

MACBETH'S DOWNFALL

MACBETH IS BRAVE IN BATTLE; HEROIC **(ACT I. 2)**

- **The bleeding captain calls him 'brave Macbeth' (Act I. 2. 16) and 'valour's minion' (Act I.2.19).**
- Macbeth marched through the enemy, laughing at chance, and killed the rebel Macdonald with a single stroke of his sword.
- The Norwegian army fled; so the Irish army attacked, but Macbeth and Banquo were completely unafraid and fought with twice as much force as before.

MACBETH MEETS THE WITCHES **(ACT I.3)**

- Macbeth is unsettled by the witches and wants to know more / Banquo is much less bothered by them.

BANQUO: **My noble partner,**

 You greet with present grace and great prediction

 Of noble having and of royal hope,

 That he seems rapt withal.

MACBETH REACTS TO BECOMING THANE OF CAWDOR **(ACT I.3-4)**

- Macbeth believes he's going to be king, and is happy about it.

MACBETH (aside): **Two truths are told,**

 As happy prologues to the swelling act

 Of the imperial theme. (Act I. 3. 117)

- Macbeth isn't sure if the prophecy is good or bad. If it's bad, why did they tell him the truth about his promotion? If it's good, why is he imagining killing Duncan, a thought so horrible it makes his hair stand on end and his heart pound.

MACBETH: **Present fears**

 Are less than horrible imaginings. (ACT I. 3. 140)

Later, after Duncan makes Malcolm his heir by naming prince of Cumberland, Macbeth realises he must overcome that obstacle or give up.

MACBETH: **Stars, hide your fires;**

**Let light not see my black and deep desires.
The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.** (ACT I. 4. 55)

This is immediately followed by Duncan calling Macbeth '**valiant**' (ACT I.4.56) and '**a peerless kinsman**' (ACT I.4.60).

LADY MACBETH PLANS TO EXPLOIT HIS AMBITION **(ACT I.5)**

Macbeth sends his wife a letter reporting the witches' prophecies. She immediately resolves to make him king.

She believes his nature is '**too full o' th' milk of human kindness**' to strike (ACT I.5.16).

LADY MACBETH: **Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet would wrongly win.** (ACT I. 5. 21)

When she hears Macbeth is returning, she says:

LADY MACBETH: **Come you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty.** (ACT I. 5.44)

When Macbeth arrives, he says little, just the king's plans – he does not mention the witches, or his advancement, directly – he leaves that to her.

MACBETH BRIEFLY REJECTS LADY MACBETH'S PLAN **(ACT I.7)**

After hosting Duncan in his castle, Macbeth is stricken by doubt and cannot commit the act.

In a soliloquy, he says that the murder will not be over and done with.

- Violence breeds violence: '**bloody instructions, which, being taught, return / To plague th' inventor**' (ACT I.7.10)
- He is the king's host and kinsman
- The king is a great and kind man whose death will be mourned across the land.

**Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives.
Words to the head of deeds too cold breath gives. (ACT II.1.61)**

Macbeth tried to say 'Amen' when one of the sleeping servants said 'God bless us!', but the word stuck in his throat.

As he committed the murder, Macbeth imagined he heard a voice saying:

**MACBETH: Still it cried, 'Sleep no more!' to all the house.
'Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more.' (ACT II.2.41)**

**MACBETH: I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on 't again I dare not. (ACT II.2.50)**

Macbeth can't go back to the crime scene to tamper with it; Lady Macbeth does.

**MACBETH: To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.
Wake Duncan with thy knocking. I would thou couldst. (ACT II.2.72)**

MACBETH IS CROWNED; MALCOLM AND DONALBAIN FLEE (ACT II.3-4)

After Macbeth 'officially' finds Duncan's body, he says to the lords –

**MACBETH: Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had lived a blessed time, for from this instant
There's nothing serious in mortality.
All is but toys. Renown and grace is dead.
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of. (ACT II.3.91)**

The king's sons flee for fear of being killed next. This makes them prime suspects.

Macbeth is crowned king.

**The armed rhinoceros, or th' Hyrcan tiger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves,
Shall never tremble. Or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword.
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence! (ACT III.4.107)**

Lady Macbeth asks the lords to hurry from the room.

MACBETH: It will have blood, they say. Blood will have blood. (ACT II.4.122)

Macbeth worries about Macduff, who did not come to the banquet.

**MACBETH: I will tomorrow –
And betimes I will – to the weird sisters.
More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good,
All causes shall give way. I am in blood,
Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
Strange things I have in head, that will to hand,
Which must be acted ere they may be scanned. (ACT III.4.140)**

SECOND MEETING WITH THE WITCHES (ACT IV.I)

The witches plan to undo Macbeth by making him overconfident.

**HECATE: He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear. (ACT III.5.31)**

As Macbeth approaches -

LADY MACBETH'S SUICIDE; MACBETH'S FINAL SOLILOQUY

(ACT V.1-5)

Lady Macbeth sleepwalks, rubbing her hands of Duncan, his chamberlains, Banquo, and the Macduff family's blood.

As Malcolm's army marches up to Scotland many lords abandon Macbeth.

MACBETH: **Let them fly all.**
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of a woman?

MACBETH: **I have lived long enough. My way of life**
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have, but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath
Which the poor heart would fain deny and dare not. (ACT V.3.30)

Macbeth tells the doctor that he would praise him above all others if he could find out what's wrong with his country and provide Macbeth with the solution.

Women cry in the castle.

MACBETH: **I have almost forgot the taste of fears.**
The time has been my sense would have cooled
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
As life were in't. I have supped full with horrors.
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts
Cannot once start me. (ACT V.5.15)

Macbeth hears news of his wife's suicide.

MACBETH: **She should have died hereafter.**

**There would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. (ACT V.5.28)**

BIRNAM WOOD MOVES

(ACT V.5)

A messenger tells Macbeth that Birnam wood is moving on Dunsinane hill. Macbeth begins to doubt the witches' prophecies as lies which sounded like truth.

**MACBETH: There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.

I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,
And wish th' estate o' th' world were now undone. –
Ring the alarum-bell! – Blow, wind! Come, wrack!
At least we'll die with harness on our back. (ACT V.5.51)**

BRIEF REDEMPTION FOR MACBETH BEFORE MACDUFF KILLS HIM

(ACT V.8)

Macduff confronts Macbeth. Macbeth still believes no man of woman born can harm him, but Macduff tells him that he was 'from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped.' (ACT V.8.16)

**MACBETH: Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,

For it hath cowed my better part of man!
And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter with us in a double sense,
That keep the word of promise to our ear,**

And break it to our hope. I'll not fight with thee.

MACDUFF:

Then yield thee, coward,

And live to be the show and gaze o' th' time.

We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,

Painted on a pole, and underwrit,

'Here may you see the tyrant'.

MACBETH:

I will not yield,

To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,

And to be baited with the rabble's curse.

Though Birnam Wood be come to Dunsinane,

And thou opposed, being of no woman born,

Yet I will try the last. Before my body

I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff,

And damned be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!' (ACT V.8.34)