Macbeth Act II Study Guide

Scene 1:

1. What suspicion about Macbeth does Banquo reveal in his soliloquy?
2. What is Banquo hoping for?
3. What does Macbeth say the “bloody cousins” (Malcom and Donalbain) are up to?
4. For what reasons does Macbeth want Banquo murdered?
5. What reason does Macbeth give for not killing Banquo himself?
6. When does Macbeth want Banquo and Fleance killed?
7. How are Macbeth’s fear justified in this scene?

Scene 2:

1. What lines reveal how Lady Macbeth is feeling about being queen?
2. What is Lady Macbeth’s problem with Macbeth?
3. What does Macbeth mean by, “be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck/ Till thou applaud the deed”?

Scene 3:

1. What does the second murderer mean when he says, “we have lost/ Best half of our affair”?
2. Some scholars believe that the third murderer might be Macbeth himself. Draw an argument as to whether Macbeth would participate in the murder or not. Give reasons for your position.

Scene 4:

1. How does Macbeth react to the news that Fleance escaped?
2. Macbeth’s sighting have gotten worse, as he insists he see Banquo’s ghost. How might this progression be a reflection of Macbeth’s mental state?
3. What explanation does Lady Macbeth give for Macbeth’s behavior?
4. How does Lady Macbeth try to calm Macbeth down?
5. What is you explanation for the appearance of Banquo’s ghost at the table? Why do you think Macbeth is the only one who can see him?
6. Besides Banquo, who was conspicuously absent from the banquet?

Scene 5:

1. Scholar’s believe that scene give was not written by Shakespeare, but was added later. Why do you think this scene was added at this point? (Consider what just happened in the play.)
2. Why is Hecate angry?
3. What does Hecate say will soon be coming?
4. What do you think Hecate means when she says “An you all know security/ Is mortals’ chiefest enemy”? Do you agree? Why or why not?
5. Some producers/ directors often omit this scene from their productions. Do think removing this scene would change the play? Why or why not?

Scene 6:

1. What things does Lennox say have been “strangely borne”?
2. What have Malcom and Macduff been up to?