

Burnett's AP English Lit
Macbeth – Act I Quote Analysis

For each quote below, summarize it in your own words – including who was speaking – and then answer the questions which follow each one.

1. "What he hath lost noble Macbeth has won." (I:ii) How is Duncan portrayed in this scene? What do you think he symbolizes?
2. "But 'tis strange . . . in deepest consequence." (I:iii) What is your impression of the witches? Are they evil? Disruptive? Pointing out man's weakness? Something else? What is their role at this point in the play?
3. "...Let us speak / Our free hearts each to other." (I:iii) Consider Macbeth and Banquo. How are they portrayed? Do they provide useful points of comparison or contrast to each other?
4. "Stars, hide your fires . . . when it is done, to see." (I:iv) Both Duncan and Macbeth invoke the stars in this scene, but in different ways. What does this tell us about the differences between the two men?
5. "Come, you spirits . . . To cry "hold, hold!" (I:v) What "spirits" might Lady Macbeth be calling upon? (Related to the witches, or something else?) How does her soliloquy reveal about her feelings on masculinity versus femininity? About her level of comfort with the notion of murder?
6. "Leave all the rest to me." (I:v) Do you think Lady Macbeth's motivation is selfishness or selflessness?
7. "I have no spur . . . And falls on the other." (I:vii) What sort of insight does this soliloquy give into Macbeth's character? Does it simplify or complicate it? What makes him hesitate?
8. "We fail? . . . who shall bear the guilt / Of our great quell?" (I:vii) Compare the ways in which Macbeth and Lady Macbeth discuss the murder of Duncan. Has Lady Macbeth grasped the enormity of what they are about to do? What are her primary concerns at this point? Macbeth's?

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