Title – Eden Tomes

# Identify (acknowledging feedback on Task 1.4):

## Selected character and setting

* Character selected: Fleance
* 1920’s Prohibition-era Chicago
* A cold, damp alleyway behind a speakeasy, shortly after escaping the hit on his father.

## Positioning of monologue within the plot of the original text

* Immediately after the equivalent of Act 3, Scene 3 where Banquo (his father, a key mob figure) is assassinated and Fleance barely escapes.
* Events prior to monologue:
  + Original: Macbeth has become king after murdering Duncan. He's paranoid about Banquo and the witches' prophecy about Banquo's sons. He orders Banquo and Fleance to be murdered. Banquo is killed.
  + New: Macbeth (a ruthless gangster) has seized control of the "family" after killing the previous Don (Duncan). He's worried about Banquo (a respected enforcer/capo, his former partner) and the "whispers" (prophecy equivalent) that Banquo's son, Fleance, might one day take over or avenge him. Macbeth orders a hit on Banquo and Fleance. Banquo is killed.
* Events following the monologue:
  + Original: Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost at the banquet. The witches give more prophecies. Macduff goes to England. Macbeth becomes more tyrannical.
  + New: Fleance goes into hiding. Macbeth becomes increasingly paranoid and violent, perhaps seeing "ghosts" of his actions (figuratively or literally, if we want to play with guilt). He solidifies his power but alienates allies. Other mob families or internal dissenters (Macduff) start to plot against him. Fleance will seek to survive, gather allies, and eventually avenge his father and reclaim what he sees as his family's due.

## How the monologue reimagines the original text and how

* Primarily reinterpreting the character of Fleance by giving him agency and voice immediately after trauma, rather than him just disappearing for a while.
* Also reinterpreting concepts like kingship (mob boss), prophecy (street rumours/fortune tellers), loyalty and betrayal within the criminal underworld.
* Reinterpreting time and place significantly, going from feudal Scotland to 1920’s Chicago.
* Fleance: From a boy who mostly flees to a young man grappling with immediate grief, terror, and a dawning understanding of the brutal world he's in.
* Kingship -> Mob Boss: Power gained through violence and fear, not divine right.
* Prophecy -> Rumours/Omens: Less supernatural, more about the psychology of belief and self-fulfilling prophecies in a superstitious environment.
* Feudal Scotland -> Prohibition Chicago: Retains the themes of ambition, violence, and precarious power, but in a more modern, urban, and recognizable criminal setting.

## How the original context of the base text will be changed/altered

* In this new interpretation – a 1920s Prohibition-era Chicago crime syndicate – the language will be different (colloquialisms of the era), the immediate dangers different (gunmen, not swordsmen), and the motivations are rooted in a different social structure (crime family vs. feudal kingdom).

## How the monologue will invite the audience to question or reflect on the dominant cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs that underpin the original play and/or the new cultural context

* The original play explores themes of legitimate rule (Divine Right) versus tyranny, and the corrupting nature of ambition. In the 1920s gangster context, 'legitimate rule' is absent, power is explicitly through violence. The monologue will invite reflection on:
  + Whether ambition is inherently destructive, or if it is the context that shapes its outcome.
  + If the 'prophecy' or 'rumour' simply gives individuals an excuse for actions they already desired.

# Steps:

1. Research and identify characters to be referenced, the focus of your character’s reflection, your character’s emotional reactions to previous plot points and representations of empowerment or disempowerment in the monologue.

* Fleance:
  + Fleance is the son of Banquo. According to the witches’ prophecy, he may one day become the King of Scotland.
  + Although he only appears in two brief scenes, the inclusion of his character in the play works to complicate Macbeth’s pursuit of the throne.
  + The witches reveal in Act I that while Macbeth will become king, Banquo’s children are also destined to occupy the throne.
  + This detail drives Macbeth to view both Banquo and Fleance as enemies, and he conspires to kill them both in order to secure his power.
  + When the murderers attack the pair outside the palace, Fleance manages to escape his father’s fate and flees to safety. This may be the final moment in which he appears on stage, but his survival works to uphold the witches’ prophecy.
  + For Macbeth, Fleance serves as an ongoing source of uncertainty as he tries to navigate his new status. The fact that no one knows where Fleance has escaped to further exacerbates Macbeth’s concerns about his influence as he has no way to suppress him.
  + For both the play’s other characters and the audience, however, Fleance serves as a reminder that a future exists beyond Macbeth’s corrupt rule. This small source of optimism offers relief from the overall tragic nature of the play.
  + While Fleance’s escape in Act III ensures the promise of his future, Shakespeare foreshadows this key role earlier in the play. Fleance’s first appearance on stage occurs in Act II, Scene 1 when he accompanies his father in the dark halls of Inverness. While their exchange may seem simple, the ominous setting and Fleance’s actions suggest that he may have the power to free Scotland from Macbeth’s kingship. Both father and son initially comment on the eerie timelessness of the night, a detail which can function as a metaphor for the unnatural darkness falling on Scotland as a result of Macbeth’s behaviour. Within this environment, however, Fleance bears a torch symbolizing the hope that he will usher in a new, more peaceful era. Fleance bears a torch in the attack scene as well, a detail which further reinforces this uplifting identity.
* Macduff:
  + Macduff stands out from a large cast of secondary characters because of the particular harm that Macbeth does to him, and the revenge Macduff takes on Macbeth in turn.
  + At the beginning of the play, Macduff is a loyal and brave noble fighting on Duncan’s side. He immediately distrusts Macbeth’s claim that Duncan was killed by his servants and refuses to go to Macbeth’s coronation.
  + Once Macbeth understands that Macduff will not be loyal to him, Macduff becomes a particular focus of Macbeth’s anger, guilt, and rabid desire to protect his power.
  + Macbeth arranges for murderers to kill Macduff’s wife and children, after Macduff has already fled to England to seek help from the king for his cause against Macbeth.
  + Macduff’s decision to abandon his family is never fully explained, and seems hard to justify, given their brutal murders.
  + But Macduff is deeply motivated by his wife and sons’ deaths, and he speaks several times in the play about how he must revenge them. Thus, his mission to place Malcolm on the throne of Scotland is one that reflects his desire to have the true monarch ruling but also shows his desire for vengeance for his wife and son’s murder.

1. Develop a plan for a monologue that reimagines a character and/or representations of concepts, identities in the base text.
2. Save your response using the following pathway: SURNAME First name U1T2 Task 1.5
3. Submit your Task 1.5 as a word document to your teacher, via the QLearn assignments page.  
   You may choose to use the planning scaffold provided or create your own planning format.  
   Your plan is due Monday at 3pm.

Air… I just need air. My lungs… they feel like fire. Heart’s trying to hammer its way out. So cold. This brick, it’s… it’s real. It’s rough. But what I saw… was *that* real?

(He closes his eyes tight, then snaps them open, looking around wildly)

The flash… from the barrel. So quick. And the noise… like thunder right in my ear. Dad… he shouted. My name. "Run, Fleance! Run!" His voice… it didn't sound like his. It… broke. And then he just… folded. Like… like a coat dropped on the floor. Just… down.

(He shakes his head violently)

No. No. It’s not… He can’t be. Not Dad. Not *my* dad. Banquo. Everyone knew Banquo. Strongest man I ever knew. They… they couldn’t just… Who *were* they?

(He shivers, wrapping his arms around himself)

Gunpowder. I can still smell it. Stings my nose. And this… this garbage. My hands… look at them. Shaking like leaves. Stop it. Stop. Just… breathe. He told me to run. So I ran.

(A beat of silence, then the grief hits him like a wave. His voice cracks.)

He’s gone. Isn’t he? They shot him. Right there. On the street. He shoved me… so hard. Sent me sprawling. Saved me. And they… they didn’t even look at him after. Just… walked away. My father.

(He chokes back a sob)

He… he taught me to tie my shoes. Showed me how to hold a bat. That stupid song he’d whistle when he was fixing something… It’s all… gone. The whole world feels… wrong. Tilted. Like it’s about to slide off into nothing. Don’t cry. Not here. They’ll hear. But Dad… oh, Dad… why?

(His brow furrows, confusion mixing with dawning dread)

Who were they? Their hats were pulled down low… but they knew us. They were waiting. It wasn’t… it wasn’t just a robbery. This was… for him. For us. Why? He was always straight. Always loyal… to the Family. To… to Mr. Macbeth. *Uncle Mac.*

(The name hangs in the air. His eyes widen slightly.)

Macbeth… He’s the Don now. Ever since Mr. Duncan… went away. Dad was… Dad was his oldest friend. His partner. He wouldn’t… would he? *Could* he?

(He remembers something, his voice dropping to a fearful whisper)

Those whispers… Dad heard them. In the clubs, on the corners. From those old women with their cards and their strange eyes. Whispers about… about me. That our name… that *I* would be… something. That Macbeth wouldn’t want that. Dad laughed them off. Said it was just street talk, nonsense. But his eyes… when he thought I wasn’t looking… he was worried. He was.

(The pieces click into place with horrifying clarity)

Macbeth got what he wanted. The top. The whole damn city in his pocket. But the whispers… they said *I* was the one who could… undo it. Is that it? Is that why? Did Uncle Mac… did he send them? To stop the whispers? By stopping… us?

(A wave of pure terror washes over him. He shrinks further against the wall.)

They know I got away. I saw one of them look… right as I scrambled into the dark. They’ll be looking. I’m a loose end. A witness. His son. Where can I go? Who do I trust? Everyone Dad knew… they’re all under *his* thumb now. Macbeth’s. Anyone could sell me out for a few dollars, for a pat on the back from the new Don. This whole city… it used to feel like ours. Now every shadow has teeth. Every doorway could be hiding them.

(The fear begins to curdle into something harder, sharper. His jaw tightens.)

He was a good man! A better man than… than *him*, if this is his doing. He didn’t deserve to be gunned down like some… animal! This is it, then. This is their precious "Family." Their "business." Not just fancy suits and whispered deals. It’s this. It’s blood and betrayal. And I was supposed to be… what? Blind? Stupid?

(He pushes himself off the wall, a new, cold anger in his eyes.)

I was just a kid. Dad… he tried to keep me from this. But I see it now. I see it all so clearly. Their smiles. Their handshakes. All rotten. All lies. They think I’m just some scared boy, running for his life. And I am. I *am* scared. But there’s something else now… under the fear. Something… burning. They took him from me. They took *everything*.

(He looks down the dark alley, towards the distant glow of the city.)

"Run, Fleance, run!" That’s what he yelled. He didn’t say "give up." He said "run." Survive. Those whispers… Macbeth was scared of them. Tried to silence them. But he couldn’t. Because *I’m* still here. The whispers are still alive as long as *I* am.

(A grim resolve settles on his face. He’s no longer just a boy.)

I won’t let them win. I won’t let his death be for… for nothing. I don’t know how yet. I don’t know what I’m supposed to do. But I’m his son. I am Banquo’s son. And I will live. I *have* to. For him. And maybe… maybe one day… they’ll all find out what they did. They’ll all understand.

(He takes a deep, steadying breath, the fight returning to his eyes.)

The night’s not over. Not for me. It’s just… beginning. I need to disappear. Get smart. Real smart. And I need to remember this. This cold. This alley. And this fire… inside. Always remember.