

Macbeth, Act 4, scene 3, by William Shakespeare

Teacher instructions: After students have read this important scene, assign them to heterogeneous groups. In groups, students will work on these elements.

1. Identify the speaker, audience, and context of the quotation. (concrete)
2. Give the significance. The significance may involve a flashback, a foreshadowing, an insight into character, or an irony. (abstract analysis)
3. What is the most important word in the quotation? (abstract analysis)
4. What is the most important word in your analysis? (abstract meta-analysis)

In the whole-class session, ask students to share their answers to 3. and 4. Have a student write these answers on the board. Students should take notes on all the important words. For homework, students should read these quotations again with the important words in their notes to give them a better idea of the deeper meanings that can result from deeper readings.

Important quotations in Act 4, scene 3

[Y]ou have loved him well—
He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young, but something
You may discern of him through me.... (13-15)

And here from gracious England have I offer
Of goodly thousands. (43f.)

... black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow.... (52f.)

I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name. But there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness.... (58-61)

We have willing dames enough.... (73)

Scotland has foisons* to fill up your will
Of your mere own. (88f.)

*rich harvests

The king-becoming graces.... (91)

Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth. (97-100)

O Scotland, Scotland! (100)

Such welcome and unwelcome things at once,
'Tis hard to reconcile. (138f.)

A most miraculous work in this good king.... (149)

No, they were well at peace when I did leave 'em. (181)

Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee. (227f.)

Be this the whetstone of your sword, let grief
Convert to anger. Blunt not the heart, enrage it. (231f.)

Receive what cheer you may:
The night is long that never finds the day. (242f.)

Some biographical names and dates

Edward the Confessor (c. 1003-1066. r. 1042-1066)
Duncan (r. 1034-1040. He died at a relatively young age [unknown].)
Macbeth (1005-1057; r. 1040-1057)
Malcolm III (1031-1093. r. 1057 to 1093)

Fathers and sons. It is ambiguous as to whether the Macbeths have children: she claims to have had a child, and Macduff claims that Macbeth is childless. One history lists Lulach, Macbeth's stepson, as his successor. List the several father and son combinations and discuss them in relation to the play:

<i>Father</i>	<i>Son(s)</i>	<i>Attitude of father to son</i>
Duncan		
Banquo		
Macduff		
Old Siward		

Study Questions.

1. What is the significance of the setting? Why is it important that this scene occur in England? Consider the presence (absence) of English King Edward. What one verb do you associate with Macbeth? What one verb do you associate with Edward the Confessor? Compare the verbs.
2. Discuss the use of foils evident in this scene. How do these characters function as foils to Macbeth: Edward, Malcolm, Macduff?
3. How does Malcolm use verbal irony and hyperbole to communicate with Macduff?
4. Why does Malcolm deceive Macduff? What does Malcolm hope to gain by deceiving Macduff?
5. In two places (57-60 and 91-94), Malcolm creates lists (catalogues).
 - a. What is the purpose of each catalogue? What are the effects of Malcolm's somewhat repetitive lists?
 - b. Rank, from worst to best or best to worst, each of these two catalogues.
6. What is the significance of parents and children in this play?
7. Compare Macduff's reaction to Malcolm's intentions toward Scotland's women and those towards Scotland's lands (69-76 and 84-90).