

Exploring Story Adaptation

Enriching the Humanities Through Opera

**OPERA
AMERICA**

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What is story adaptation and how is it relevant to opera?

Today's Objectives:

- Analyze an opera synopsis based on a literary work.
- Compare a literary work with the opera adaptation synopsis.
- Identify elements of adaptation across multiple versions of the same key scene present in the literary source and opera.
- Collaboratively brainstorm a pitch for an opera adaptation of the literary work.



Write down the first word that comes to mind.

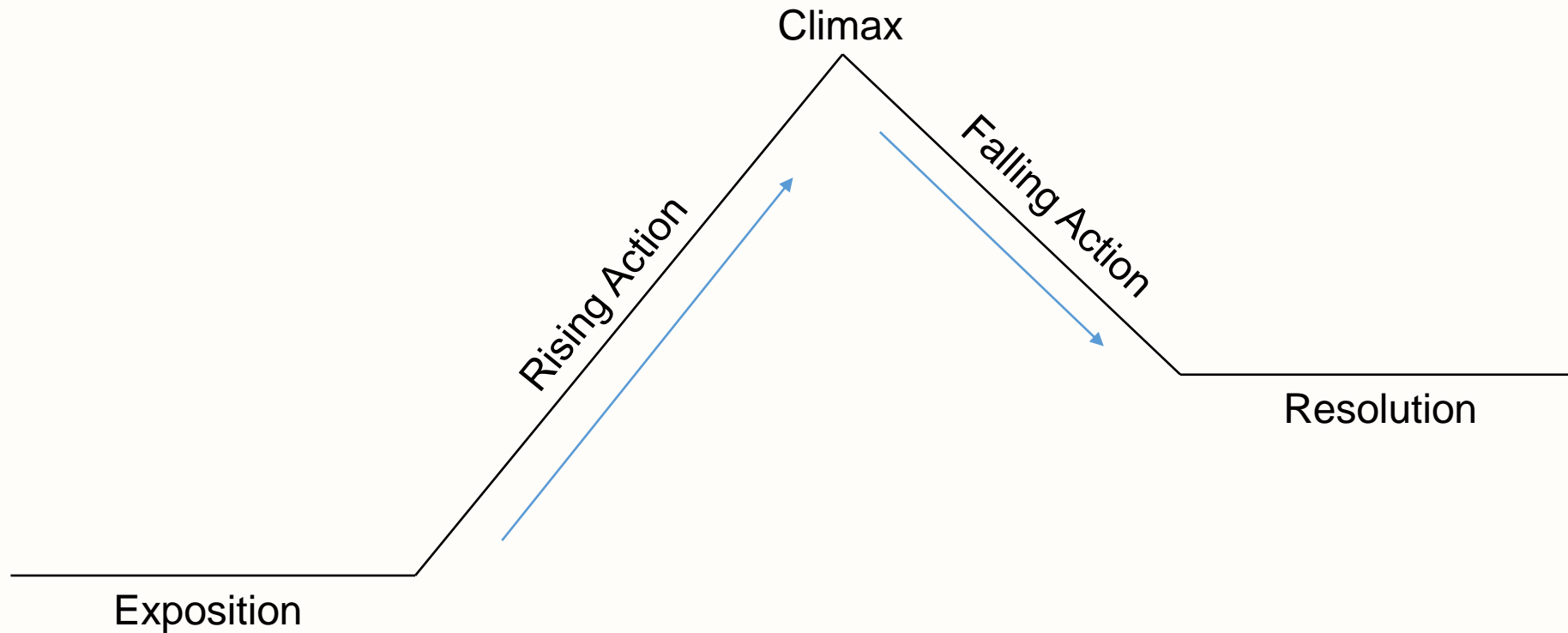
Opera

Macbeth

Adaptation



Story Arc Review



***Macbeth* Synopsis**

The opera *Macbeth*, composed by Giuseppe Verdi, is based on Shakespeare's play of the same name, tells the story of a Scottish nobleman who rises to power and commits a series of murders to maintain his grip on the throne. After encountering witches who foretell his future, Macbeth becomes consumed by ambition and, with the encouragement of his wife, Lady Macbeth, murders King Duncan and seizes the throne. However, his reign is marked by paranoia, violence and corruption, and ultimately, his own downfall as he and Lady Macbeth become increasingly tyrannical, ridden with guilt.

Turn & Talk

Compare the story structure of *Macbeth*, the opera and the literary work.

- Is the setting/time-period the same for both the opera and literary work?
- Is there a difference in point of view? In historical context? In narrative structure?
- What else did you notice?

Key Scene #1

Act II, Scene 6 & 7: Tu di sangue hai brutto il volto (You have blood on your face)

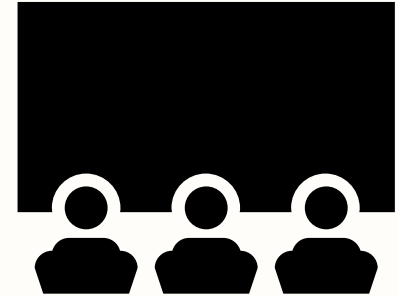
After Lady Macbeth entertains her courtiers with a drinking song at the banquet, Macbeth receives news of Banquo's death from his assassin. As Macbeth is about to take Banquo's seat at the table, he is suddenly overcome by a chilling apparition of the dead Banquo, who confronts him. Lady Macbeth attempts to soothe him and are in vain, and the king's erratic behavior begins to raise eyebrows among the courtiers, who exchange uneasy glances at the strange display.



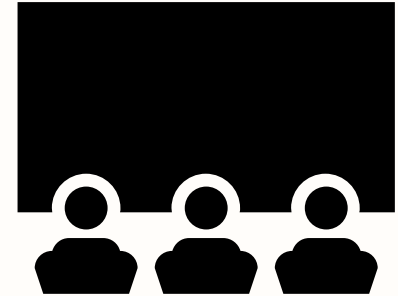
Macbeth, Glimmerglass Festival (photo: courtesy of Glimmerglass Festival)

Key Scene #1 continued

[Met Opera on Demand](#): Track #21. ACT II: Si colmi il calice
02:00 – 04:46



[PBS LearningMedia™](#): Macbeth | Act II | The Metropolitan Opera
19:20 – 24:09



Key Scene #2



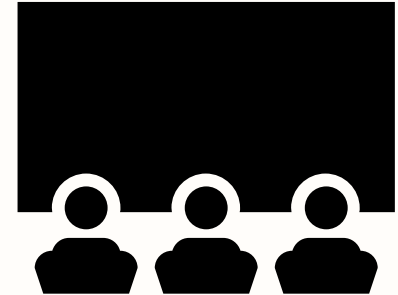
Macbeth, Resonance Works (photo: courtesy of Resonance Works)

Act III, Scene 2: Finché appelli, silenti m'attendete (Wait for me in silence until I call)

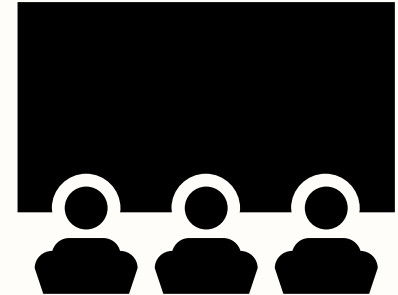
Macbeth visits the witches and demands more prophecies to secure his reign. The witches reveal three apparitions to him.

Key Scene #2 continued

[Met Opera on Demand](#): Track #25. ACT III: Che fate voi, misteriose donne?
& #26. ACT III: Fuggi, regal fantasima!
#25. 01:22 – 07:16 into #26. 00:00 – 00:30



[PBS LearningMedia™](#): Macbeth | Act III | The Metropolitan Opera
06:10 – 12:35



Key Scene #3

Act IV, Scene 6-10: E' morta la Regina! (The Queen is dead!)

As news arrives that Lady Macbeth has died, Macbeth is given word that Birnam Wood is moving, and English soldiers emerge. Macduff confronts Macbeth and reveals that he was not born naturally but had a Caesarean birth. This vulnerability makes him immune to Macbeth's invincibility prophecy. Macbeth meets his tragic demise and with the end to his reign, paves the way for Malcolm's ascension to the throne.

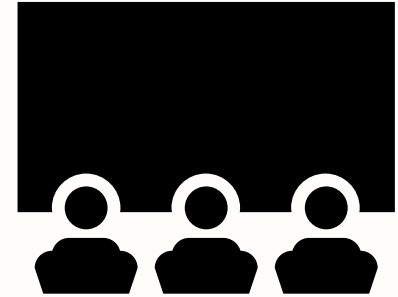


Macbeth, Kentucky Opera (photo: courtesy of Kentucky Opera)

Key Scene #3 continued

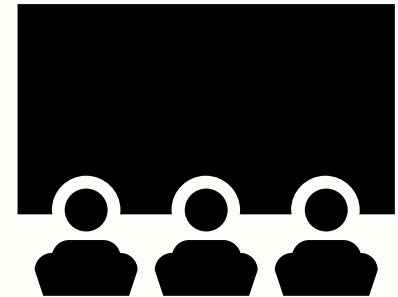
[Met Opera on Demand](#): Track #36. ACT IV: Ella è morta!

00:00 – 03:57



[PBS LearningMedia™](#): Macbeth | Act IV | The Metropolitan Opera

34:16 – 38:13



Why do we adapt stories?

Adaptation Guidelines

Adapting the Who, What, When, and Where.

- . **Who:** character/character identity

Note: character identity can be adapted, but characters may not be eliminated or added.

- . **What:** key scene, action in the story - what is happening?
- . **When:** time period, time of day, year, etc.
- . **Where:** location and setting

Adaptation Pitch

Who (characters in the scene):

What (scene action):

When (time period, time of year/day):

Where (location/setting):

Why did you choose to adapt the opera this way?

How will these changes affect the rest of the story?

Present 

Reflection

Share thoughts on the story adaptation pitch process.

How did your understanding of the story change as you adapted it?

Have any new insights or perspectives emerged?

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