

from THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

By William Shakespeare

A HERE'S HOW

Vocabulary

I did not know the word *heath*, so I looked it up in the dictionary. The dictionary defines *heath* as “an area of wild, relatively flat land where low, shrubby plants grow.” This definition helps me picture the place where the witches want to meet Macbeth.

B HERE'S HOW

Literary Focus

I know that the full name of this play is *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. So Macbeth must be the tragic hero. I think the witches will cause something to happen which will lead to the hero's downfall. I will keep reading to see if I am right.

C HERE'S HOW

Reading Focus

Fair and *foul* sound like opposites. In this line, however, the witches say, “Fair is foul, and foul is fair.” I have a **question** about that. What does it mean that the witches talk about these two opposite ideas together, as if they were the same?

Act I Scene 1. *An open place.*

Thunder and lightning. Enter three WITCHES.

First Witch.

When shall we three meet again?

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch.

When the hurlyburly's done,

When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch.

That will be ere¹ the set of sun.

First Witch.

Where the place?

Second Witch. Upon the heath. **A**

Third Witch.

There to meet with Macbeth. **B**

First Witch.

I come, Graymalkin.²

Second Witch.

10 Paddock³ calls.

Third Witch. Anon!⁴

All.

Fair is foul, and foul is fair. **C**

Hover through the fog and filthy air.

[*Exeunt.*]⁵

1. In Shakespeare's time, **ere** meant “before.”
2. **Graymalkin** is the first witch's attendant or familiar, a gray cat.
3. **Paddock** is a toad, the second witch's familiar.
4. **Anon** means “soon.” The third witch means they will meet again soon.
5. **Exeunt** is a stage direction that means “they exit.”



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IN OTHER WORDS Three witches plan to meet with Macbeth that evening, after a battle has been fought.

Scene 2. *A camp.*

Alarum within. Enter KING DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, with ATTENDANTS, meeting a bleeding CAPTAIN. **D**

King.

What bloody man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state. **E**

Malcolm. This is the sergeant

Who like a good and hardy soldier fought
'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!
Say to the king the knowledge of the broil⁶
As thou didst leave it.

Captain. Doubtful it stood,

10 As two spent swimmers, that do cling together
And choke their art.⁷ The merciless Macdonwald—
Worthy to be a rebel for to that

6. A **broil** is a quarrel or fight.

7. Here, **choke their art** means “hinder each other’s ability to swim.”

D **HERE’S HOW**

Vocabulary

I have never seen the word *Alarum* before. It looks a lot like the word *alarm*, which I know is a warning sound like a bell or horn. When I read on, I see that King Duncan arrives. *Alarum* is probably a signal that announces the king’s arrival.

E **YOUR TURN**

Vocabulary

A person’s *plight* is his or her situation. What is the *plight* of the man the king asks about?

A YOUR TURN

Vocabulary

Look up the word *disdaining* in the dictionary. Write the definition. What does the Captain mean when he says that Macbeth was “*disdaining Fortune*” in the battle against Macdonwald?

B QUICK CHECK

What is King Duncan’s relationship to Macbeth?

C YOUR TURN

Reading Focus

The King mentions Macbeth and another captain, Banquo, in the same line. What **questions** come to mind about the relationship between Macbeth and Banquo?

The multiplying villainies of nature
Do swarm upon him—from the Western Isles⁸
Of kerns and gallowglasses⁹ is supplied;
And Fortune, on his damnèd quarrel smiling,
Showed like a rebel’s whore: but all’s too weak:
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel, **A**
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valor’s minion¹⁰ carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave;
Which nev’r shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseamed him from the nave to th’ chops,¹¹
And fixed his head upon our battlements.

20

30

King.

O valiant cousin! Worthy gentleman! **B**

Captain.

As whence the sun ’gins his reflection¹²
Shipwracking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seemed to come
Discomfort swells. Mark, King of Scotland, mark:
No sooner justice had, with valor armed,
Compelled these skipping kerns to trust their heels
But the Norweyan¹³ lord, surveying vantage,¹⁴
With furbished arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.

King. Dismayed not this

Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo? **C**

Captain. Yes;

As¹⁵ sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.

8. The **Western Isles** are islands off the west coast of Scotland.
9. **Kerns and gallowglasses** are foot soldiers.
10. A **minion** is a favorite servant or follower.
11. **Unseamed . . . chops** means split his enemy’s body from navel to jaws.
12. When the sun **’gins his reflection**, it rises.
13. **Norweyan** is an old-fashioned way of saying “Norwegian.”
14. **Surveying vantage** refers to seeing an opportunity.
15. Here, the meaning of **as** is “No more than.”

40 If I say sooth,¹⁶ I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks;
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe.
Except¹⁷ they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,¹⁸
I cannot tell— **D**
But I am faint; my gashes cry for help.

King.

So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;
They smack of honor both. Go get him surgeons.

[Exit CAPTAIN attended.]

[Enter ROSS and ANGUS.] **E**

Who comes here?

50 **Malcolm.** The worthy Thane¹⁹ of Ross.

Lennox.

What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look
That seems to²⁰ speak things strange.

Ross. God save the king!

King.

Whence cam'st thou, worthy thane?

Ross. From Fife, great king;

Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
And fan our people cold.

Norway himself,²¹ with terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor

60 The Thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict; **F**
Till that Bellona's bridegroom,²² lapped in proof,²³

16. **Sooth** means "truth."

17. Here, **except** means "unless."

18. To **memorize another Golgotha** means to "make the place as memorable as Golgotha," where Jesus Christ was crucified.

19. **Thane** is a Scottish title of nobility.

20. Here, **seems to** is short for "seems about to."

21. **Norway himself** refers to the king of Norway.

22. Bellona is the goddess of war. Macbeth, who is a great soldier, is called her mate, or **Bellona's bridegroom**.

23. Someone who is **lapped in proof** is wearing armor.

D YOUR TURN

Literary Focus

Re-read the Captain's descriptions of Macbeth's actions in battle. What heroic qualities does this **tragic hero** show?

E QUICK CHECK

Which character or characters come onstage now? Which character or characters leave the stage? Underline the stage directions that tell you what is happening onstage in the middle of this scene.

F YOUR TURN

Reading Focus

Re-read Ross's description of the disloyal Thane of Cawdor. What **questions** can you ask about Cawdor based on these lines?

A LITERARY ANALYSIS

How does King Duncan react to the news of the battle? What do his decisions tell you about the kind of ruler he is?

B HERE'S HOW

Literary Focus

Macbeth is about to gain a new title. This title comes from being a hero in battle. It also comes because of the betrayal of the old Thane of Cawdor. I think this might be a clue to something that will happen later in the play. Maybe Macbeth's **tragic flaw** will lead him to betray the king also. Or maybe Macbeth will be betrayed, and that will lead to his downfall.

Confronted him with self-comparisons,²⁴
Point against point, rebellious arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish²⁵ spirit: and, to conclude,
The victory fell on us.

King. Great happiness!

Ross. That now
Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition;²⁶
Nor would we deign him burial of his men
Till he disbursèd, at Saint Colme's Inch,²⁷
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

70

King.
No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our bosom interest:²⁸ go pronounce his present²⁹ death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth. **A**

Ross.
I'll see it done.

King.
What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won. **B**

[*Exeunt.*]

IN OTHER WORDS The king discusses the battle with some of his thanes, or lords. The king learns that the Thane of Cawdor has betrayed him to his enemy in the battle. One of the king's captains, Macbeth, has fought heroically. The king decides to execute the Thane of Cawdor and give Macbeth his title.

24. **Self-comparisons** are defensive moves in fighting.
25. A **lavish** spirit would be rude.
26. Here, **composition** refers to peace terms.
27. **Saint Colme's Inch** is an island off the coast of Scotland.
28. The king's **bosom interest** refers to his heart's trust. He will no longer trust the old Thane of Cawdor.
29. Here, **present** means "immediate." The king will have the Thane of Cawdor killed right away, at present.

Scene 3. *A heath.*

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES.

First Witch.

Where hast thou been, sister?

Second Witch.

Killing swine.

Third Witch.

Sister, where thou?

First Witch.

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,

And mounched, and mounched, and mounched. "Give me,"

quoth I.

"Aroint thee,³⁰ witch!" the rump-fed ronyon³¹ cries.

Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' *Tiger*:

10 But in a sieve³² I'll thither sail, **C**

And, like a rat without a tail,

I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do. **D**

Second Witch.

I'll give thee a wind.

First Witch.

Th' art kind.

Third Witch.

And I another.

First Witch.

I myself have all the other;

And the very ports they blow,³³

All the quarters that they know

I' th' shipman's card.³⁴

I'll drain him dry as hay:

30. **Aroint thee** means "begone."

31. The witch calls the woman who insulted her a **rump-fed ronyon**—that is, a scabby creature with a fat rear end.

32. **But in a sieve** refers to witches' supposed power to sail in sieves, which are full of holes.

33. The **ports they blow** refers to the harbors where the wind blows the sailors.

34. A **card** is an old-fashioned word for a compass.

C YOUR TURN

Vocabulary

The word *thither* means "there." Re-read the line "But in a sieve I'll *thither* sail," replacing the word *thither* with "there." Rewrite the word order to help you make sense of the line.

D YOUR TURN

Reading Focus

What **questions** do you have about the First Witch's speech in these lines?

A LITERARY ANALYSIS

The First Witch tells about the terrible plans she has for the sailor. She will send storms to wreck his ship and keep him from sleeping for days. Why do you think Shakespeare includes these details that seem to have nothing to do with Macbeth?

B HERE'S HOW

Literary Focus

I think the sound of the drum in this scene increases the sense of drama. This drama is probably an important part of making the **tragedy** seem dismal, or sad.

C HERE'S HOW

Reading Focus

I remember seeing the words *foul* and *fair* together earlier in the play. I have a couple of **questions**. Why does Macbeth repeat these words here? What is the relationship between Macbeth and the witches? I think Macbeth and the witches share some kind of close bond.

20 Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his penthouse lid;³⁵
He shall live a man forbid.³⁶
Weary sev'nights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak,³⁷ and pine:
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tossed.
Look what I have. **A**

Second Witch.

Show me, show me.

First Witch.

Here I have a pilot's thumb,
30 Wracked as homeward he did come.

[*Drum within.*]

Third Witch.

A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come. **B**

All.

The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters³⁸ of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! The charm's wound up.

[*Enter MACBETH and BANQUO.*]

Macbeth.

So foul and fair a day I have not seen. **C**

Banquo.

40 How far is't called to Forres?³⁹ What are these
So withered, and so wild in their attire,

35. A **penthouse lid** refers to an eyelid.

36. Here **forbid** means "cursed."

37. **Peak** means "grow pale."

38. **Posters** refers to travelers.

39. **Forres** is a town in northeast Scotland. Duncan's castle is located there.

That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' earth,
And yet are on't? Live you, or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy⁴⁰ finger laying
Upon her skinny lips. You should⁴¹ be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

Macbeth. Speak, if you can: what are you?

First Witch.

50 All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

Second Witch.

All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

Third Witch.

All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter! **D**

Banquo.

Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? **E** I' th' name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal:⁴² to me you speak not.
60 If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favors nor your hate.

First Witch. Hail!

Second Witch. Hail!

Third Witch. Hail!

First Witch.

Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

D QUICK CHECK

The witches call Macbeth by three titles. Underline the one he has already. Circle the one the king has just given to him. Put a star by the one that applies only to the future.

E LITERARY ANALYSIS

Banquo's words give a clue as to how Macbeth reacts to the witches' predictions. What does Macbeth do? Why do you think Macbeth reacts this way to news that he will be king some day?

40. Here, **choppy** means "chapped or sore."

41. Here, **should** means "must."

42. The phrase **rapt withal** means "entranced by it."

A YOUR TURN

Literary Focus

Lines 67–69 contrast the fates of Macbeth and Banquo. How do these lines suggest that Macbeth will be the **tragic hero** of the play?

B HERE'S HOW

Language Coach

I know that the word *strange* has **multiple meanings** depending on its context. Here, I think Macbeth means that the information the witches shared is “unusual,” and that it is unusual that they are even making these predictions.

C YOUR TURN

Vocabulary

The word *prophetic* means “containing a prediction of the future.” Do you think the witches’ “*prophetic greeting*” gave Macbeth good news about his future, or bad? Why do you think this?

D YOUR TURN

Literary Focus

Based on his speech here, what do you think Macbeth’s **tragic flaw** might be?

Second Witch.

Not so happy,⁴³ yet much happier.

Third Witch.

Thou shalt get⁴⁴ kings, though thou be none. **A**

70 So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

First Witch.

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

Macbeth.

Stay, you imperfect⁴⁵ speakers, tell me more:
By Sinel’s death I know I am Thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence?⁴⁶ **B** Or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
80 With such prophetic greeting? **C** Speak, I charge you. **D**

[WITCHES *vanish*]

IN OTHER WORDS The three witches gather again. They meet two of the king’s captains, Macbeth and Banquo. The witches predict that Macbeth will become Thane of Cawdor and eventually king. They say that Banquo will never be king, but that his children will be kings. Macbeth tries to ask for clarification but the witches disappear.

What Happens Next

Banquo and Macbeth consider the Witches’ prophecies that Banquo’s children will be kings and Macbeth will be made Thane, or lord, of Cawdor. The king’s messengers arrive to tell Macbeth

43. Here, **happy** means “lucky.”
44. To **get** stands for to beget or give birth to.
45. Here, **imperfect** means “unfinished,” so the imperfect speakers have not finished saying what Macbeth wants to hear.
46. **Say from whence. . . intelligence?** In other words, “How do you have this information?”

that the Thane of Cawdor has been sentenced to death for treason and that Macbeth will replace him. Macbeth feels danger may be ahead, but he doesn't know why. Macbeth and Banquo meet with the king and Macbeth receives the title of thane. Lady Macbeth reads a letter from her husband telling her his news. A messenger tells Lady Macbeth that the king and Macbeth are on their way.

Scene 5. *Inverness. Macbeth's castle.* **E**

Lady Macbeth.

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. **F** Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal⁴⁷ thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! **G** Make thick my blood,
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature⁴⁸
Shake my fell⁴⁹ purpose, nor keep peace between
10 Th' effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall,⁵⁰ you murd'ring ministers,⁵¹
Wherever in your sightless⁵² substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall⁵³ thee in the dunnest⁵⁴ smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry "Hold, hold!" **H**

[*Enter* MACBETH.]

Great Glamis! Worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
20 Thy letters have transported me beyond

-
47. One meaning of **mortal** is "deadly."
48. **compunctious** . . . **nature**: natural feelings of compassion.
49. One meaning of the word **fell** is "savage or cruel."
50. **Gall** is a bitter substance. It can also refer to bile in the body.
51. **Murd'ring ministers** are agents of murder.
52. Here, **sightless** means "invisible."
53. **Pall** means "cover someone or something with a shroud or burial cloth."
54. **Dunnest** means "darkest."

E **QUICK CHECK**

Where does Scene 5 take place?

F **HERE'S HOW**

Vocabulary

Duncan is entering the castle under the *battlements*. I think that *battlements* must be a part of the castle near the top. I looked the word up in the dictionary, and I was right! *Battlements* are walls or railings around the top of a fortified building.

G **HERE'S HOW**

Reading Focus

Lady Macbeth asks the spirits to make her less like a woman. I have a **question** about that. In the 1600s, what qualities did people believe women had?

H **YOUR TURN**

Reading Focus

What **questions** might you ask about Lady Macbeth as her husband and King Duncan approach the castle?

A QUICK CHECK

What is Lady Macbeth suggesting that her husband do?

B HERE'S HOW

Vocabulary

I had to look up the word *sovereign* in the dictionary. It is an adjective that means "greatest" or "superior to all others." That sounds like a word describing a king or ruler. It seems Lady Macbeth is saying that their actions will bring them power.

C YOUR TURN

Literary Focus

Re-read Lady Macbeth's speech here and in lines 1–37. How might her suggestion lead to **tragedy** for her husband?

This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

Macbeth. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here tonight.

Lady Macbeth. And when goes hence?

Macbeth.
Tomorrow, as he purposes.

Lady Macbeth. O, never

Shall sun that morrow see!

Your face, my thane, is as a book where men

30 May read strange matters. To beguile the time,⁵⁵

Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,

Your hand, your tongue: look like th' innocent flower,

But be the serpent under't. **A** He that's coming

Must be provided for: and you shall put

This night's great business into my dispatch;⁵⁶

Which shall to all our nights and days to come

Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom. **B C**

55. To **beguile the time** means to "deceive those around you."

56. Here, **dispatch** means "management."



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Macbeth.

We will speak further. **D**

Lady Macbeth. Only look up clear.⁵⁷

40 To alter favor ever is to fear.⁵⁸

Leave all the rest to me.

[*Exeunt.*]

IN OTHER WORDS Lady Macbeth asks the spirits to make her cruel and murderous, not like a woman. She tells her husband to pretend to welcome Duncan while really planning to murder the king. Lady Macbeth says she will take care of the rest of the plans.

What Happens Next

King Duncan arrives, and is greeted by Lady Macbeth. He asks to be taken to Macbeth.

Scene 7. *Macbeth's castle.*

Hautboys.⁵⁹ Torches. Enter a SEWER,⁶⁰ and diverse SERVANTS with dishes and service, and pass over the stage. Then enter

MACBETH. **E**

Macbeth.

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly. If th' assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease,⁶¹ success; **F** that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all—here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,

57. Here, **clear** means “undisturbed.”

58. **To alter . . . fear:** In other words, “to show an altered face is dangerous.”

59. **Hautboys** are oboes, a kind of wind instrument.

60. Here, the **sewer** is a butler.

61. **His surcease** refers to Duncan's death.

D LITERARY ANALYSIS

Do you think Macbeth was already thinking about murdering the king, or was Lady Macbeth's idea a surprise to him? Why do you think this?

E QUICK CHECK

Who is on the stage with Macbeth as he begins his speech? Circle the words in the stage directions that let you know this.

F YOUR TURN

Vocabulary

Circle nearby words that may give you clues about the meaning of the word *trammel* in line 3. Now look up the word in the dictionary and write the definition here.

A YOUR TURN

Literary Focus

In lines 6–12, Macbeth discusses the possible results of killing the king. Restate his ideas in your own words to explain how this action might lead to **tragedy** for Macbeth.

B YOUR TURN

Reading Focus

Macbeth gives three reasons he should not kill King Duncan. What is one **question** you have about these reasons?

C HERE'S HOW

Vocabulary

I am not sure what the word *cherubin* means, but I do recognize the first part of the word. It looks like *cherub*, which is an angel of some kind. In the dictionary, I see that I am right. *Cherubin* are winged angels.

D YOUR TURN

Literary Focus

What quality does Macbeth identify as his own **tragic flaw**?

We'd jump⁶² the life to come. But in these cases
 We still have judgment here; that we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
 10 To plague th' inventor: this even-handed⁶³ justice
 Commends⁶⁴ th' ingredients of our poisoned chalice
 To our own lips. **A** He's here in double trust:
 First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
 Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
 Who should against his murderer shut the door,
 Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
 Hath borne his faculties⁶⁵ so meek, hath been
 So clear⁶⁶ in his great office, that his virtues
 Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
 20 The deep damnation of his taking-off;⁶⁷ **B**
 And pity, like a naked newborn babe,
 Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin horsed
 Upon the sightless couriers⁶⁸ of the air, **C**
 Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
 That⁶⁹ tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
 To prick the sides of my intent, but only
 Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
 And falls on th' other— **D**

[Enter LADY MACBETH.]

How now! What news?

Lady Macbeth.

30 He has almost supped. Why have you left the chamber?

Macbeth.

Hath he asked for me?

-
- 62. Here, **jump** means "risk." Macbeth knows he will be condemned to hell for the sin of murder, so he is risking the afterlife.
 - 63. **Even-handed** means "fair and impartial."
 - 64. Here, **commends** means "offers."
 - 65. One meaning of the word **faculties** is "powers."
 - 66. Here, **clear** means "clean and pure."
 - 67. **Taking-off** refers to murdering Duncan.
 - 68. **Sightless couriers** is a poetic way of referring to winds.
 - 69. Here, **that** means "so that."

Lady Macbeth. Know you not he has?

Macbeth.

We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honored me of late, and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon. **E**

IN OTHER WORDS Macbeth reviews arguments against committing the planned murder. Duncan has been a good king. He is under Macbeth's protection, both as his king and as his guest. The king and others have given Macbeth many honors, and he wants to enjoy the praises. In addition, carrying out this murder will damn Macbeth to hell. All he has to gain is his ambition to rule. He tells his wife that he will not do it.

What Happens Next

As Macbeth expresses hesitation about killing the king, Lady Macbeth tells her husband not to be a coward. She claims she could kill her own infant if she wanted to do so as much as Macbeth has wanted to kill Duncan. Lady Macbeth says she will make sure the king's chamberlains, or attendants, are drunk so they cannot protect the king. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth decide to use the chamberlains' own daggers to commit the murder. They agree to smear the chamberlains with blood as they sleep so it will look like the king was killed by his own men. Macbeth says he will commit the murder.

Act II Scene 1. *Inverness. Court of Macbeth's castle.*

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE, with a torch before him (on the way to bed).

Banquo.

How goes the night, boy?

E HERE'S HOW

Literary Focus

Macbeth says that he does not want to kill King Duncan, because the king has honored him. To me, Macbeth seems very proud of his honor and new titles. He wants to enjoy them as much as he can. Maybe caring too much about his rank is part of his **tragic flaw**.

A LITERARY ANALYSIS

How does the opening of Act II, Scene 1 contribute to the threatening and gloomy mood created by the witches in Act I, Scene 1?

B YOUR TURN

Vocabulary

Repose means "rest." Write a sentence using the word *repose*.

C LITERARY ANALYSIS

Banquo tells about the gifts that Duncan has given to members of Macbeth's household. How do Duncan's actions support what you already know about the king?

D QUICK CHECK

Which of the witches' predictions for Macbeth have come true so far?

Fleance.

The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.

Banquo.

And she goes down at twelve

Fleance. I take't, 'tis later, sir.

Banquo.

Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry⁷⁰ in heaven.

Their candles are all out. Take thee that too. **A**

A heavy summons⁷¹ lies like lead upon me,

And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,

Restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature

10 Gives way to in repose! **B**

[Enter MACBETH, and a SERVANT with a torch.]

Give me my sword!

Who's there?

Macbeth.

A friend.

Banquo.

What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed:

He hath been in unusual pleasure, and

Sent forth great largess to your offices:⁷²

This diamond he greets your wife withal,

By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up⁷³

In measureless content. **C**

20 **Macbeth.** Being unprepared,

Our will became the servant to defect,⁷⁴

Which else should free have wrought.

Banquo. All's well.

I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:

To you they have showed some truth. **D**

70. **Husbandry** refers to economizing. Here, it specifically refers to putting out the lights to save money on candles.

71. The **summons**, or call, here is a call to sleep.

72. The king's **largess to your offices** refers to gifts he has given out in Macbeth's servants' quarters.

73. Here, **shut up** means "concluded."

74. Here, giving in **to defect** refers to making insufficient preparations.

Macbeth. I think not of them.

Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.

30 **Banquo.** At your kind'st leisure.

Macbeth.

If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,⁷⁵
It shall make honor for you. **E**

Banquo. So⁷⁶ I lose none

In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised⁷⁷ and allegiance clear,⁷⁸
I shall be counseled. **F**

Macbeth. Good repose the while!

Banquo.

Thanks, sir. The like to you!

[Exit BANQUO, with FLEANCE.]

Macbeth.

Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
40 She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

[Exit SERVANT.]

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible⁷⁹
To feeling as to sight, or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain? **G**

75. When Macbeth asks Banquo to **cleave** . . . 'tis, he wants Banquo to join his cause, when the time comes and the witches' prophecy comes true.

76. Here, **so** means "provided that, or as long as."

77. Here, **franchised** means "free (from guilt)."

78. Here, **clear** means "clean or free."

79. Here, something **sensible** is perceptible to the senses.

E LITERARY ANALYSIS

In line 26, Macbeth claims that he does not think about the witches' words. Does his suggestion to Banquo in lines 31–32 support his claim? Why or why not?

F YOUR TURN

Literary Focus

Banquo tells Macbeth he is willing to listen to Macbeth's proposal, as long as he can keep his honor. How does Banquo's character compare or contrast with the character of Macbeth, the **tragic** hero?

G HERE'S HOW

Reading Focus

Here, Macbeth is imagining that he sees a dagger. I have some **questions** about people's beliefs in Shakespeare's times. Where did people think visions came from? What did they think the visions meant? How might their reaction be different than our reaction today?

A YOUR TURN

Language Coach

The word *suits* can have **multiple meanings**. Write two possible definitions of *suits* on the lines below and indicate which meaning is intended in line 68.

B QUICK CHECK

Macbeth says that King Duncan is about to go either to heaven or to hell. What does Macbeth mean?

I see thee yet, in form as palpable⁸⁰
As this which now I draw.
50 Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses,
Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still;
And on thy blade and dudgeon⁸¹ gouts⁸² of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing.
It is the bloody business which informs⁸³
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse⁸⁴
The curtained sleep; witchcraft celebrates
60 Pale Hecate's⁸⁵ offerings; and withered murder,
Alarumed⁸⁶ by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's⁸⁷ ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it.⁸⁸ **A** Whiles I threat, he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

[A bell rings.]

70 I go, and it is done: the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven, or to hell. **B**

[Exit.]

-
- 80. Here, **palpable** means "obvious."
 - 81. The **dudgeon** of a dagger is its hilt or handle.
 - 82. **Gouts** are large drops of a substance, such as blood.
 - 83. Here, **informs** means "gives shape to something."
 - 84. Here, **abuse** means "trick or deceive."
 - 85. **Hecate's** are things belonging to Hecate (HEHK IHT), the goddess of sorcery.
 - 86. **Alarumed** means "called to action."
 - 87. **Tarquin's** refers to something belonging to Tarquin, a Roman tyrant who raped a woman named Lucrece.
 - 88. **Now suits with it** means "now seems suitable to it."

IN OTHER WORDS

Duncan has been good to everyone in Macbeth's household. At night, Macbeth meets Banquo. Macbeth claims not to remember what the witches said to him. Still, he asks for Banquo's loyalty if he does become king. Then Macbeth prepares to kill Duncan. He is nervous and sees visions of a bloody dagger. As a bell rings, Macbeth heads toward Duncan's room.

Scene 2. Macbeth's castle.

Enter LADY MACBETH.

Lady Macbeth.

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quenched them hath given me fire. **C**

Hark! Peace!

It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night.⁸⁹ He is about it.

The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms

Do mock their charge with snores. I have drugged their
possets,⁹⁰

That death and nature do contend about them,

10 Whether they live or die.

Macbeth (*within*). Who's there? What, ho?

Lady Macbeth.

Alack, I am afraid they have awaked.

And 'tis not done! Th' attempt and not the deed

Confounds⁹¹ us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;

He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled

My father as he slept, I had done't. **D**

[*Enter* MACBETH.]

89. **It was the owl . . . stern'st good-night:** The owl's call is supposed to predict death. The bellman was a person who rang a bell outside a condemned person's cell the night before his execution, to warn him to confess his sins.

90. **Possets** are bedtime drinks.

91. **Confounds** means "ruins."

C**YOUR TURN****Language Coach**

Two possible meanings for the word *quenched* are "satisfied" and "put out." Which meaning do you think makes more sense in this context? Remember, Lady Macbeth is contrasting the guards being *quenched* with her own gaining of fire, or boldness.

D**QUICK CHECK**

In your own words, what does Lady Macbeth mean when she says, "Had he not resembled / My father as he slept, I had done't"?

A HERE'S HOW

Literary Focus

Macbeth says that he has killed King Duncan. I think Macbeth must have given in to his **tragic flaw** of wanting to be king. His crime is probably only the first step of the terrible **tragedy** that will happen to him.

B LITERARY ANALYSIS

Re-read lines 18–26. How would you describe Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's behavior and state of mind?

C YOUR TURN

Reading Focus

In lines 34–42, Macbeth describes how he cannot even answer "Amen" when he hears the guards' blessing. What is one **question** you have about this event?

My husband!

Macbeth.

I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise? **A**

Lady Macbeth.

I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.

20 Did not you speak?

Macbeth. When?

Lady Macbeth. Now.

Macbeth. As I descended?

Lady Macbeth. Ay.

Macbeth. Hark!

Who lies i' th' second chamber? **B**

Lady Macbeth. Donalbain.

Macbeth. This is a sorry sight.

Lady Macbeth.

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Macbeth.

30 There's one did laugh in 's sleep, and one cried "Murder!"
That they did wake each other. I stood and heard them.
But they did say their prayers, and addressed them
Again to sleep.

Lady Macbeth. There are two lodged together.

Macbeth.

One cried "God bless us!" and "Amen" the other,
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands:
List'ning their fear, I could not say "Amen,"
When they did say "God bless us!"

Lady Macbeth. Consider it not so deeply.

Macbeth.

40 But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?
I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat. **C**

Lady Macbeth. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.



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D QUICK CHECK

In your own words, explain why Macbeth will have trouble sleeping in the future.

Macbeth.

Methought I heard a voice cry “Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep”—the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the raveled sleave⁹² of care,
The death of each day’s life, sore labor’s bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature’s second course,⁹³
50 Chief nourisher in life’s feast—

Lady Macbeth. What do you mean?

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.” **D**

Lady Macbeth.

Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,

92. **raveled sleave:** tangled thread.

93. The **second course** refers to sleep. The first course is food.

A HERE'S HOW

Reading Focus

I have a **question** about Macbeth's behavior. Why is he afraid, now that he has already committed the murder? What exactly does he think will happen if he goes back and sees the dead king? In the speech before this one, Macbeth talks a lot about praying. I think Macbeth is worried that he will be judged by God and will go to hell.

B LITERARY ANALYSIS

Lady Macbeth says that it is easy for the couple to wash away the murder they have committed. Make a prediction about whether or not she is right. What do you think will happen to Macbeth and his wife as a result of the murder?

60 You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macbeth. I'll go no more.

I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on 't again I dare not. **A**

Lady Macbeth. Infirm of purpose!

70 Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures. 'Tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.

[*Exit. Knock within.*]

Macbeth. Whence is that knocking?

How is't with me, when every noise appalls me?
What hands are here? Ha! They pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,⁹⁴
Making the green one red.

[*Enter LADY MACBETH.*]

Lady Macbeth.

80 My hands are of your color, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. (*Knock.*) I hear a knocking
At the south entry. Retire we to our chamber.
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it then! **B** Your constancy
Hath left you unattended.⁹⁵ (*Knock.*) Hark! more knocking.

94. If something is **incarnadine**, it has been made red.

95. When Lady Macbeth tells her husband, **Your . . . unattended**, she means that his firmness has deserted him.

Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us
And show us to be watchers.⁹⁶ Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts. **C**

Macbeth.

To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.

[*Knock.*]

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!

[*Exeunt.*]

IN OTHER WORDS Macbeth tells his wife that he has killed the king. He is very upset. He heard the guards say a prayer, but could not pray himself. Macbeth thinks a voice has told him he will never sleep again, since he has murdered a sleeping man. Lady Macbeth mocks him for acting like a coward. She plants bloody daggers on the guards. As she and Macbeth wash the blood from their hands, they hear a knock at the door. Macbeth wishes Duncan were still alive.

What Happens Next

In the remaining scenes of Act Two, Macduff and Lennox arrive at Macbeth's castle. Macduff discovers the king has been killed. Macbeth claims that the king's chamberlains murdered him. Macbeth explains that in a fit of rage he, Macbeth, killed the chamberlains for their crime.

*In Act Three, Banquo tells Macbeth the Witches' prophecies have come true for Macbeth. Banquo wonders if he will become the father of many kings as the Witches have claimed. Unable to bear the thought of Banquo's descendants becoming kings, Macbeth hires two murderers to kill Banquo and his son Fleance. The murderers kill Banquo, but Fleance escapes, which troubles Macbeth. Banquo's ghost appears at a feast the Macbeths hold for the thanes, causing Macbeth further distress. **D***

C HERE'S HOW

Reading Focus

Lady Macbeth seems much more in control of the situation after the murder than Macbeth. Macbeth is wandering around bloody and carrying the daggers. He seems afraid, while Lady Macbeth seems sure of herself. This makes me ask the **question**. Why does Lady Macbeth seem to be in charge when Macbeth is supposed to be the main character? I think I will read on to see if I learn more.

D HERE'S HOW

Literary Focus

Macbeth is very worried about Banquo's descendants becoming kings. I think this is because Macbeth is too concerned with having power and being a ruler. His ambition and fear of losing power causes Macbeth to commit these murders. It is the same **tragic flaw** that led him to murder King Duncan.

96. **Watchers** are people who are up late at night.

A YOUR TURN

Vocabulary

What does *vengeance* mean? Look it up in a dictionary. What kind of *vengeance* do you think Lennox and the rebel lord wish upon Macbeth?

B QUICK CHECK

Who are the Weird Sisters?

C LITERARY ANALYSIS

Think about the results of the witches' first predictions. Are you surprised that their new predictions have led to more violence? Why or why not?

D YOUR TURN

Literary Focus

Macbeth predicted that he would sleep no more after he had murdered the king. How does Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking add to the tragedy?

Lennox reveals to a rebel lord that he suspects Macbeth killed Duncan. The other lord tells Lennox that Macduff has left Scotland to join forces in England with Malcolm, one of the murdered king's sons. Both Lennox and the rebel lord pray that Macbeth will receive God's vengeance and that peace will return to Scotland. **A**

In Act Four, Macbeth pays another visit to the Weird Sisters. **B** *He asks to be shown visions of what his future holds. In the first vision, the disembodied head of a warrior warns Macbeth that he is in danger from Duncan's son Malcolm. In the second, a blood-covered child tells Macbeth he cannot be killed by any man "of woman born." In the third, a child wearing a crown and holding a tree promises Macbeth that he cannot lose in a battle until Birnam Wood physically moves toward Macbeth's fort at Dunsinane. Happy that these visions show such impossibilities, Macbeth asks whether Banquo's descendants will reign in the land. The Witches show a procession of kings all descended from Banquo. Furious, Macbeth decides to have the family of Macduff killed. His hired murderers kill Lady Macduff and her son.* **C**

In England, Macduff learns of the slaughter of his family. He agrees to join the rebel army and declares he will take personal revenge upon Macbeth.

Act V Scene 1. Dunsinane. In the castle.

Enter a DOCTOR of physic and a waiting GENTLEWOMAN.

Doctor. I have two nights watched with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walked?

Gentlewoman. Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her closet,⁹⁷ take forth paper, fold it, write upon't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doctor. A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep and do the effects of watching!⁹⁸ **D** In

97. Here, a **closet** is a chest of drawers or other piece of furniture.

98. The **effects of watching** refer to the deeds of a person who is awake.

10 this slumb'ry agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances,⁹⁹ what, at any time, have you heard her say? **E**

Gentlewoman. That, sir, which I will not report after her.

Doctor. You may to me, and 'tis most meet¹⁰⁰ you should.

Gentlewoman. Neither to you nor anyone, having no witness to confirm my speech.

[Enter LADY MACBETH, with a taper.]

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise,¹⁰¹ and, upon my life, fast asleep! Observe her; stand close.¹⁰²

Doctor. How came she by that light?

20 **Gentlewoman.** Why, it stood by her. She has light by her continually. 'Tis her command.

Doctor. You see, her eyes are open.

Gentlewoman. Ay, but their sense¹⁰³ are shut.

Doctor. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gentlewoman. It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: **F** I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour. **G**

Lady Macbeth. Yet here's a spot.

Doctor. Hark! she speaks. I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy¹⁰⁴ my remembrance the more strongly.

30 **Lady Macbeth.** Out, damned spot! Out, I say! One: two: why, then 'tis time to do't. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord, fie! A soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our pow'r to accompt?¹⁰⁵ Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

Doctor. Do you mark that?

Lady Macbeth. The Thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now? What, will these hands ne'er be clean? No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that! You mar all with this starting. **H**

99. **Actual performances** are real deeds and actions.

100. One definition of the word **meet** is "suitable."

101. Here, a **guise** is a custom.

102. Here, **close** means "hidden."

103. Here, **sense** refers to the powers of sight.

104. Here, **satisfy** means "confirm."

105. **Accompt** is a different way of saying "account."

E YOUR TURN

Vocabulary

The doctor describes Lady Macbeth's nighttime activities as *agitation*. Write a definition for the word *agitation*. Use a dictionary to check your answer.

F HERE'S HOW

Vocabulary

The word *accustomed* looks familiar, but I do not remember its meaning. I think it has something to do with a *custom*, which is a traditional activity. I looked up the word in the dictionary, and I was close. *Accustomed* means "usual" or "habitual."

G LITERARY ANALYSIS

Find the last time in this play when characters washed their hands. What do you think it means that Lady Macbeth is repeating this motion in her sleep?

H YOUR TURN

Reading Focus

Write a **question** about Lady Macbeth's confessions in lines 36–38.

A HERE'S HOW

Literary Focus

I know that in a **tragedy**, many characters come to an unhappy end. This already seems to be happening to Lady Macbeth. She seems to be so unhappy and guilty. I think part of Macbeth's tragedy is his wife's downfall.

B LITERARY ANALYSIS

To whom do you think Lady Macbeth is speaking? Explain your answer.

C QUICK CHECK

According to the doctor, what is the cause of Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking?

Doctor. Go to, go to!¹⁰⁶ You have known what you should not.
40 **Gentlewoman.** She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that. Heaven knows what she has known.

Lady Macbeth. Here's the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh! **A**

Doctor. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.¹⁰⁷

Gentlewoman. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity¹⁰⁸ of the whole body.

Doctor. Well, well, well—

Gentlewoman. Pray God it be, sir.

50 **Doctor.** This disease is beyond my practice.¹⁰⁹ Yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

Lady Macbeth. Wash your hands; put on your nightgown; look not so pale! I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried. He cannot come out on 's¹¹⁰ grave. **B**

Doctor. Even so?

Lady Macbeth. To bed, to bed! There's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand! What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed!

[*Exit* LADY MACBETH.]

60 **Doctor.** Will she go now to bed?

Gentlewoman. Directly.

Doctor.

Foul whisp'rings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets. **C**
More needs she the divine¹¹¹ than the physician.
God, God forgive us all! Look after her;

106. **Go to, go to!** is an exclamation.

107. **Charged** means "burdened."

108. **Dignity** means "worth; rank."

109. The doctor's **practice** is his professional skill.

110. **On's** is short for "of his."

111. A **divine** is a priest.

Remove from her the means of all annoyance,¹¹²
And still¹¹³ keep eyes upon her. So good night.
My mind she has mated¹¹⁴ and amazed my sight:
70 I think, but dare not speak.

Gentlewoman. Good night, good doctor.

[*Exeunt.*]

IN OTHER WORDS Lady Macbeth has been walking and talking in her sleep. She gets out of bed, makes motions like she is washing her hands, and starts talking about blood and terrible crimes. The doctor and her servant hear her and are shocked. The doctor cannot do anything. He says that her sick mind comes from her actions.

What Happens Next

Four lords of Scotland—Lennox, Menteith, Angus, and Caithness—agree to help Malcolm and the English forces. The rebel army has marched into Scotland and is encamped at Birnam Wood not far from Dunsinane.

Macbeth is confident when faced with the threat of invasion. He trusts the prophecies of the visions, which seemed to promise him victory in battle. **D** *He dons his armor to prepare for battle.*

The English and rebel Scottish armies, led by Malcolm, meet at Birnam Wood. Malcolm orders each soldier to cut a branch and carry it front of him as camouflage so that they can hide the size of their army.

Suddenly, Macbeth and his soldiers hear women crying from within the castle.

Scene 5. *Dunsinane. Within the castle.*

Seyton.

The queen, my lord, is dead.

112. Here, **annoyance** refers to an injury.

113. Here, **still** means “continuously.”

114. Here, **mated** means “baffled.”

D YOUR TURN

Vocabulary

Circle all the words that might give you clues about the definition of the word *prophecies*. Write the definition on the lines below. Then check your answer against the definition in the dictionary.

A**HERE'S HOW****Reading Focus**

I have a **question**. Why does Macbeth not seem to care that his wife is dead? If I think about everything that has happened, I think Lady Macbeth's death is just one more death after so many. Macbeth has become sort of numb to death.

B**YOUR TURN****Literary Focus**

In your own words, describe Macbeth's attitude toward life. How might this attitude be part of his **tragedy**?

Macbeth.

She should¹¹⁵ have died hereafter;

There would have been a time for such a word.¹¹⁶ **A**

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

10 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more. It is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing. **B**

IN OTHER WORDS

Macbeth's wife is dead, but Macbeth barely cares. He says that time just keeps going on and on and that life is meaningless.

What Happens Next

A messenger tells Macbeth that he saw Birnam Wood move. In fact, Malcolm and his troops have reached Dunsinane holding branches in front of them. Birnam Wood has come to Dunsinane as the Witches predicted.

Macbeth is challenged by and then kills the bold son of Siward, claiming that no man "of woman born" can overcome him. As the alarms sound, Macduff looks for Macbeth. Malcolm and Siward enter Macbeth's castle.

Scene 8. *Another part of the field.*

Enter MACBETH.

Macbeth.

Why should I play the Roman fool, and die

115. When Macbeth says that his wife **should** die, he means that she inevitably would.

116. Here, **word** refers to a message.

On mine own sword? Whiles I see lives,¹¹⁷ the gashes
Do better upon them. **C**

[Enter MACDUFF.]

Macduff. Turn, hell-hound, turn!

Macbeth.

Of all men else I have avoided thee.

But get thee back! My soul is too much charged¹¹⁸

With blood of thine already.

Macduff. I have no words:

My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain

10 Than terms can give thee out!¹¹⁹ **D**

[Fight. Alarum.]

Macbeth. Thou lovest labor:

As easy mayst thou the intrenchant¹²⁰ air

With thy keen sword impress¹²¹ as make me bleed:

Let fall thy blade on vulnerable¹²² crests;

I bear a charmed life, which must not yield

To one of woman born.

Macduff. Despair¹²³ thy charm,

And let the angel¹²⁴ whom thou still hast served

Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb

20 Untimely ripped. **E**

Macbeth.

Accursèd be that tongue that tells me so,

For it hath cowed my better part of man!¹²⁵ **F**

And be these juggling fiends no more believed,

117. **Whiles** . . . **lives** means "so long as I see living men."

118. **Charged** here means "burdened."

119. **Terms** . . . **out**: words can describe you.

120. Something **intrenchant** is impossible to cut.

121. To **impress** is to make a physical mark on someone or something.

122. **Vulnerable crests** are heads that can be wounded.

123. **Despair** here should be read as "despair of."

124. **Angel** refers to a fallen angel, or fiend.

125. Macbeth's **better** . . . **man** is his manly spirit.

C HERE'S HOW

Literary Focus

Macbeth says that he will keep fighting. Just like at the beginning of the play, he acts very bravely. I think this shows that, even though he is a **tragic** hero on the way to his downfall, he still has some heroic qualities.

D YOUR TURN

Literary Focus

What personal reason does Macduff have to hate Macbeth? How is this part of Macbeth's **tragedy**?

E QUICK CHECK

How does Macduff's news fulfill the witches' third prophecy?

F HERE'S HOW

Vocabulary

The word *cowed* is new to me, but it seems like it is important to understand how Macbeth reacts to Macduff's news. In the dictionary, the definition of *cowed* is "made timid or filled with fear." That makes sense here. Macbeth is saying that Macduff's news has made him fearful.

A YOUR TURN

Vocabulary

Look up the word *rabble* in the dictionary. What “*rabble’s* curse” do you think Macbeth is talking about?

B YOUR TURN

Literary Focus

Why does Macbeth refuse to give in to Macduff? How is this reason related to Macbeth’s **tragic flaw**?

That palter¹²⁶ 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:¹²⁷
We’ll have thee, as our rarer monsters¹²⁸ are,
Painted upon a pole,¹²⁹ and underwrit,
“Here may you see the tyrant.”

30

Macbeth.

I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm’s feet,
And to be baited¹³⁰ with the rabble’s curse. **A**
Though Birnam Wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last. **B** Before my body
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff;
And damned be him that first cries “Hold, enough!”

126. To **palter** is to equivocate or speak with double meanings.

127. To be the **gaze . . . time** is to be the spectacle of the age, open to public view.

128. Here, **monsters** refers to freaks.

129. **Painted . . . pole:** pictured on a banner set by a showman’s booth.

130. To be **baited** means “to be assailed or attacked (like a bear by dogs).”



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[*Exeunt, fighting. Alarums.*]

[*Reenter fighting, and MACBETH slain.* **C** *Exit MACDUFF, with MACBETH. Retreat and flourish.*¹³¹ *Enter, with drum and colors, MALCOLM, SIWARD, ROSS, THANES, and SOLDIERS.*]

Malcolm.

40 I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

Siward.

Some must go off;¹³² and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

Malcolm.

Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

Ross.

Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt:
He only lived but till he was a man;
The which no sooner had his prowess confirmed **D**
In the unshrinking station¹³³ where he fought,
But like a man he died.

Siward. Then he is dead?

Ross.

50 Ay, and brought off the field. Your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

Siward. Had he his hurts before?

Ross.

Ay, on the front.

Siward. Why then, God's soldier be he!

Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knolled. **E**

Malcolm. He's worth more sorrow,

60 And that I'll spend for him.

131. Retreat and flourish are trumpet calls. To retreat is to withdraw, and a flourish is a fanfare.

132. To **go off** is to die—the theatrical metaphor refers to going offstage.

133. His **unshrinking** station is the place at which he stood firmly.

C HERE'S HOW

Literary Focus

When I read the stage direction, I see that Macbeth has been killed. He has finally had his downfall, so I think the **tragedy** is almost over.

D HERE'S HOW

Vocabulary

I am not sure what *prowess* means, but I think it has something to do with bravery in battle. I can guess this because Ross is describing how Siward's son fought "like a man." I looked in the dictionary, and I was right. *Prowess* means "extraordinary ability or courage in battle."

E HERE'S HOW

Reading Focus

I think it is strange that Siward is not more upset about his son's death. He almost seems happy about the way his son died. I have a **question** about that. What kind of death did people in Shakespeare's time see as ideal or most honorable? I can guess that they were proud when someone died in battle.

A HERE'S HOW

Vocabulary

Malcolm refers to Macbeth as a *usurper*. I am not sure what a *usurper* is, but I know that Macbeth unfairly took over the kingdom when he killed Duncan. So I think that *usurper* means "someone who seizes something unfairly."

B YOUR TURN

Vocabulary

A *salutation* is a greeting. What is one situation in which you would use a *salutation*?

C QUICK CHECK

Who is the new King of Scotland?

D YOUR TURN

Vocabulary

The word *exiled* means "forced to live in another country, either for personal or political reasons, or as a punishment for a crime." For which reason were the "friends" of Scotland *exiled*? Why do you think this?

Siward. He's worth no more:

They say he parted well and paid his score:¹³⁴
And so God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.

[Enter MACDUFF, with Macbeth's head.]

Macduff.

Hail, king! for so thou art: behold, where stands
Th' usurper's cursèd head. **A** The time is free.¹³⁵
I see thee compassed¹³⁶ with thy kingdom's pearl,
That speak my salutation **B** in their minds,
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine:
Hail, King of Scotland!

70 **All.** Hail, King of Scotland! **C**

[Flourish.]

Malcolm.

We shall not spend a large expense of time
Before we reckon with your several loves,¹³⁷
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honor named. What's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time¹³⁸—
As calling home our exiled friends abroad **D**
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny,
Producing forth the cruel ministers¹³⁹
80 Of this dead butcher and his fiendlike queen,
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands¹⁴⁰

134. **parted . . . score:** departed well and settled his account.
135. **The time is free** means that "the world is liberated."
136. To be **compassed** is to be surrounded.
137. To **reckon . . . loves** is to reward the devotion of each of you.
138. **What's more . . . time** refers to everything else that must be done and established in this age of a new king.
139. The **ministers** here are Macbeth's agents.
140. **Self . . . hands** refers to Lady Macbeth's own violent hands, with which she killed herself.

Took off her life— **E** this, and what needful else
That calls upon us,¹⁴¹ by the grace of Grace
We will perform in measure, time, and place.¹⁴² **F**
So thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone.

[*Flourish. Exeunt omnes.*]

IN OTHER WORDS Macduff and Macbeth fight. Macduff says that he was not born naturally from a woman, but rather delivered in what would today be called a Caesarean section. He defeats Macbeth after a bloody battle. Malcom becomes king and plans to undo some of Macbeth's cruelty and terrible deeds as king.

E **HERE'S HOW**

Literary Focus

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are both dead. I have also learned that Lady Macbeth killed herself. This sad ending is probably part of what makes this play such a famous **tragedy**.

F **YOUR TURN**

Reading Focus

What **questions** do you have about Malcolm's plans for the future? How might you answer your questions, since we do not know what will happen in the future?

141. **Calls upon us** means "demands the new king's attention."

142. **In measure . . . place** means "fittingly, at the appropriate time and place."