

Two truths are told

Macbeth · How Macbeth reacts when the first prophecy comes true

Name:

Class:

Date:

Do Now

1. Who tells Duncan about “brave Macbeth” in Act 1 Scene 2?

2. Which title does Macbeth already hold at the start of the play?

3. What three things do the witches call Macbeth in Act 1 Scene 3?

4. In which year was Macbeth probably first performed?

5. What does ‘the divine right of kings’ mean?

Read

Macbeth’s aside after Ross’s news · William Shakespeare · 1606 · Act 1 Scene 3

1 MACBETH.

Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.

5 I thank you, gentlemen.

This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor:

10 If good, why do I yield to that suggestion

Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.

15 My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,

Shakes so my single state of man
That function is smother’d in surmise,
And nothing is but what is not.

Check your understanding

1. What news has Macbeth just heard?

2. Which “two truths” does he mean?

3. What does the “horrid image” do to his body?

4. Who hears this speech?

Quotation explosion

“why do I yield to that suggestion Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair”

AO1 What is the “suggestion”, and what does it show about Macbeth?

AO2 What does the verb “yield” suggest?

AO2 Why does Shakespeare use an aside here?

AO3 Why would a Jacobean audience find this “horrid image” so shocking?

Embedding a short quotation

Put two to five words of quotation inside your own sentence so it reads smoothly. Short quotations let you zoom in on a single word.

And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,

Your task: Write one sentence that embeds “knock at my ribs” and says what it shows about Macbeth’s fear.

The question

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 3 of Macbeth and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play Macbeth has just been told he is Thane of Cawdor, so the witches' first prophecy has come true.

Starting with this extract, how does Shakespeare present Macbeth as a man tempted by murder?

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth in the play as a whole.

Today: plan your answer in 8 minutes. No essay.

My argument (thesis)	
Point 1 + quotation	
Point 2 + quotation	
Point 3 + quotation	
Context to use	

Have a go

Read this short moment from later in Act 1. Answer in two or three sentences.

Macbeth hears that Malcolm is heir · William Shakespeare · Act 1 Scene 4

- 1 MACBETH.
The Prince of Cumberland!
That is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
5 For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires!
Let not light 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.

How has Macbeth's attitude to murder moved on since his aside in Act 1 Scene 3? Use one quotation.

Green pen

- ☐ My thesis gives an idea about Macbeth, not a summary of the plot.
- ☐ Each point has a short, exact quotation and a named method.
- ☐ My context is linked to my argument.
- ☐ I checked the spelling of Shakespeare, prophecy, ambition and aside (AO4).

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