

Study Guide

Macbeth-Act 4

Character Descriptions:

- Lennox alerts Macbeth of Macduff fleeing to England.
- Macduff blames himself for his family's death .
- Macbeth visits the witches, demanding the truth of their prophecies.
- Lady Macduff feels her husband has deserted her and their family.
- The Witches shows Macbeth 4 new apparitions.
- Malcolm says he would make a worse King than Macbeth.

Important Literary Terms:

- Presentation of material that prepares us for later events is known as foreshadowing.
- A 14 line Shakespearian poem is called a sonnet.
- Surrealism is expression of the imagination.
- A rhetorical question is a question used for effect, not meant to be answered.

Important Events from Act 4:

- The doctor say the King of England can heal those who are sick.
- Macbeth's actions in Act 4 can be best described as brutal.
- Hecate angry with the rest of the witches because they toyed with Macbeth without consulting her.
- When the second witch says, "Something wicked this way comes" it demonstrates that Macbeth is so evil he is no longer human.
- Banquo's ghost shows Macbeth a line of eight kings.
- In response to Macbeth's questions, the witches show him apparitions which give him a false sense of security. The child with a crown and a tree branch says that Macbeth won't be defeated until Birnam forest marches to Macbeth's castle. The armed head tells Macbeth to beware of Macduff.
- Lady Macbeth does not appear in act 4.
- The bloody child says that no man born of woman will hurt Macbeth.
- When Macduff receives news of his family's death, Malcolm urges him to get angry and take revenge.
- Malcolm pretends he is too evil to become king in order to find out if Macduff is loyal.

Based on a Passage from Act 4 of Macbeth (between Macbeth, the First Witch, the First Apparition, the Second Apparition and the Third Apparition):

- Focused and commanding best describes the first witch's tone toward Macbeth when she speaks to him.
- *"Can tell so much: shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom"*
This extraneous line does not provide Macbeth with information that he feels is useful.
- *"He knows thy thought:
Hear his speech, but say thou nought."*
In these lines, the first witch commands Macbeth to be quiet.
- *"Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?
But yet I'll make assurance double sure
And take a bond of fate. Thou shalt not live,
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder."*
In these lines, Macbeth plans to make sure that Macduff dies and is absolutely no threat.

- A paradox the witches suggest to Macbeth is that no one born of woman can harm him, but he should still beware of Macduff.

Based on a Passage from Act 4 of Macbeth (between Macbeth and Malcom):

- When Macduff uses the expressions “O” in this passage, the feeling that the term project gives off is the feeling of despair.
- Malcom mentions Old Siward to show that preparation has been made to overcome the enemy.
- *“Such welcome and unwelcome things at once Tis hard to reconcile”.*
- These paradoxical lines demonstrate Macduff’s mixed feelings. Macduff regards Malcom’s parents with respect.
- According to Malcom, Macbeth has tried to persuade Malcom into trusting him.

Based on a Passage from Act 4 of Macbeth (between Macduff, Malcom, and Ross):

- The themes directly supported by this passage are that some evil deeds forces good men to seek revenge, sometimes innocent people suffer for the wrongs of others, and tragedy makes people join forces to defeat a common enemy.
- Macduff changes over the course of this excerpt. His behaviors go from curiosity to grief and then to vengeance.
- Macduff seems to have fathered more than one child. Macduff would rather hear bad news and respond than ignore the news. The themes directly supported by this passage are that some evil deeds forces good men to seek revenge, sometimes innocent people suffer for the wrongs of others, and tragedy makes people join forces to defeat a common enemy.
- Macduff ask a series of questions due to shock and grief.
- Ross uses the term “savagely slaughtered”. Sent to heaven in place of this term would make the tone less tragic.

Significant Quotes from Macbeth, Act 4:

- MALCOLM : “This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues, was once thought honest./You have loved him well./He hath not touched you yet. ?I am young, but something you may deserve of him through me, and wisdom to offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb t’appease an angry God.”
- WITCH : “Round about the cauldron go, in the poisoned entrails throw./Toad, that under cold stone days and nights has thirty-one sweltered venom sleeping got/Boil thou first i’th’charmed pot.”
- MACBETH : “Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?”
- LADY MACDUFF : “To leave his wife, to leave his babies, his mansion and his titles in a place from whence himself does fly? He loves us not.”
- ROSS : “He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows/The fits o’th’season.”
- SON: “If he were dead, you’d weep for him. If you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.”