

Study Guide

Macbeth- Act 1



* In the story of Macbeth, Duncan is the king of Scotland and Malcolm is the son of the king. Also, Banquo's sons will be king but he will not. Macbeth beheads Macdonwald and Lady Macbeth asks to be "unsexed". The old hags that plot against Macbeth are the 3 witches.

* A major section of the play is called an act. A play on words which wittily explains a double meaning is called a pun. Reoccurring images, words, object, actions, or phrases that tend to unify the work motif. A rhetorical technique in which reference is made to a person, event, object or work from history or literature is called an allusion. The form of drama which presents a sad tale of the fall of a character or characters is called a tragedy. A personal failing which brings about the downfall of the central character is called a tragic flaw. An introduction which provides information about the work to come is called a prologue. A short part of a play that begins with actors entering or exiting the stage is called a scene.

* The first witch was upset that a sailor's wife would not share her chestnuts.

* Duncan regrets that he misjudged the Thane of Cawdor by trusting him.

* The witches do not predict that Banquo will be King after Macbeth. However, the witches do predict that Macbeth will be the Thane of Cawdor and the future king.

* King Duncan ordered the death of the original Thane of Cawdor.

* Macbeth initially has second thoughts about murdering Duncan.

* Duncan is pleased with Macbeth's castle when he first arrives; it feels safe and welcoming.

* Lady Macbeth thinks her husband is a weak, incapable man.

* Ultimately, the witches implant the evil deed in Macbeth's mind.

* Only based on what we have read thus far, Macbeth's tragic flaw appears to be ambition

* The play's first act includes all of the following events: a battle, the reading of a letter, and meeting of supernatural beings.

* The setting of the play is in Scotland.

* Banquo accompanies Macbeth when he meets the witches.

* Macdonwald is defeated when he is beheaded by Macbeth.

* Macbeth is surprised when he is addressed as Thane of Cawdor because one of the prophecies has come true.

* Macbeth begins to hope for Duncan's death when Malcolm is named heir to the throne.

- * The fact that Duncan was deceived by the Thane of Cawdor suggests that Duncan is too trusting.
- * Lady Macbeth's welcome to Duncan can be best described as kind.
- * Duncan announces Malcolm as heir to the throne.
- * Lady Macbeth's motive for urging Macbeth on is that she has a desire for her husband to gain power.
- * The murder of King Duncan is set to take place in Macbeth's castle.
- * The overall purpose of the first scene of Act 1 of the play is to establish an atmosphere of evil and doom.
- * Macbeth acts as he does by the end of Act 1 because he is weak, wants to please his wife, and is very ambitious.
- * At the beginning of the play, Macbeth can best be described as admirable and courageous.
- * Lady Macbeth's immediate reaction upon reading her husband's letter is to express doubt about Macbeth's ambition.

Direct Quotes from Macbeth:

Duncan: "There's no way to read a man's mind by looking at his face. I trusted Cawdor completely."

Lady Macbeth: "Your face, my Thane, is as a book where men may read strange matters. To beguile the time, look like the time; bear welcome in your eye, your hand, your tongue; look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under't."

Lady Macbeth: "Come you spirits that tend on mortal thought, unsex me here, and fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full of direst cruelty!"

Malcom: "This is the brave sergeant who fought to keep me from being captured. Hail, brave friend! Tell the king what was happening in the battle when you left it."

The witches: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair. Hover through the fog and filthy air."

Banquo: "You seem to understand me, because each of you has put a gruesome finger to her skinny lips. You look like women, but your beards keep me from believing that you really are."