



# **THE PLAY OF MACBETH**

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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# **THE PLAY OF MACBETH**

**By William Shakespeare**

## **A PLAY**

A story performed by actors and actresses in front of audience.

## **ELEMENTS OF A PLAY**

### **1. PLOT**

A trend or series of related events by which a problem or conflict is concluded and then resolved.

It can be a conflict between humans, animals, ideas or any other force.

### **2. CHARACTERS**

These are actors and actresses taking part in a play.

Some characters are major while others are minor.

The major character (PROTAGONIST) in the play is MACBETH against minor characters (ANTAGONISTS).

Another categorization can be heroes against villains.

### **3. DIALOGUE/CONVERSATION**

The discussion between or among characters

This is what exposes the plot.

### **4. SOLILOQUY**

Talking to oneself in front of audience

This exposes the mood.

### **5. ACTS**

These are segment of a play showing changes of place. It is a major division. The play of MACBETH has only five acts.

The minor division within act is called SCENES.

## **SETTING**

This refers to where and when the actions take place.

The geographical setting in the play of Macbeth is:

- a) Scotland
- b) England
- c) Ireland

The chronological setting in the play of Macbeth is around the middle ages (1050) specifically the eleventh century

## **WAYS TO HITS ON UNDERSTANDING THE PLAY.**

Understanding the play rest on the power of vision.

One must see a play in own minds.

## **MOTIFS**

A literary device that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

### **EXAMPLES OF MOTIFS**

#### **i. PROPHECY.**

A statement about what is going to happen in future.

It seems to involve the power of gods.

#### **ii. HALLUCINATION**

The fact of seeming to see or heard things that is not really there.

It involves false vision in one's mind.

#### **iii. VIOLENCE**

A behavior that is intended to hurt or kill somebody.

It involves the act of killing multitudes of people.

#### **iv. SUPERNATURAL**

The events, forces or powers that cannot be explained by the laws of science.

It involves gods or magic.

## **CAST**

Listing the characters at the beginning of a play.

### **CAST IN A PLAY OF MACBETH.**

#### **I. KING DUNCAN**

The Scottish lord. A good king of Scotland.

He belongs to the royal family.

#### **II. MALCOLM**

The elder son of the king Duncan

He belongs to the royal family.

#### **III. DONALBAIN**

The second son of King Duncan.

He belongs to the royal family.

#### **IV. MACBETH**

The cousin of King Duncan.

He becomes a cruel king in the play.

#### **V. LADY MACBETH**

The wife of Macbeth.

#### **VI. BANQUO**

The best friend of Macbeth.

He is a Scottish nobleman.

#### **VII. FLEANCE**

The only son of Banquo.

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#### **VIII. WEIRD SISTERS (THREE WITCHES)**

The supernatural beings in the play.

They give prophecies.

## **IX. HECATE**

The goddess of witchcrafts.

## **X. MACDUFF**

The Scottish nobleman.

## **XI. LADY MACDUFF**

The wife of Macduff.

She have a son.

## **XII. LENNOX**

The Scottish nobleman

## **XIII. ROSS**

The Scottish nobleman

## **XIV. ANGUS**

The Scottish nobleman

## **XV. MENTETH**

The Scottish nobleman in Malcolm's English army

## **XVI. CATHNESS**

The Scottish nobleman in Malcolm's English army

## **ACT ONE**

### **SCENE ONE (A DESERTED PLACE)**

#### **SUMMARY**

The play begins on a lonely stretch of land in Scotland.

Weird sisters (three witches) give a prophecy that the battle between Scotland and Norway will end before sun set. They plan to meet Macbeth on the barren field (health) at that time.

They also foretelling the Scotland's future "fair is foul and foul is fair" What is good will be bad and what is bad will be good as such they are evil prophets.

#### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERIZATION**

##### **1. WEIRD SISTERS (THREE WITCHES)**

###### **a) COOPERATIVE**

They meet in advance to discuss and declare the ends of battle between Scotland and Norway. They also plan to meet Macbeth on the barren field or health.

###### **b) DESTRUCTIVE**

They want to change things in the Scotland so that what is good must be bad and what is bad must be good. They are evil prophets.

##### **What atmosphere is established in scene 1?**

The scene is filled with witches, thunders and lightning which creates a dark sinister (evil) atmosphere.

### **SCENE TWO (A CAMP NEAR FORRES)**

#### **SUMMARY**

The king Duncan and his sons Malcolm and Donalbain including a Scottish nobleman Lennox learn the event about the battle from wounded captain.

The wounded captain informs the king Duncan that his cousin Macbeth accompanied by Banquo kill the multitudes of Norwegians including Macdonwald, the king of Norway.

The Scottish lord appreciates the role played by his cousin Macbeth.

The Scottish noblemen Ross and Angus tell the king Duncan that the thane of Cawdor commits a treason.

The king Duncan orders the immediate execution of the first thane of Cawdor and gives this position to brave Macbeth.

He sends Ross and Angus to announce Macbeth that now is a new thane of Cawdor.

## **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

### **1. KING DUNCAN**

#### **a) INQUISITIVE**

He wants to know the news about the battle between his scots and Norwegians from wounded captain and Scottish noblemen.

He wants to learn more about the role played by Macbeth and his friend Banquo.

#### **b) APPRECIATIVE**

He is appreciating the role played by Macbeth to the extent of pointing him to be a thane of Cawdor.

#### **c) JUST/ DOMINEERING /AUTHORITATIVE**

He orders the Scottish noblemen Ross and Angus to execute the rebel thane of Cawdor for his treason and inform Macbeth that now he is new thane of Cawdor.

### **2. MACBETH AND BANQUO**

#### **a) PATRIOTIC**

They kill multitudes of Norwegians including Macdonwald in the battle between Scotland and Norway. They are defending their own country.

### **3. THE WOUNDED CAPTAIN, ROSS AND ANGUS**

#### **a) OPENNESS**

They inform the events of the battle between Scotland and Norway to Scottish lord Duncan.

## **SCENE THREE (A HEALTH-THE OPEN FIELD)**

Weird sisters (three witches) are discussing the evil and disruptive deeds in waiting for Macbeth.

The first witch informs his fellow witches that had a disagreement with a sailor's wife because she denies giving the chestnuts on her plate.

Weird sisters decide to punish a sailor by creating a windstorm to disturb his ship to ALEPPO.

Macbeth and Banquo came across weird sisters (three witches) on their way to the camp near Forres (the city of Scotland).

Banquo determines that three witches are women yet have beards like men.

Weird sisters give a prophecy that Macbeth will be thane of Cawdor in addition to his thane of Glamis inherited from his deceased father SINEL.

They also declare that Macbeth will be the king of Scotland.

Banquo persuades Weird sisters to give some prophecies to him.

Weird sisters again give a prophecy that Banquo descendants will be kings. In short he will be father of kings.

Macbeth and Banquo surprises and proceed their journey to the camp near Forres.

In the camp, the Scottish noblemen Ross and Angus announce to Macbeth that he is named thane of Cawdor by the king Duncan due to his heroism.

Macbeth and Banquo trust the prophecies of Weird sisters. They hope to rule Scotland one day.

## **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

### **1. WEIRD SISTERS (THREE WITCHES)**

#### **a) TIME CONSCIOUS**

They meet on an open field in time to greet Macbeth with words of honor and give him prophecies.

#### **b) EVIL**

They want to create a wind storm to disturb the sailor's ship on his way to Aleppo hence his wife denies to give chestnuts to the first witch.

## **2. BANQUO**

### **a) OBSERVANT**

He observes that three witches are women yet they have beards like men.

### **b) PERSUASIVE**

He persuades Weird sisters to know his future. The weird sisters declare that he will be father of kings.

## **3. MACBETH**

### **a) AMBITIOUS**

He hopes to be thane of Cawdor in addition to his thane of Glamis inherited from his father SINEL.

He also hopes to be the king of Scotland.

## **SCENE FOUR (THE ROYAL PALACE AT FORRES)**

### **SUMMARY**

There is Cawdor execution (killing by law) for his treason (harming his own country by helping enemies.)

After Cawdor's execution, King Duncan welcomes and thanks two generals MACBETH and BANQUO for being heroes in the civil war.

King Duncan announces his intention to name his elder son MALCOLM to succeed him as a king. He referred him as PRINCE OF CUMBERLAND OR CROWN PRINCE.

Macbeth creates internal conflict towards Malcolm for being an obstacle over his ambition.

The king Duncan plans to visit Macbeth's castle in INVERNESS to have loyal party and spend night there. Macbeth leaves and goes ahead of king's impending arrival to inform his wife LADY MACBETH for better preparation.

### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

## **1. KING DUNCAN**

### **a) SIMPLE MINDED**

He shows the best to his people for executing the former thane of Cawdor for his treason.

He plans to visit Macbeth's castle to have loyal party due to having victory in the battle between Scotland and Norway.

## **2. MACBETH**

### **a) JEALOUS**

He creates a conflict for Malcolm when King Duncan chooses him as a Prince of Cumberland probably the future king of Scotland.

He feels that Malcolm is a barrier to hinder the prophecies of weird sisters.

## **SCENE FIVE (MACBETH'S CASTLE IN INVERNESS-A CITY IN SCOTLAND)**

### **SUMMARY**

Lady Macbeth reads to herself a letter she has received from Macbeth.

The letter announces the details of Macbeth's meeting with weird sisters (three witches) and his promotion to the thaneship of Cawdor.

Lady Macbeth plans to assassinate the king Duncan so that her husband may meet the prophecies of weird sisters.

A messenger informs Lady Macbeth about the king's impending arrival at the castle

Lady Macbeth begs spirits that tend on mortal thoughts to unsex her to have manliness for easy murdering the king Duncan.

Macbeth enters and informs his wife that the king plans to depart the next day but Lady Macbeth declares that Duncan will never see tomorrow.

### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

## **1. LADY MACBETH**

### **a) POWER HUNGRY**

She wants her husband Macbeth to murder King Duncan so that he may meet the prophecies of weird sisters. She desires to be the wife of the king in Scotland.

**b) SUPERSTITIOUS**

She summons the evil spirits to give her thoughts of a man for easy assassinating the crown.

**SCENE SIX (MACBETH'S CASTLE)**

**SUMMARY**

The Scottish lord (King Duncan), Malcolm, Donalbain including some Scottish noblemen Banquo, Lennox, Macduff, Ross and Angus arrive at Macbeth's castle.

King Duncan praises the castle's pleasant environment with sweet air and he also thanks Lady Macbeth for exchanging good greetings.

**CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

**1. KING DUNCAN**

**a) APPRECIATIVE**

He praises the Macbeth's castle with pleasant environment and fresh air. He also thanks plentifully Lady Macbeth for exchanging good greetings.

**2. LADY MACBETH**

**b) HOSPITABLE**

She welcomes the Scottish lord with his noblemen.

**SCENE SEVEN (MACBETH'S CASTLE NEAR THE HALL)**

**SUMMARY**

Macbeth's servants set a table and provide a good dinner for that evening feast.

During the dinner, Macbeth leaves and begins to contemplate plan of assassinating Duncan.

Macbeth changes the plan of murdering the king Duncan to fulfill the prophecies of Weird sisters because:

- a) He is Duncan's king's man, subject and host.

- b) The king is universally admired as a virtuous ruler.

Lady Macbeth comes and encourages her husband to kill Duncan so that he may be the king of Scotland.

Macbeth agrees to proceed with the murder.

## **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

### **1. MACBETH**

#### **a) SYMPATHETIC**

He changes his deeds of murdering Duncan because he is his king's man, subject and host. In addition to that he knows that Duncan is a virtuous ruler.

#### **b) DISLOYAL**

He is supposed to be loyal to King Duncan as a leader, let alone his cousin. On the contrary, he chooses to rise against and kill him to meet the prophecies of Weird sisters.

### **2. LADY MACBETH**

#### **a) PERSUASIVE**

She coaxes her husband to proceed the deeds of murdering King Duncan so that she may become a queen of Scotland.

## **ACT TWO**

### **SCENE ONE (COURYARD IN MACBETH'S CASTLE)**

#### **SUMMARY**

Banquo and his son Fleance are walking around the castle unable to get a sleep because he has been plagued by dreams of witches prophecies.

Banquo takes his offensive sword and dagger and hand over them to his son. Symbolically, the kingship is being passing from father to son.

They come across Macbeth while the King Duncan is sleeping in his chamber.

Banquo informs him about the dreams and Weird sisters' prophecies but Macbeth begs to discuss the events next time.

Banquo and his son leave, then Macbeth sends a servant to inform Lady Macbeth if the mission is ready she must give a signal by RINGING A BELL.

Lady Macbeth prepares a liquid for king's guards to make them sleep deeply so that Macbeth may do the deeds.

A bell rings. Macbeth on his way to king's chamber sees a dagger floating in the air. He realizes that it is false vision (hallucination) created in his brain.

#### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

##### **1. BANQUO**

###### **a) OPTIMISTIC**

He hopes his son Fleance will be a king of Scotland after seeing Macbeth's prophecies of thaneship of Cawdor comes true.

##### **2. LADY MACBETH**

###### **a) DIREST (CRUEL)**

She prepares a wine for the king's chamberlains to make them drunk so that Macbeth may have a chance of assassinating the king Duncan.

## **SCENE TWO (COURTYARD IN MACBETH'S CASTLE)**

### **SUMMARY**

Lady Macbeth is filled with anticipation for Macbeth's safe return and completion of assassination.

Macbeth manages to kill the king Duncan while he is sleeping. The murder sleep of Duncan is a sin that condemns Macbeth's soul.

He comes out with blooded dagger in his hands. He screams with fear and decided to never get a sleep.

Lady Macbeth gets angry for him to return with blooded dagger in his hands. She takes dagger and goes back herself to king's chamber to smear blood of Duncan on the sleeping chamberlains (guard).

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth hear a mysterious knocking at the master door of castle. They never respond instead they get back to their bed chamber.

### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

#### **1. KING DUNCAN**

##### **a) NAÏVE**

He lacks insight into human thoughts. He trusted in the first and second thane of Cawdor very much yet they both rise against him as such "there is no art to find the minds construction in the face" meaning it is difficult to know someone's mind just by looking at the face.

#### **2. MACBETH**

##### **a) EVIL**

He kills King Duncan although he is his king's man, subject and host. He did so to meet the prophecies of Weird sisters, hence they declare that Macbeth will be a king of Scotland.

### **3. LADY MACBETH**

#### **a) PRAGMATIC**

She smears Duncan's blood on the sleeping guards to be suspected in the following day.

### **SCENE THREE (THE ENTRANCE TO MACBETH'S CASTLE)**

#### **SUMMARY**

The Scottish noblemen Macduff and Lennox are still knocking at the gate of Macbeth's castle.

A Porter slows to respond to the knock and wants to know "who is there" knocking at the gate of the hell in the name of Beelzebub (devil)

Macduff and Lennox complains about the porter's much time to open the gate immediately.

The porter says that he was up late partying and rambles on humorously about the effects of alcohol. He says alcohol provokes:

- a) Red nose
- b) Sleepiness
- c) Urination

He adds that drinks provoke sexual feelings however they fail to perform in the bed. Symbolically Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have strong desire to become loyal yet they will fail to ruling Scotland.

Macbeth enters and Macduff asks him if the king is awake, saying Duncan begs him to meet early that morning.

Macduff gets in kings chamber to awake Duncan up.

Lennox describes the storms that raged the previous night. They heard cries of grief and terrible voices predicting catastrophes.

Macduff screams with anger and comes running from the king's chamber, shouting that the king has been murdered.

When Macbeth and Lennox rush into a look, Macduff spreads the sad news all over the castle.

Lady Macbeth continues her charade by fainting at the sad news.

Malcolm and Donalbain think are next target, Malcolm decides to flee from Scotland to England. In another hand Donalbain decides to flee from Scotland to Ireland.

Everyone suspect the guards because their hands including daggers are painted with Duncan's blood.

## **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

### **1. PORTER**

#### **a) JOVIAL**

He chats happily and friendly with Scottish noblemen Macduff and Lennox about the effects of alcohol

#### **b) HYPOCRITICAL**

He compares Macbeth's castle gate with a hell gate in the name of devil. He foreshadows unknowingly the evil deeds happened in the castle.

### **2. MACDUFF**

#### **a) DUTIFUL**

He wants to wake up King Duncan in the early morning as he coaxes him previous day.

He observes that king Duncan is murdered and spreads the sad news all over the castle.

### **3. MACBETH**

#### **a) PRETENTIOUS**

He pretends like King Duncan is still alive by allowing Scottish nobleman Macduff to awaken up the king in his respective chamber.

### **4. MALCOLM AND DONALBAIN**

#### **a) FEEBLE MINDED**

They flee Scotland in afraid of being a second target to be killed by unknown person.

## **SCENE FOUR (OUTSIDE MACBETH'S CASTLE)**

### **SUMMARY**

The conversation between Scottish nobleman Ross and Old man inform audience about a number of unnatural occurrences in the weather.

The darkness covers the earth, an ordinary owl killed a powerful falcon and Duncan's horses suddenly turns wild and begins eating each other.

Macduff wants to know who killed Duncan from Ross and Old man. They informed him that Duncan's guards. On the contrary he suspects Malcolm and Donalbain hence they have run away.

Some Scottish noblemen attend Duncan's funeral ceremony at COLMEKILL (Duncan's family plot) while others attend coronation of Macbeth which take place at the SCONE

Macbeth named a king of Scotland because Duncan's sons Malcolm and Donalbain flee away Scotland and they are suspected to commit patricide owl.

### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

#### **1. MACDUFF**

##### **a) TACTIFUL**

He wants to know the person involved in Duncan's death. He suspects Duncan's sons including Macbeth.

## **ACT THREE**

### **SCENE ONE (THE ROYAL PALACE OF FORESS)**

#### **SUMMARY**

Banquo paces and thinks about the coronation of Macbeth and prophecies of Weird sisters. He suspects Macbeth on assassinating the crown to meet his prophecies.

Macbeth attired as a king of Scotland followed by his queen Lady Macbeth including Scottish noblemen and attendants.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth arrange a banquet (feast). They invite Banquo with his only son Fleance to attend the banquet they will host that night.

Banquo rides a horse and leaves the palace together with his son Fleance hoping to attend banquet in that evening.

Macbeth hires two murderers to kill Banquo and his son Fleance so that they may not meet the prophecy of Weird sisters.

#### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

##### **1. DIREST (CRUEL)**

He sends two murderers to kill Banquo and his son Fleance because he fears for his own life due to prophecy of Weird sisters.

### **SCENE TWO (THE ROYAL PALACE AT FORRES)**

#### **SUMMARY**

The conversation between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth about the problem they are facing in their kingship.

They fear much about Banquo's son Fleance to assassinate him to meet the prophecies of three witches.

They agree to continue hiding the truth about Duncan's death.

## QUESTION

1. Does Lady Macbeth think this murder of Banquo and his son Fleance are necessary?
  - Yes, she wants to get what they want and being happy not tormented with anxiety.

## SCENE THREE (PARK NEAR THE PALACE)

## SUMMARY

Two murderers are still waiting for Banquo and his son Fleance to come for the banquet that evening.

Macbeth sends a third murderer to help his fellow friends.

They all wait along the path Banquo and his son travel.

As they approach with their horses the murderers jump out they fight and kill Banquo but Fleance finds a chance to escape.

## CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION

### 1. THREE MURDERERS

#### a) DIREST (CRUEL)/EVIL

They kill Banquo as it was ordered by the king Macbeth.

### 2. BANQUO

#### a) LOVING AND CARING

He loves his only son Fleance.

He tries his best to fight against murderers and letting his son to run away.

#### **SCENE 4 [THE BANQUETING HALL AT FORRES)**

##### **SUMMARY**

On stage stands a table heaped with a feast that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth prepared for Scots.

Murderers come and inform Macbeth about the deeds. Macbeth gets angry for the news of Fleance's escape because he knows one day he will be a king of Scotland.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth welcome and thank plentifully all banquet attendants by saying "good digestion requires a good appetite and good health requires both. Let's eat to have a good health."

Macbeth informs the guests that he is not extremely happy in absence of Banquo and Macduff. The guests persuade Macbeth to seat on the chair and eat together.

Macbeth sees a Banquo's ghost seats on his chair and he responds to the false vision (hallucination) to stay away in his respective grave.

Lady Macbeth calms down her guests. She assures her guests that Macbeth has had these attacks since he was a child and it will soon pass.

The ghost appears again, Macbeth loses control and Lady Macbeth fears he will confess to the murder of Duncan. She asks her guests to leave quickly.

Macbeth plans to meet with Weird sisters again to learn information about his future.

##### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

## **1. MACBETH**

### **a) SHORT TEMPERED**

He gets angry to the news of Fleance's escape because he know that one day he will come and rule Scotland. He is afraid of his life.

### **b) FEEBLE MINDED**

He sees a Banquo's ghost which is not really there (hallucination) and he disturbs the banquet.

## **2. LADY MACBETH**

### **a) JUST/DOMINEERING/AUTHORITATIVE**

She commands everyone in the banquet hall to leave quickly. She afraid Macbeth to reveal the Duncan's murder.

## **SCENE FIVE (A HEALTH)**

### **SUMMARY**

Hecate, the goddess of witchcraft scolds Weird sisters for meddling in business of Macbeth in absence of her as a mistress, the source of their powers.

She calls them disobedient hags (ugly old women) for giving riddles and prophecies to Macbeth without consulting her.

She orders all witches to prepare for arrival of Macbeth. He comes to know his destiny.

### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

## **1. HECATE**

### **a) SHORT TEMPERED**

She gets angry and scolds Weird sisters for giving riddles and prophecies in absence of her as a mistress, the source of their powers.

## **SCENE SIX (THE ROYAL PALACE AT FORRES)**

### **SUMMARY**

The conversation between Scottish nobleman Lennox and unnamed Lord, they discuss about the death of Banquo and Duncan.

Lennox sarcastically comments that Fleance must have killed his father and run away Malcolm and Donalbain also did that deeds.

He says Macbeth conveniently will kill Fleance, Malcolm and Donalbain as a revenge for committing patricides.

The Lord informs Lennox that Malcolm is living in England court with King EDWARD and he is taking care of him.

He also says MACDUFF the thane of fife flee away from Scotland to England to meet Malcolm.

Macduff wants Edward to form an alliance with the people of Northamber land headed by Lord SIWARD to overthrow Macbeth's tyranny.

## **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

### **1. KING EDWARD**

#### **a) SYMPATHETIC**

He feels sorry for Malcolm's situation and he accommodates him to form army so that they may fight against Macbeth's tyranny.

## **ACT FOUR**

### **SCENE ONE (A DESERTED PLACE NEAR PALACE)**

#### **SUMMARY**

In a dark cavern, witches are preparing magic potion and casting a spell.

Witches circle a bubbling cauldron (a large metal pot) and add some bizarre ingredients in the cauldron for instance:

- a) Slice of snake
- b) Eye of newt
- c) Toe of frog
- d) Wool of bat
- e) Tongue of dog
- f) Blind worm
- g) Adder's fork
- h) Lizard leg
- i) Owlet's wing
- j) Tongue of wolf
- k) Scale of dragon
- l) Finger of birth-strangled baby
- m) Nose of Turk
- n) Tartar's lips
- o) Liver of blaspheming Jew

Macbeth enters and greets the witches. He begs them to give him complete information about his future.

Witches summon horrible apparition (ghosts) which offers a prediction to allay Macbeth's fears.

The first apparition is a floating head wearing a helmet warns Macbeth to beware Macduff.

The second apparition is a bloody child appears and informs Macbeth that no man born of woman will harm him.

The third apparition is a crowned child holding a tree, he informs Macbeth that is safe until Birnam wood moves to Dunsinane hill.

The witches also show Macbeth a procession of eight crowned kings walks by, the last one carrying a mirror with the reflection of Banquo's ghost.

Macbeth demands to know the meaning of this final vision but witches disappear

A Scottish nobleman Lennox informs Macbeth that thane of fife (MACDUFF) runs away to England to be under control of Malcolm. Macbeth plans to kill Macduff's family.

## **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

### **1. MACBETH**

#### **a) PERSUASIVE**

He begs witches to reveal the truth of their prophecies hence he wants to know about his future.

## **SCENE TWO (MACDUFF'S CASTLE IN FIFE)**

## **SUMMARY**

The conversation among LADY MACDUFF, her Son and a Scottish nobleman ROSS, they discuss about the flee of Macduff to English.

Lady Macduff gets angry for her husband left for English without consulting her.

Ross has no reason for Macduff's running away to England as such he tries his best to console Lady Macduff.

A Scottish nobleman Ross leaves.

A messenger hurries in warning Lady Macduff to run away because Macbeth sends a group of murderers to kill her.

Lady Macduff keeps on questioning the messenger on what's wrong she has done to be killed by Macbeth. This delay is what results her to be killed together with her son.

## **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

### **1. MACDUFF**

#### **a) IRRESPONSIBLE**

He runs away to English and leaves his family in Scotland unsafe. King Macbeth sends a group of murderers to kill his wife and Macduff's son.

## **SCENE THREE (ENGLAND, THE KING'S PALACE)**

## **SUMMARY**

MALCOLM and Scottish nobleman Macduff are outside the King Edward's place in England.

Malcolm suspects herself for committing several crimes in Scotland such as violent, greedy and lustful which are worse than Macbeth. He says so to determine whether Macduff is trustworthy.

Malcolm proceeds suspecting herself as an evil person. He does so to test Macduff hence he thinks is secretly working with Macbeth because he left his family in Scotland

Macduff screams with anger to agree that Malcolm is not fitting to rule Scotland and perhaps not even to live. In giving voice to his disparagement, Macduff has passed Malcolm's test of loyalty.

A Scottish nobleman Ross enters and informs Malcolm and Macduff that Scotland is in terrible condition.

He also tells Macduff that his family has been brutally murdered. Macduff is shocked and vows to revenge the murder of his family.

## **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

### **1. MALCOLM**

#### **a) SIMPLE MINDED**

He shows best to his people from Scotland. He tested Macduff to know if he is under Macbeth's control. This shows that Malcolm efforts may restore Scotland.

### **2. MACBETH**

#### **a) REVENGEFUL**

He wants to fight against Macbeth as a revenge to his deceased family.

## **ACT FIVE**

### **SCENE ONE (A ROOM IN DUNSSINANE CASTLE)**

#### **SUMMARY**

The conversation between a gentlewoman and the doctor, they are discussing about the illness of LADY MACBETH.

The gentlewoman informs the doctor that Lady Macbeth gets out of bed in nightgown and writes of a piece of paper, seals the letter and returns to bed.

The gentlewoman refuses to repeat things revealed by Lady Macbeth. She is afraid to be charged with treason. Lady Macbeth confesses to encouraging Macbeth to kill Duncan and Banquo. She also sees false vision of blood in her hand and she is unable to wash it off.

The doctor watches Lady Macbeth and concludes that he cannot treat her illness as she needs the assistance of God.

#### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

##### **1. GENTLEWOMAN**

###### **a) SECRETIVE**

She denies to inform the doctor the murmurs of Lady Macbeth about her confess to encourage Macbeth to kill Duncan and Banquo.

##### **2. LADY MACBETH**

###### **a) REGRETIFUL**

She regrets her evil behaviors and confesses to encouraging Macbeth to kill Duncan and Banquo. She gets illness.

## **SCENE TWO (OPEN COUNTRY NEAR DUNSINATE)**

### **SUMMARY**

The English armies are approaching Dunsinane led by MALCOLM, MACDUFF, SIWARD and SIWARD'S SON to fight against Macbeth's tyranny. They are camped in Birnam wood ready for impending battle.

The Scottish noblemen Menteth, Angus, Lennox and Cathness with soldiers are discussing the battle plans of Malcolm.

They plan to meet near Birnam wood with other and Macbeth is ready in Dunsinane.

### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

#### **1. MALCOLM, MACDUFF, YOUNG SIWARD, SIWARD, MENTETH, ANGUS, LENNOX AND ENTIRE SOLDIERS.**

##### **a) COOPERATIVE**

They meet in advance at Birnam wood ready to fight against Macbeth with entire army at Dunsinane castle. They want to revenge for Macbeth's tyranny and reward Malcolm to rule Scotland.

## **SCENE THREE (A ROOM IN DUNSINANE CASTLE)**

### **SUMMARY**

Macbeth is secure in his castle at Dunsinane. He feels confident to win the battle because the witches told him that he cannot be harmed unless Birnam wood moves to Dunsinane. In addition to that no man born of woman will kill him.

He believes the prophecies from witches and thought Birnam wood cannot move to Dunsinane. He also thought amongst English army, Malcolm, Macduff and young Siward everyone was born of woman. Therefore they cannot all harm him.

Macbeth dresses for battle as the Doctor reveals Lady Macbeth's condition to him. He asks the doctor to find a cure for his wife. Macbeth leaves for the battle.

## **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

### **1. MACBETH**

#### **a) SUPERSTITIOUS**

He believes the prophecies from witches that no man born of woman will harm him and he is safe unless Birnam wood moves to Dunsinane. He thought that all cannot happen.

### **2. SEYTON (AN OFFICER OF MACBETH'S ARMY)**

#### **a) INFORMATIVE**

He informs Macbeth the impending battle arranged by Malcolm to fight against him as a revenge for his deceased father.

## **SCENE FOUR (OPEN COUNTRY NEAR BIRNAM WOOD)**

## **SUMMARY**

MALCOLM, MENTENT, SIWARD, CATHNESS, YOUNG SIWARD, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS AND SOLDIERS are marching in BIRNAM WOOD ready to fight against Macbeth's tyranny at Dunsinane.

Malcolm orders everyone to cut a branch from a Birnam tree and shield themselves. They does not want to be calculated the number of people involved in the battle.

## **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

### **1. MALCOLM**

#### **a) JUST/DOMINEERING/ AUTHORITATIVE**

He commands everyone to cut branch of Birnam tree to be used as camouflage while approaching Dunsinane.

## **SCENE FIVE (INSIDE DUNSNINANE CASTLE)**

## **SUMMARY**

Macbeth feels confident that he will overthrow Malcolm in the battle due to prophecies of witches.

He hears a cry, SEYTO informs him that Lady Macbeth is dead. Macbeth responds by saying that life is very short.

A MESSENGER arrives to inform Macbeth that the wood of Birnam seems to be moving towards Dunsinane, Macbeth sounds the alarm and prepares to fight.

## **SCENE SIX (OUTSIDE DUNSNINANE CASTLE)**

### **SUMMARY**

MALCOLM, SIWARD, MACDUFF AND their army arrives at Dunsinane. Malcolm orders everyone to throw down branches of Birnam trees to be calculated.

Macduff orders the trumpets to announce the start of battle.

## **SCENE SEVEN (THE BATTLE OUTSIDE THE CASTLE)**

### **SUMMARY**

Macbeth and Young Siward challenge one another in the battle field. They are in sword fight aiming one to kill each other to win or lose.

Macbeth manages to kill Young Siward in the battle field.

### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

#### **1. MACBETH**

##### **a) BRAVE AND STRONG**

He manages to kill young Siward in the battle field when they challenge one another. He sword fight to kill his enemy.

#### **2. SIWARD'S SON**

##### **a) WEAK**

He loses the face to face sword fighting with the brave Macbeth in the battle field.

### **SCENE EIGHT (ANOTHER PART OF THE BATTLE FIELD)**

#### **SUMMARY**

Macbeth and Macduff finally meet face to face in the battle field.

Macbeth urges Macduff to leave as Macbeth feels he has enough of Macduff's family blood in his hands. He also informs Macduff that any man born from a woman will never harm him.

Macduff responds that he was not born of woman but through caesarian section as such he is ready to fight against Macbeth.

Macbeth says that what the witches said had a double meanings and he realizes the meaning of their prophecy. Macduff calls him a coward and coerces.

In sword fighting, Macduff manages to kill Macbeth. He cuts off Macbeth's head.

#### **CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION**

##### **1. MACDUFF**

###### **a) PATRIOTIC**

He momentarily sword fight Macbeth to defend his country to be ruled with rightful king.

###### **b) REVENGEFUL**

He momentarily sword fight against Macbeth as a revenge to his deceased family.

##### **2. MACBETH**

###### **a) REGRETIFUL**

He realizes that witches prophecy has double meaning. He loses the battle.

### **SCENE NINE (INSIDE DUNSSINANE CASTLE)**

#### **SUMMARY**

Malcolm, Siward and other thane are searching for a Scottish nobleman. Macduff and Siward's son are in the battle field.

Siward informed that his son is killed valiantly in the battle.

Macduff returns with a head of Macbeth and proclaims Malcolm as the rightful heir to the throne.

Malcolm assures Scots that Scotland will be restored to a peaceful place when he is now a king. He also vows to honor the thanes and kinsmen that helped in the fight against Macbeth with title of EARL

## **SHAKESPEAREN THEMES PORTRAYED IN THE BOOK “THE PLAY OF MACBETH”**

### **1. APPEARANCE VERSUS DECEPTIVE**

The witches echo fair is foul and foul is fair meaning what seems to be is not what actually is. This theme is portrayed through

- a) King Duncan considers the former thane of Cawdor and Macbeth the present thane of Cawdor as being faithful yet they both later rise against him.
- b) Duncan and Banquo praise the pleasant environment with fresh air at Macbeth's Castle in Inverness yet Macbeth and his wife are inside planning to kill the King Duncan.
- c) Lady Macbeth tells her husband to look like innocent flower yet he is a serpent under it when Duncan goes there for the feast.
- d) Malcolm orders English army to hide themselves with Birnam Wood so that Macbeth should not aware how many soldiers are there.

### **2. UNCONTROLLED AMBITIONS**

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth murder King Duncan because they have uncontrolled ambition for leadership to meet the prophecies of witches. They also kill Banquo because his an obstacle for their leadership.

### **3. BETRAYAL**

There are several incidents where the characters betray one another for instance:

- a) The first thane of Cawdor betrays Duncan by plotting an inversion against the King.
- b) Macbeth betrays Duncan by rising against him to the extent of murdering him.
- c) Macbeth also betrays Banquo his close friend by using the murders to prevent him from being the root of kings.
- d) The witches also betray Macbeth by the use of equivocation (half-truth) promises.
- e) Macduff betrays his family by leaving them in Scotland where they are unsafe and indeed Lady Macduff and Children are killed by the cruel Macbeth.

#### **4. FUTILITY OF CRIME/ RETRIBUTION/ CONSEQUENCES OF WHAT WE DO**

- a) Macbeth kills Duncan, Banquo, Lady Macduff and Children thinking that he will triumph over this. Contrary to his expectation, he is also killed by Macduff in revenge of his family.
- b) Lady Macbeth encourages her husband to assassinate the king and they manage to kill the King Duncan. Firstly, she suffers from the sleep walking disease and later commits suicide.

#### **5. GREED**

- a) Macbeth commits the crimes because of greed for leadership. He kills Duncan to be the King of Scotland.
- b) Later, he also kills Banquo his close friend to prevent him from being the root for the kings because witches say he will be father of Kings.

#### **6. INCALCULABILITY OF EVIL**

Macbeth commits one crime of killing Duncan to fulfill the prophecies of witches. Contrary to this, he feels not to be safe as such he kills Banquo. Banquo is a threat to him because he can suspect to have murdered King Duncan to have the kingship.

#### **7. MASCULARITY**

It is the belief that male sex orientation is superior to the female sex orientation.

For instance

- a) Lady Macbeth convinces her husband to murder the King hence Macbeth is full of vivid female attributes.

- b) Lady Macbeth also evokes the evil spirits to “unsex her” so that she should not be compassionate like a woman but be bold like a man to assassinate King Duncan.
- c) Macbeth informs his wife that “undaunted mettle” makes him hope that Lady Macbeth will only give birth to male children. This expression for Macbeth tends to express that only a courageous and fearless woman gives a baby boy not a girl.
- d) The Witches depict some elements of masculinity. They are women yet they look like men with beads. Their wicked appearance shows power and it is through their manipulations that they convince Macbeth to believe in their prophecies.
- e) Lady Macbeth’s violent and evil soliloquies testify her strength of will. This overshadows her husband’s manhood.
- f) Macbeth sends three male murderers to kill Banquo and his son Fleance to hinder the prophecy that he will be the father of Kings. He knows that female murders cannot afford to deal with great deeds.

## **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING LITERATURE ESSAYS**

- The introduction must be as brief as possible. It is awarded no marks.
- Discuss eight points in your essay. Arrange the points in logical and chronological order. Each point should be expanded in each separate paragraph.
- Support your points with relevant examples from the book.
- Use simple and straightforward English.
- Observe correct spellings, punctuation and grammar.
- The conclusion also must be as brief as possible, it is awarded no marks.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

With examples from the book “Macbeth” justify that the Macbeth is a bloody tragedy

*The play of Macbeth is violent and bloody in nature. This essay explains how Macbeth is a bloody tragedy play.*

*In the first place, the battle between Scotland and Norway at the beginning of the play, Macbeth kills multitudes of the Norwegians including the traitorous Macdonwald while defending his Country from Irish Invaders. The wounded Captain and Macbeth’s slaying of Macdonwald depicts a bloody tragedy.*

*Secondly, the King Duncan orders to execute the thane of Cawdor because of his treason in the battle between Scotland and Norway. The promotion of thaneship of Cawdor is now given to Macbeth for his heroism in the battle. The death of first thane of Cawdor again portrays how bloody the play of Macbeth is.*

*The third point is Macbeth’s murder of King Duncan while he is asleep in his castle. In the story, Macbeth kills King Duncan to meet the prophecy of witches hence they already declared that he will be the King of Scotland. The murdering of King Duncan using a dagger is perfect example of blood tragedy.*

*Additionally, Lady Macbeth smears the blood on the sleeping chamberlains or guards to be suspects. Macbeth kills Chamberlains or guards as a revenge for his murdered cousin Duncan. The spilling of blood by Macbeth on innocent guards shows a bloody and violent play.*

*After killing the King and guards, Macbeth goes on to kill Banquo his close friend because he regards him as an obstacle towards his ambition. Witches declared that Banquo will be father of Kings in Scotland. The death of Banquo portrays a bloody tragedy. Even after killing Banquo, Macbeth is still not satisfied at all, he wants to kill Banquo’s son Fleance so as to stop the prophecy of weird sisters.*

*The sixth point is the death of Lady Macduff and son shows how bloody the play is. Soon after the running away of Macduff to England. Macbeth full of fury slaughtered Macduff’s family. This is perfect example of a bloody tragedy.*

*The next point is portrayed by Lady Macbeth. Overwhelmed with guilty, Lady Macbeth becomes restless and does sleep walking that eventually takes her life. Lady Macbeth's suicide depicts a bloody tragedy.*

*The war between Macbeth and Macduff with the support of the English army is a bloody and tragic war. In this battle Siward loses his son and Macbeth. Finally, he killed by Macduff.*

*In conclusion, the death of traitor Macdonwald including multitudes of Norwegians, the execute of first thane of Cawdor, the assassination of King Duncan, the death of innocent guards, the murdering of Banquo, the death of Lady Macduff and her son, the suicide of Lady Macbeth and the death of young Siward in battle portrays that the play of Macbeth is bloody tragedy.*

In detail describe the admirable and un-admirable attributes of the following characters

- a) Macbeth
- b) Lady Macbeth

*This essay details the admirable attributes of Macbeth which has been captured in different ways for instance courageous and loyal. Contrary, Macbeth has also described with un-admirable attributes which are weak and over ambitious. The admirable attributes of Lady Macbeth portrayed in the story are accommodative and compassionate. Lady Macbeth also detailed with un-admirable attributes which are manipulative and cruel.*

*In the first place, Macbeth shows admirable attribute of courageous. He kills multitudes of Norwegians including the traitor Macdonwald in the battle between Scotland and Norway. He defends his country from Irish Invaders. Due to his courageous deeds, King Duncan promotes Macbeth to be the thane of Cawdor.*

*Apart from being courageous, Macbeth is loyal to the King. He risks his own life to fight for the King in defense of Scotland. Macbeth always know that Duncan is universally admired as a virtuous ruler as such he is King's man and subject.*

*Thirdly, Macbeth has described with un-admirable attribute. He is weak. He manipulated by his wife Lady Macbeth to kill an innocent loving King. They want to meet the prophecies of Witches because they already declared that Macbeth will be the King of Scotland. With the influence of Lady Macbeth, he could not have killed the King.*

*Apart from being weak, Macbeth is over ambitious. He eventually kills the King Duncan and becomes the King of Scotland himself. He also kills his close friend Banquo who regarded as an obstacle towards his ambition. Unfortunately, Macbeth finally died while defending his ill-gotten crown. The English army led by Malcolm and Macduff attacks Macbeth's castle. Macbeth killed because of his over ambitious.*

*Another character to be described is Lady Macbeth. She has also captured with admirable attribute of accommodative. Lady Macbeth accepts to accommodate the King Duncan and Scottish noblemen in her castle at Inverness. After exchanging good greetings, she prepares good food to serve loyal scots. Finally she provides good place to sleep for the King.*

*Lady Macbeth's another admirable attribute is compassionate. She fails to kill King Duncan on her own because he looks like her father when he gets asleep. Lady Macbeth influences her husband to assassinate the King Duncan.*

*The seventh point is that Lady Macbeth is detailed with un-admirable attribute which is manipulative. She manipulates her husband to kill the King to meets the prophecy of Witches hence they already declare that Macbeth might be the King of Scotland. Macbeth is reluctant to kill the King but is pressurized into the by his wife.*

*Finally, Lady Macbeth is cruel. She prepares a drink for King's guards to make them sleep deeply so that Macbeth might kill the King Duncan. She smears the Duncan's blood on the chamberlains or guards for them to be blamed for the death of the King.*

*In conclusion, the following characters namely Macbeth and Lady Macbeth has been described with admirable and un-admirable attributes respectively in the story.*

## **HOW IS MORAL DECADENCE HIGHLIGHTED IN THIS PLAY OF MACBETH?**

*Moral decadence refers to the act of falling into an inferior condition, state, deterioration or decay. In the play of Macbeth there is much more decadence as portrayed by some characters. This essay explains how this theme is shown in detail.*

*In the first place, the thane of Cawdor rebels against King Duncan in the battle between Scotland and Norway. He is eventually executed for his treason. This element of rebellion by thane of Cawdor to his King shows moral decadence. A thane of Cawdor is supposed to be loyal to his King and not being rebellious and treasonous.*

*Secondly, Macbeth's strong desire to be the King of Scotland shows moral decadence. He eventually assassinates the King Duncan to meets the prophecies of Witches hence they have already declared that Macbeth will be the King of Scotland. Macbeth as general must not have entertained with thoughts of becoming the King.*

*The third point is Banquo's interest in the Witches prophecy depicts moral decadence. Banquo is told that he shall be the father of Kings. Though Banquo is not all that ambitious than Macbeth, he still nursed the idea of being a father of Kings. Banquo could have rejected the prophecy and discouraged Macbeth but he could not due to moral decadence.*

*Additionally, Macbeth's murder of the King in his castle shows moral decadence. As a host, one has to protect the visitor and not allow any harm to a visitor.*

*Ironically, Macbeth slays the King while hosted in his castle. This shows moral decadence.*

*The fifth point is Lady Macbeth's manipulation of Macbeth to slay the King shows moral decadence. As a wife, Lady Macbeth should have restrained Macbeth to slay the King, instead, she encourages him to murder the King. The act of Lady Macbeth of pushing her husband to assassinate the King shows moral decadence.*

*After King Duncan's murder, Lady Macbeth smears blood on the sleeping chamberlains to put blame on them. As a woman, Lady Macbeth should not take part in the assassination of King Duncan so that Macbeth should meet the prophecy of Witches. The blaming of innocent guards for a treasonous act shows moral decadence.*

*Apart from that point, Macbeth's murder of the chamberlains in a cover up strategy highlights moral decadence. Macbeth kills the innocent guards before they defend themselves to the deeds. Anyone has a right to be heard before being judged and what Macbeth does to the chamberlains shows moral decadence.*

*Lastly, the murder of Banquo by Macbeth shows moral decadence. Macbeth and Banquo are close friends and it was immoral for Macbeth to kill his friend. Macbeth's evil act of killing his friend eventually makes him sick in the mind. He starts to see Banquo's ghost there by making his mind unstable. It's through this moral decadence that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth die tragically.*

*In the conclusion, the following characters the first thane of Cawdor, Macbeth, Banquo and Lady Macbeth has described with different thoughts of moral decadence portrayed in the play.*

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Discuss each of the following themes using four points.
  - i. Greed
  - ii. Struggle for freedom (20 marks)
2. In the book “Macbeth” in what way are the witches to be blamed for the tragedy in the play. (20 marks)
3. Compare and contrast character of the following each with four points.
  - i. Macbeth
  - ii. Lady Macbeth (20 marks)
4. “Events in Macbeth are dark and mysterious” How true is this? (20 marks)
5. In detail, explain how is the theme of betrayal portrayed in the play “Macbeth” (20 marks)
6. “Without Lady Macbeth’s manipulative nature, the play would not have ended in tragedy” Justify your answer in essay form. (20 marks)

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**THE END**

