

Macbeth Act I-Key events

1) The witches introduce Macbeth and the **motif** of prophecy/the supernatural

Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, and literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

2) Macbeth defeats the rebels, and King Duncan announces that he will kill the traitor Cawdor and give his title to Macbeth.

3) The witches' prophecy: Macbeth will be Thane of Cawdor and King

First witch prophesies that Banquo will be "Lesser than Macbeth and greater."

Second witch prophesies that Banquo will be "not so happy, yet much happier" than Macbeth.

Third witch prophesies that Banquo will father kings but not be one.

4) The King's messenger (Ross) informs Macbeth of his new title as the Thane of Cawdor

5) Macbeth contemplates murder and struggles with his own thoughts

6) King Duncan announces that Malcolm, his son, is to be future king and names him Prince of Cumberland. Also, the king tells Macbeth that the royal family is going to Inverness. Macbeth departs before they do to prepare for their arrival. Aside to himself Macbeth feels he must destroy Malcolm because he stands in his way to being king.

7) In the following letter Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth what follows:

- Macbeth says that the three witches that meet him and Banquo (after winning the battle) have supernatural powers. The witches vanished into the air when he wanted to ask them something and he stood amazed. After the witches vanished Duncan's Messenger came greeting him as Thane of Cawdor. The three Weirs Sisters or witches had already called him Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth that he sends her this letter so that she can know what is in store for them. He also tells her to keep these news to herself.

8) Lady Macbeth says to herself that Macbeth deserves to not only be the Thane of Glamis but of Cawdor also. She is afraid that Macbeth's tender heart can get in the way of her plans to kill Duncan. Lady Macbeth highlights that Macbeth has the ambition to be great but that he wants to win the king's position by righteous ways. Lady Macbeth calls upon the evil spirits to allow her to commit evil deeds.

9) Macbeth arrives home and Lady Macbeth tells him to mask his emotions and that she will take care of further proceedings. Lady Macbeth tells Macbeth to be like the innocent flower without but like the serpent within.

10) King Duncan arrives at Macbeth's Castle. Duncan comments that the location of Inverness is pleasant and that the clear and sweet air that flows around Inverness appeals to him. This is ironic because he is going to be betrayed by Macbeth who will kill him; (theme: appearance vs. reality).

11) Macbeth contemplates their plan to commit murder, and decides against it. There are three reasons why Macbeth feels he shouldn't kill Duncan.

- First Macbeth is Duncan's kinsman, Macbeth serves the king because that is his place in the world.
- Second, Macbeth said that he would not be honorable if he doesn't kill Duncan himself, face to face.
- Third, Duncan is so loved by the people and the world that the whole world would weep his death.
- Last, Macbeth has no will to be King, only ambition, that accomplishes nothing but pain and sorrow.
- Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth that he will not kill Duncan.

12) Lady Macbeth tells Macbeth that if he were a real man then he would kill Duncan to be King, she calls him a coward for not trying. She convinces Macbeth to kill Duncan.