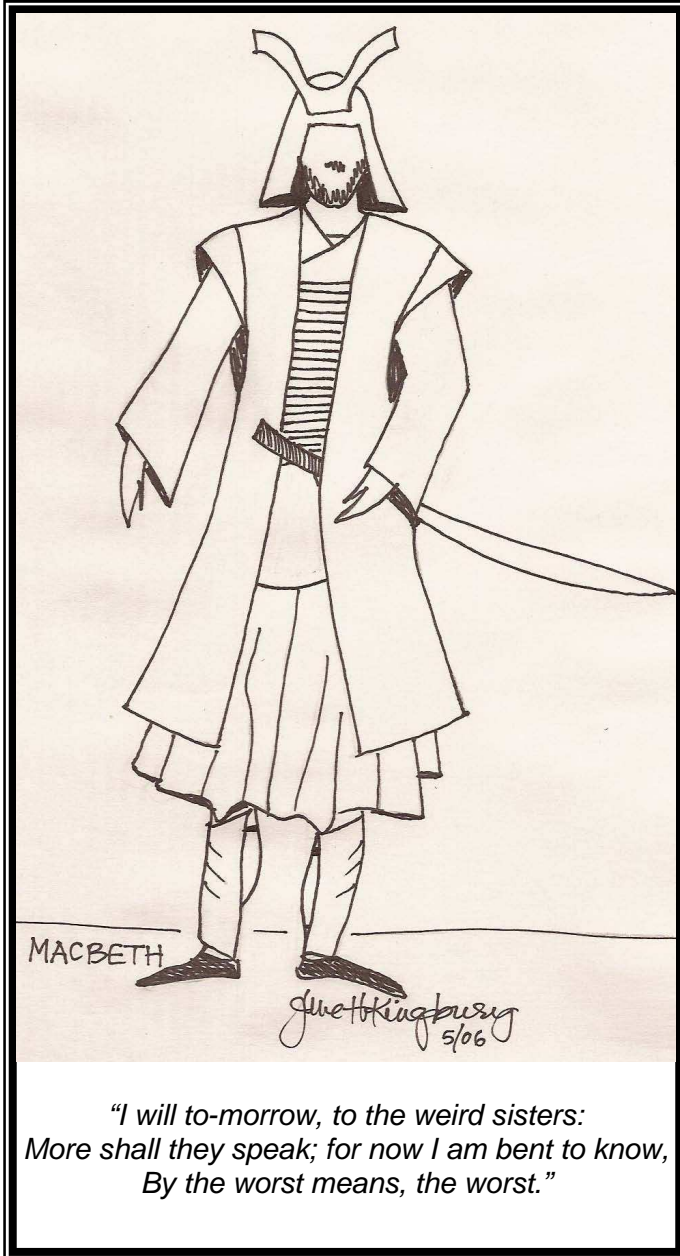
Overcome with guilt, Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep and then kills herself.

The Weird Sisters' prophecies are fulfilled when Malcolm and his army use tree limbs as cover to advance on Macbeth's castle. During the battle, Macduff confronts Macbeth, who learns his opponent was not "of woman born" but rather "untimely ripped" from his mother. After Macduff kills Macbeth, Malcolm is named King and calls for peace.

NASHVILLE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL'S

# MACBETH

Costume design by June Kingsbury



# BACKGROUND ON *MACBETH*

Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* between 1605 and 1606. It was performed for the first time at Hampton Court in 1606 before King James I of England and his brother-in-law King Christian of Denmark. In those days, just as in our own, theatres were always on the lookout for financial resources, and it is believed that *Macbeth* was written to please King James, and to induce a grant for Shakespeare's company, which had changed its name only recently to the "King's Men." The highly flattering depiction of Banquo in *Macbeth* was the lure for the grant. King James was a descendent of Banquo. Hence, when the witches promise that Banquo would be the father of kings, they pointed toward King James I; and the dark and brutish world of Macbeth's kingdom was intended in part to contrast favorably with the enlightened and orderly kingdom of King James. Shakespeare also politely omitted from the play a defeat suffered by the Danes in order to avoid offending the visiting Danish King.

The story of *Macbeth* comes from an early history of Scotland, and so has some basis in fact. It is not a history play, however, because the emphasis falls on the people in the play, not on the politics or the actual chain of historical events.

Harbage, Alfred. *Shakespeare's Audience*. New York, 1941.  
Lee, Sidney and Onions, C.T., ed. *Shakespeare's England: An Account of the Life and Manners of His Age*. Oxford, 1916.  
Muir, Kenneth. *Shakespeare's Source: Comedies and Tragedies*. London, 1957.  
Nicoll, Allardyce. *The Elizabethans*. Cambridge, 1957.

## INTERPRETING SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS:

WITH NEW ELEMENTS, NON-TRADITIONAL CASTING, DIFFERENT SETTINGS AND COSTUMES,

Audiences often think that the "traditional" setting of Shakespeare's plays must place them in the Renaissance with all Caucasian casts (with the exception of Othello and Shylock.) Theatre artists however are continually drawn to connect the plays more concretely to contemporary understanding with different kinds of casting or setting (again with a general exception of the history plays.) Consider the following opinion and the details of one very unique production of *Macbeth* set in the Caribbean.

"Recent scholarship has emphasized that Shakespeare's plays are really scripts designed to be performed in varied settings, such as the public Globe theater, the private Blackfriars theater, and at court ceremonies celebrating important persons. We have ample evidence that the same play was performed very differently in these diverse contexts. That may be one reason why the stage directions given in the quarto and folio publications are so sparse. It is up to the reader to put the play into action, to perform the play in his or her head by providing many details that even Shakespeare's very rich language does not provide. (See *Teaching Shakespeare in Performance*, ed. Cozart Riggio, 1999.)

Of course, Shakespeare is not exactly silent on these matters. Shakespeare's stages were relatively sparse, especially in comparison to today's productions in theaters and on the big screen. Thus, Shakespeare used his language to help create a visual atmosphere. When students see productions that bring his language to life in vastly different ways, it helps them to become more sensitive to the rich suggestiveness of Shakespeare's language, and to the fact that theatre and film artists create their own vision based on a combination of Shakespeare's hints and their own imagination. I encourage students to take an active role in studying Shakespeare, and I want them to become self-reflexive about issues that matter to them personally. Contemporary directors consciously try to bring Shakespeare's plays alive by highlighting elements in them that connect with contemporary cultural issues.

Whenever I teach Shakespeare as a general university requirement course, I encounter a pronounced anxiety emanating from the students. Almost every one of them accepts that he was one of the greatest writers who ever put ink to paper, but at the same time they are often convinced that his language is impenetrable. There is a sense that Shakespeare is saying something very important in his plays, but only teachers or scholars have access to that meaning. Not unlike Hamlet, whose first impulse is to delay action, students frequently are content to wait for the explication of Shakespeare's language to be unfolded in class lectures.

In traditional teaching, English professors have tried to empower students by focusing on Shakespeare's rhetorical, poetic, and dramatic techniques. Indeed, these efforts are invaluable, and in class I pay close attention to things like figures of speech, iambic pentameter, enjambment, rhyming, puns, soliloquies, asides, and comic/tragic forms. More recently, teachers of Shakespeare have devoted renewed energy to explicating the cultural contexts that made the writing of the plays possible. This too is indispensable, and I spend significant time in class helping the students see how cultural history can shed light on Shakespeare's art, and on how Shakespeare's work contributed to the culture of his day.

However, the magic of Shakespeare's works is not reducible to a list of techniques for analyzing language, no matter how well they are presented. Nor is cultural history by itself going to turn students into great readers. Something essential is missing. That something is the creative and imaginative effort that each individual reader must make in order to bring Shakespeare's language to life. My goal in my introductory and advanced classes is to entice the students with the diverse interpretive possibilities inherent in Shakespeare's plays. I want the students to become active readers and writers who understand that it is up to them to unleash their own creativity and imagination while experiencing a Shakespeare play. They need to learn to explore their own cultural contexts and gauge their personal investment in Shakespeare."

Marc Geisler, Department of English, Western Washington University Dr. Marc Geisler teaches a Shakespeare course at Western Washington University that explores the varied interpretations of Shakespeare in theatre and film.  
:http://pandora.cii.wvu.edu/showcase2001/text\_only/geisler/portfolio.htm

# The Play That Electrified Harlem

At the height of the Depression, Orson Welles and an all-black cast used federal money to transform

## Macbeth

by Wendy Smith



Feverish anticipation: Opening night.  
*Federal Theatre Project Collection.*

For days, Harlem residents strolling anywhere between Lexington Avenue and Broadway from 125th to 140th Streets had seen the word "MACBETH" stenciled in glowing paint at every corner. New York's African-American community had been discussing the new production by the Federal Theater Project's Negro Unit with mingled pride and anxiety for months and by opening night on April 14, 1936, anticipation had reached a fever pitch. At 6:30 p.m., 10,000 people stood as close as they could come to the Lafayette Theatre on Seventh Avenue near 131st Street, jamming the avenue for 10 blocks and halting northbound traffic for more than an hour.

Spotlights swept the crowd as mounted policemen strove to keep the entrance to the theater open for the arriving ticket holders, an integrated group of "Harlemites in ermine, orchids and gardenias, Broadwayites in mufti," as the *New York World-Telegram* noted the next day. Every one of the Lafayette's 1,223 seats was taken; scalpers were getting \$3 for a pair of 40-cent tickets. The lobby was so packed people couldn't get to their seats; the curtain, announced for 8:45, didn't rise until 9:30. When it finally did, on a jungle scene complete with witches and voodoo drums, the frenzied mood outside the theater was matched by that within.

"Excitement...fairly rocked the Lafayette Theatre," *The New York Times* commented the next morning. The spectators were enthusiastic and noisy; they vocally encouraged Macbeth's soliloquies and clapped vigorously when the second act opened with more than half of the 100-plus cast massed onstage for his coronation ball, a sea of colorful costumes swaying to the strains of Joseph Lanner waltzes. After the curtain fell on the final grim tableau of the witches holding Macbeth's severed head aloft as Hecate intoned ominously, "The charm's wound up!" cheers and applause filled the auditorium for 15 minutes. Not bad for a show directed by an actor barely out of his teens with a cast that was 95 percent amateur, and a scenery and costume budget of \$2,000.

The "Voodoo *Macbeth*," as this all-black version set in 19th century Haiti came to be called, was notable on several counts. It was one of four Manhattan premieres in the spring of 1936 that solidified the shaky reputation of the Federal Theater Project, the most controversial of the Works Progress Administration's arts programs. (The project had been under fire since its founding in August 1935 for spending taxpayers' money on salaries without actually providing much theater for the public to see.) *Macbeth* launched the meteoric directing career of Orson Welles, not yet 21 when it opened, who would go on to astonish New York theatergoers with several more bold stage productions before departing for Hollywood in 1939. It gave African-American performers, usually restricted to dancing and singing for white audiences, a chance to prove they were capable of tackling the classics.

READ THE REST OF THIS ARTICLE AND VIEW OLD PHOTOS ON THE AMERICAN MEMORY WEB SITE

at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fedtp/ftsmth00.html>

# LESSON ONE

## THE POWER OF SUGGESTION

### **First Witch**

All hail Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis.

### **Second Witch**

All hail Macbeth, hail to thee, thane of Cawdor.

### **Third Witch**

All hail Macbeth, that shall be King hereafter.

### **Act I, Scene III**



<http://www.onlineshakespeare.com/macbeth2.jpg>

**With these three lines, the action and conflict of *Macbeth* is set in motion. The witches told Macbeth his future, a seemingly glorious future that he did not even imagine possible. However, once told of the possibility, Macbeth desired this future more and more, and his current situation became pitiful to him.**

### **Lesson Objectives**

To explore our response to the power of suggestion.

To examine our definitions of success.

### **Lesson Activity**

1. Ask students to choose a partner. Hand each student one of the paired “fortunes” on the next page. (One fortune is more glamorous and successful than the other.) Ask them to imagine that the last three “fortunes” they have received from this source have all come true.
2. Ask students to discuss their fortunes, and how the possibility of that future would make them feel. Happy or disappointed? Hopeful or afraid? Would they be willing to do anything extraordinary to make the fortune come true? If they are unhappy with their fortune, would they feel stuck or helpless with no choice? If they could add one detail to their fortune to make it more attractive, what would it be?
3. Now ask students to trade fortunes with their partner. How would their feelings change? How would they feel about giving up their fortunes to their partner?
4. Tell students that they may have any fortune they choose. Ask them to write it down and to imagine once again their feelings regarding this future. Now tell students that if they chose the “glamorous” fortune there will be a price; they would only live for 2 months after it came true. Does this change their mind about which fortune they would choose?

### **Closure/Summary**

Discuss the power of suggestion in all of our lives. How did it alter Macbeth’s view of success? Ask students if they feel Macbeth had free will to choose his own destiny.

### **Further Discussion**

Ask your students to evaluate the messages they pick up from advertisements, friends, and family about themselves. Do these messages affect the choices they make? How?

# FORTUNES

Cut out these fortunes and pass them to your students for Lesson One.

**Fame! Money! Power!**

**Normal and satisfying**

<p><b>You will fall madly in love and marry rich, famous, gorgeous royalty.</b></p>	<p><b>You will marry someone nice who can put you through graduate school.</b></p>
<p><b>You will be the CEO of a top-five Fortune 500 company and with world influence and renown.</b></p>	<p><b>You will own a small, struggling business.</b></p>
<p><b>You will be a top recording artist and producer, with platinum albums and world tours.</b></p>	<p><b>You will play in a band that tours small nightclubs.</b></p>
<p><b>You will win five Olympic golds, a Nike endorsement deal and own a sports franchise.</b></p>	<p><b>You will be a high school coach.</b></p>
<p><b>You will enter politics, become powerful and influential and win the Nobel Peace Prize.</b></p>	<p><b>You will be member of the City Council.</b></p>
<p><b>You will host your own talk show, own a global publishing and production empire.</b></p>	<p><b>You will be a local reporter.</b></p>

**Write additional contrasting fortunes.**


# LESSON TWO

## CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCE

### Lesson Objective

To compare the required actions and resulting consequences of Macbeth's options and choice



<http://www.digital-eel.com/scans/swords.htm>

### Lesson Activity

(skip down to #4 if students have not yet read the play)

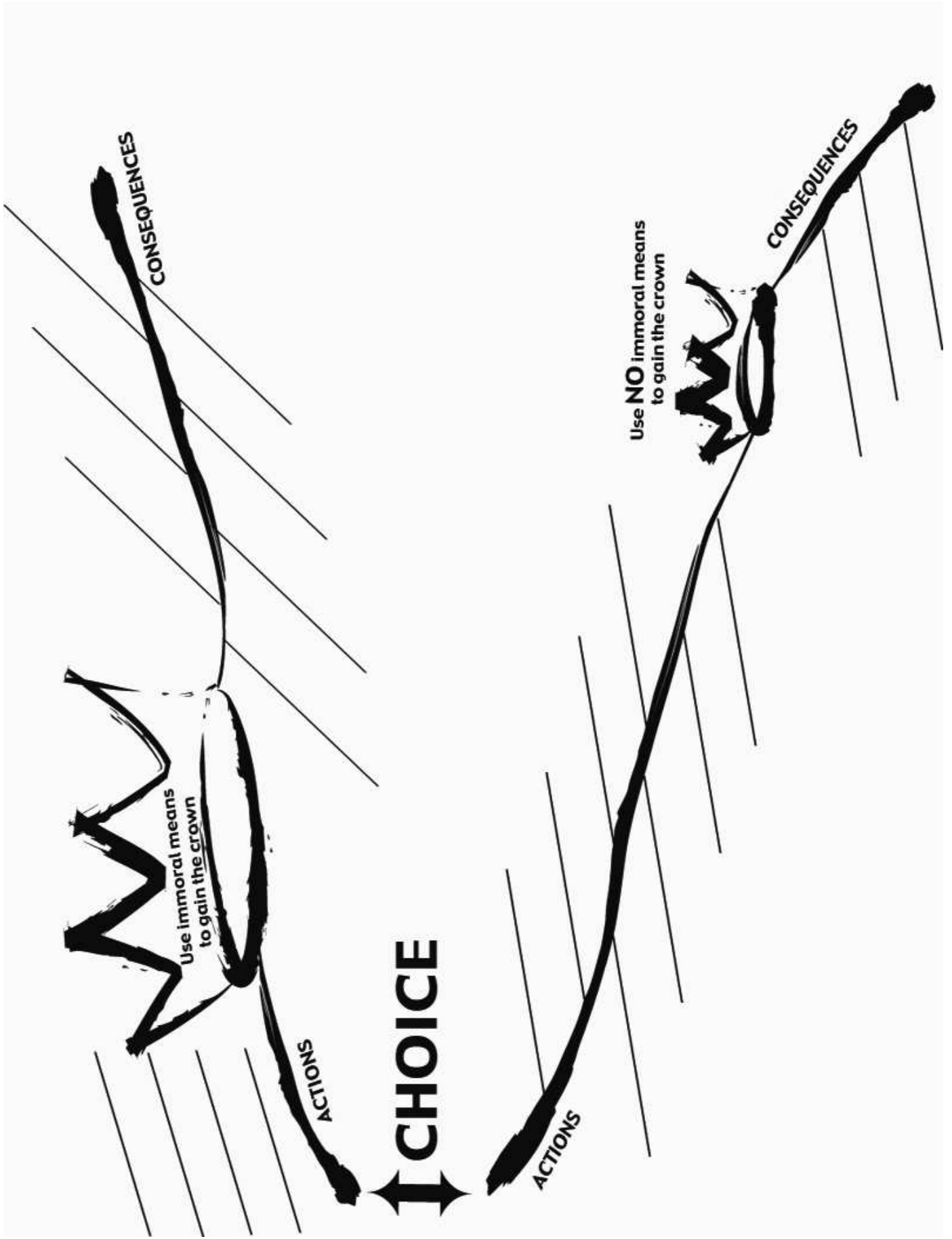
1. Ask students to suppose that the witches' prophecy **MUST** come true. **BUT**, what if Macbeth had chosen **NOT** to take immoral and evil actions to bring about the prophecy. What might have happened? Ask students to fill out the chart on the next page looking at Macbeth's choice to seize the future the witches have foretold no matter what the cost. Ask students to imagine what could have happened if Macbeth had made only ethical choices in preparation for his kingship and had waited for it to come to pass.
2. Ask the students to write on the diagram the actions that Macbeth had to take to make the prophecy come to pass, as well as the consequences for himself and others, and the further actions he had to take to keep his crown.
3. Ask students to imagine/project what Macbeth might have done had he chosen not to take immoral actions in order to bring about the witches' words. Still supposing that the witches are correct, also suppose that Macbeth does become king at age 50 without murdering or wronging anyone to receive the crown. What might be the actions he would have taken both positive and negative? What else might have happened? What might be the consequences that would occur, both positive and negative?
4. What other choices between moral and immoral are driven by ambition and especially the desire for immediate gratification? Can students fill out the diagram with present day situations from current events? What would the diagram look like if they compared two different paths taken by two different individuals or organizations? Answer first what belongs in the star shape on the diagram, what it is that each individual or organization desires. Try comparing Kenneth Lay of Enron with Bill Gates of Microsoft. Try comparing terrorists with diplomats and statesmen.
5. What does the diagram look like if it is filled out with one of a student's own choices? Ask students to identify something they want very much. What would the actions and consequences be if they made immoral choices to obtain what they want? What are the actions they must take and the consequences they must accept if they are completely moral?
6. Relate this exercise to the play as a whole, to specific scenes, and to the development of Macbeth's character as he gets "steeped in blood" more and more. What is Macbeth's solution to all his problems? Can he turn back or stop along the way and make things better?

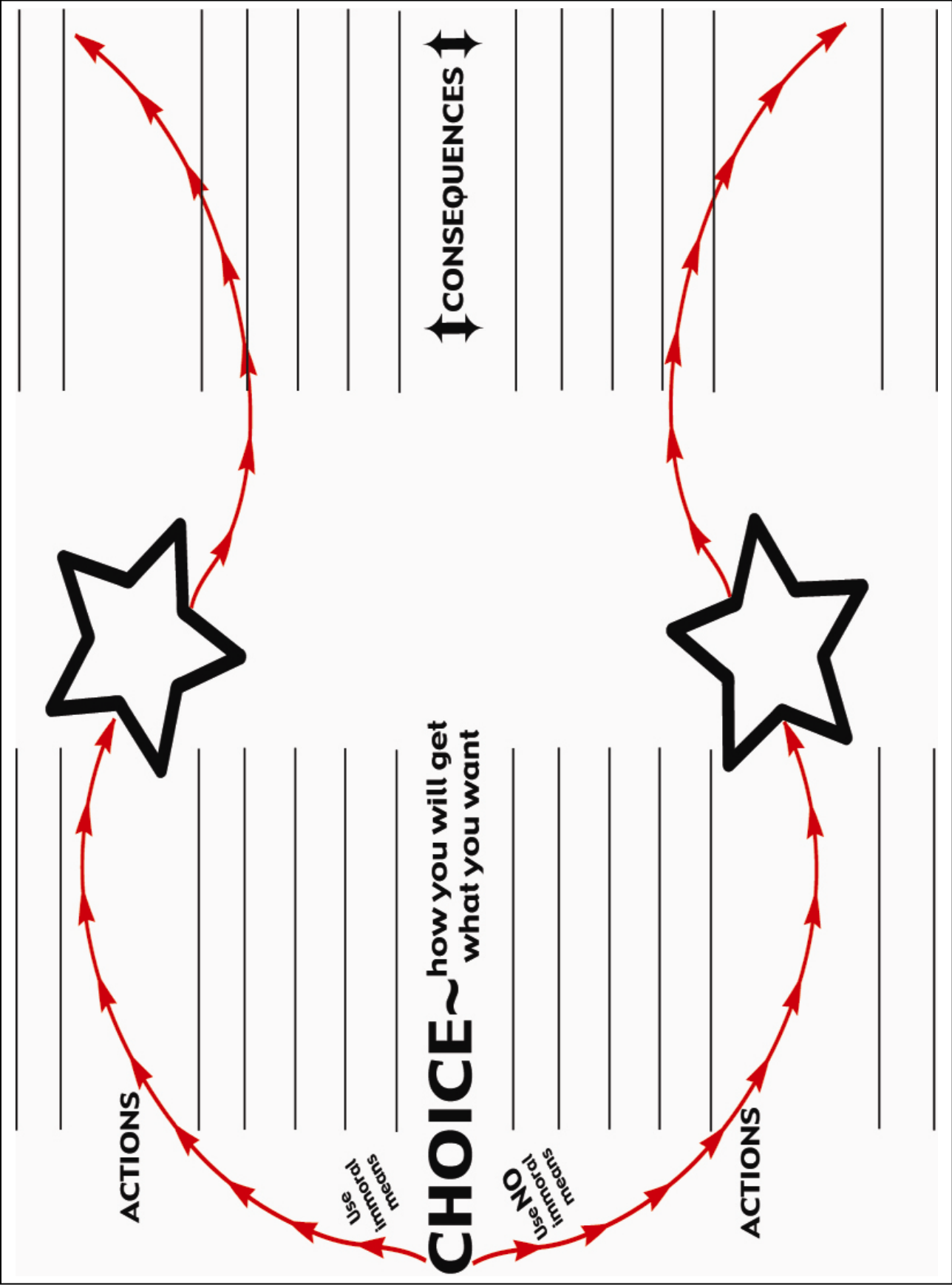
### Closure/Summary

For each choice of the charts students fill out, what are the risks that would be taken and the prices that would be paid?

### Options/Further Activities

Read "The Road not Taken" by Robert Frost. Discuss the poem and its implications in relation with Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. What is so fascinating about the title words?





# LESSON THREE

## A GUILTY PLEASURE

### Lesson Objective

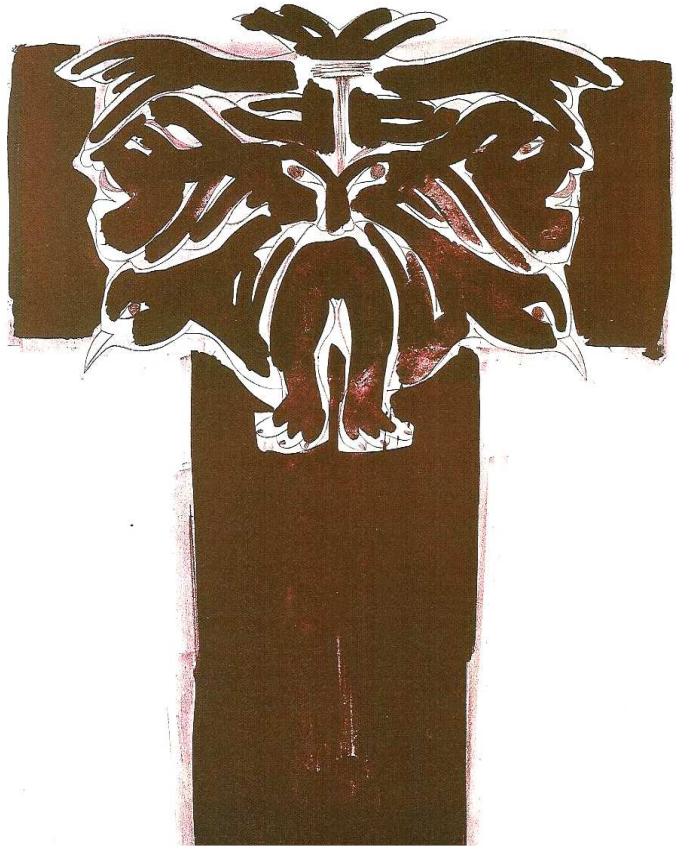
To explore and observe how a guilty conscience affects behavior and one's view of life.

### Warm-up

1. Have each student choose an everyday activity to act out, such as brushing their teeth, fixing their hair, tying a shoelace, etc.
2. Have everyone perform their activity, all together in silence.
3. Tell students you will give them different scenarios that may affect and change the way they were doing their activity. Ask students to act out their activity as though...
  - It's five minutes before a date with their heartthrob.
  - They have just been grounded.
  - They just broke up with someone.
  - They think someone is spying on them.

### Lesson Activities

1. Tell your class that they are going to act out a scene. Their team has won a national championship. It is a huge celebration with the whole school. Have the class list some of the things that would happen at the celebration.
2. Choose one-fourth to one-third of the class to be on this fictional team (mix in girls and boys), and remind the rest of the students that they can be a character close to themselves or another type of person. Act out the scene.
3. After several minutes, or an appropriate stopping time, have everyone sit down. Discuss the feelings that were present at the party: friendship, excitement, fun, jealousy – whatever they felt. Different characters will feel differently. Ask the others how the team members in the scene seemed to be feeling.
4. Now take the team aside and secretly give them the following information: their championship was won by an act of cheating that they all helped with. No one knows but them. Tell them that the party scene will be done again with this new element. Encourage the student



to express his/her feelings through action and behavior, like in the warm-up activity, but not to mention to anyone what they have done.

5. Let the student concentrate on this for a moment and then have everyone do the party scene again, playing the same parts they played before.
6. Again, let the scene continue as long as it has momentum. Then have the class sit down. Ask your students if anything seemed different. If so, what? What did they think was happening? Eventually, tell the class of the secret and let the students talk about how it affected them and the scene.
7. Read or enact the Banquet scene in *Macbeth*, Act III, scene iv, lines 40-151. Compare it to the students' scene.

### **Closure/Summary**

Discuss whether Macbeth could or would change the course of his murderous life and clear his conscience. Why or why not?

### **Options/Further Activities**

Ask students to pay close attention to the banquet scene performed by Nashville Shakespeare Festival. After the performance, ask the students to compare the scene to their reading in class and their team celebration. What are the similarities? Differences? How did the actor portraying Macbeth choose to play the scene? Was he convincing?

## LESSON FOUR

### JUSTIFICATION

#### **Lesson Objective**

To notice the justifications people make when they commit immoral acts to obtain what they want.

#### **Lesson Activities**

1. Ask students to list all the reasons that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth came up with to justify murdering Duncan.
2. Ask students to rank the list in order of each justification's power to persuade the couple to act.

### **Closure/Summary**

What about after the crime? Did these justifications continue to work to keep guilt away?

### **Options/Further Activities**

Ask students to do some private writing and apply this list-making and ranking to something they have done wrong and tried to justify. Ask them to draw some conclusions about our abilities to avoid the truth and to lie to ourselves when we want something? Why would we want to avoid deceiving ourselves? How can we avoid it?





# Contact

## Nashville Shakespeare Festival!

Instead of offering in-school visits for this production of *Macbeth*, TPAC Education is encouraging teachers to bring the Nashville Shakespeare Festival Workshops to your school.

Robert Marigza, Operations Director at Nashville Shakespeare Festival  
615.255.2273 or robert@nashvilleshakes.org

### MACBETH Workshops in Your Classroom!

Extend your students' knowledge of Shakespeare by providing professional theatre experiences in your classroom! As a complement to our production of *Macbeth*, the Nashville Shakespeare Festival is offering workshops for further exploration of the language, characters, and narrative of one of Shakespeare's best-known plays. Take advantage of an important learning opportunity for your students by inviting professional theatre artists into your classroom.

#### MACBETH Acting Workshops

Embody the language, characters, and scenes of *Macbeth* in an interactive Acting Workshop. This hour-long workshop involves full participation for students, as a theatre artist leads explorations in Shakespearean verse, staging scenes, and character study. Hear your students speak Shakespeare's dialogue, and discover the Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and Weird Sisters hidden in your classroom.

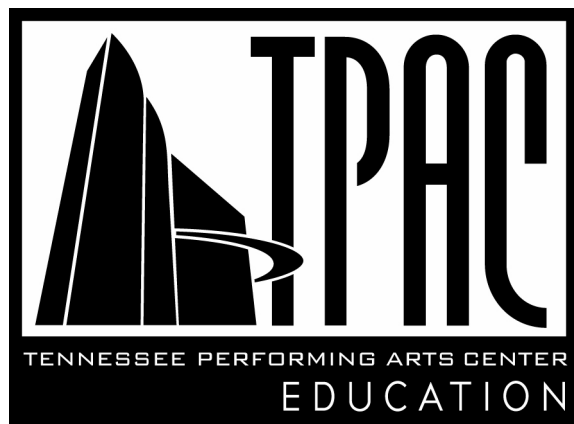
To insure the participatory nature of an Acting Workshop, we recommend no more than 30 students per class. Cost: \$150 – Initial Workshop, \$100 Subsequent Workshops.

#### MACBETH Directing Workshops

Experience the world of *Macbeth* in a Directing Workshop, as professional performers take the page to the stage. This hour-long workshop is an interactive opportunity for your students to direct key scenes from *Macbeth*. A theatre artist facilitates classroom discussion and observation, while students direct professional actors, discover different interpretations of scenes, and co-create a Shakespearean performance.

To insure a small-group discussion during a Directing Workshop, we recommend no more than 30 students per class. To facilitate a large-group discussion during a Directing Workshop, we recommend no more than 60 students. Cost: \$200 Initial Workshop, \$150 Subsequent Workshops.

[www.tpac.org/education](http://www.tpac.org/education)



**TPAC Education**  
**PO Box 190660**  
**Nashville, TN 37219**  
**615-687- 4288**