

Macbeth

William Shakespeare

Shakespeare wrote the play for King James I, who had an interest in witches and the supernatural. He was also believed to have been distantly related to the character Banquo.

The play opens with the three witches planning to meet Macbeth. At the time, this would have been highly dramatic as the audience would have believed in witches and their powers.

Read the opening scene and answer the following questions.

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1. What are the last lines the witches say?
2. What do you think they mean?
3. Where do the witches plan to meet Macbeth?
4. When do they plan to meet Macbeth?
5. “when the battle’s lost and won” – What does this suggest about their attitude to who wins?
6. What kind of reaction would the audience in Shakespeare’s time have had to the witches?
7. What would they anticipate from the fact that Shakespeare is connecting Macbeth with the witches?

Key Quotations

Copy out the quotation, explain who says it and what it tells us.

1. For brave Macbeth--
well he deserves that
name-

2. And with his former
title greet Macbeth.

3. My noble partner

4. Look how
our partner's
rapt.

5. Say from whence
You owe this strange
intelligence?

6. most worthy
thane!

7. And make my
seated heart
knock at my ribs,

8. What, can
the devil
speak true?

Macbeth: Act 2, scene 2

Remember to support your ideas with quotations

1. How has Lady Macbeth made sure the guards will not see the murder?
2. How does Macbeth feel about killing the King? (give three examples and analyse the language of the quotation)
3. Why is Lady Macbeth angry with her husband?
4. Why doesn't Macbeth want to go back to the scene of the crime?
5. How does Lady Macbeth react to his fears?
6. Look at Macbeth's last two lines, explain how he feels at this point.

Task: Explain how Lady Macbeth's character has changed / developed since we first met her.

In Act 3, Macbeth says to Lady Macbeth:

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed.

Q1. What is he referring to?

Q2. What does the quotation mean?

Q3. What has changed in his relationship with his wife?