

ASM TUITION ACADEMY

MACBETH

ACT 1 SUMMARY:

Scene 1: The play opens with a stormy scene on a heath where three witches, or "weird sisters," gather. They speak cryptically about their next meeting with Macbeth. The atmosphere is dark and foreboding, setting the tone for the play.

- **Quote:**
 - "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (Act 1, Scene 1, Line 12). This line reflects the theme of ambiguity and the reversal of moral values, which recurs throughout the play.

Scene 2: The scene shifts to a military camp where King Duncan of Scotland learns of Macbeth's valour in battle. Macbeth is a brave and loyal warrior, fighting against the rebellious Macdonwald and the Norwegian forces. Duncan praises Macbeth and decides to reward him.

- **Quote:**
 - "What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath won" (Act 1, Scene 2, Line 68). Duncan's words here reflect the transition of the title of Thane of Cawdor from the traitorous Thane to Macbeth, a shift that foreshadows Macbeth's own ambition and eventual downfall.

Scene 3: Macbeth and Banquo encounter the witches on the heath. The witches greet Macbeth with three prophecies: he will become Thane of Cawdor and eventually king. They also predict that Banquo's descendants will be kings, though Banquo himself will not be one. Macbeth is initially sceptical, but the witches vanish after their cryptic greetings.

- **Quote:**
 - "All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!" (Act 1, Scene 3, Line 50). This prophecy ignites Macbeth's ambition and sets the play's central conflict into motion.

Scene 4: Duncan announces that he will visit Macbeth's castle to celebrate Macbeth's new title as Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth begin to contemplate how they might fulfil the witches' prophecy. Lady Macbeth is particularly ambitious and begins to plot Duncan's murder.

- **Quote:**
 - "The milk of human kindness" (Act 1, Scene 5, Line 16). Lady Macbeth uses this metaphor to describe her husband's nature, suggesting that he is too compassionate to seize the throne by murder.

Scene 5: Lady Macbeth reads a letter from Macbeth detailing the witches' prophecies. She becomes determined to help Macbeth achieve his ambitions, believing he is too kind to act alone. She resolves to persuade Macbeth to commit regicide.

- **Quote:**
 - "Come, you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here" (Act 1, Scene 5, Lines 39-40). Lady Macbeth calls upon supernatural forces to strip her of feminine qualities so that she can commit the murder herself, indicating her willingness to abandon morality for power.

Scene 6: Duncan arrives at Macbeth's castle and is warmly welcomed by Lady Macbeth. The scene is filled with dramatic irony as Duncan praises the castle's pleasant atmosphere, unaware of the impending betrayal.

- **Quote:**
 - "This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air / Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself" (Act 1, Scene 6, Lines 1-2). Duncan's words are laden with dramatic irony, as the audience knows that the castle will soon become the site of his murder.

Scene 7: In a soliloquy, Macbeth wrestles with his conscience and fears the consequences of killing Duncan. He contemplates the moral implications and his own ambition. Lady Macbeth then chastises him for his hesitation and provides a plan to murder Duncan, which he reluctantly agrees to follow.

- **Quote:**
 - "I am settled, and bend up / Each corporal agent to this terrible feat" (Act 1, Scene 7, Lines 79-80). Macbeth's decision to follow through with the murder shows his internal conflict but also his susceptibility to ambition and external influences.

Conclusion

Act 1 of *Macbeth* introduces the play's central themes of ambition, power, and moral corruption. The witches' prophecies ignite Macbeth's ambition, setting the stage for the following tragic events. Lady Macbeth's manipulation and Macbeth's moral struggle highlight the psychological and ethical conflicts that drive the narrative forward.

ACT 2 SUMMARY:

Scene 1: The act opens with Macbeth's soliloquy as he prepares to murder King Duncan. He envisions a bloody dagger leading him toward Duncan's chamber. Macbeth reflects on the gravity of the deed he is about to commit, contemplating the consequences of regicide.

- **Quote:**
 - "Is this a dagger which I see before me, / The handle toward my hand?" (Act 2, Scene 1, Lines 33-34). This vision represents Macbeth's psychological turmoil and foreshadows the violence he is about to commit.
- **Quote:**

- "I go, and it is done; the bell invites me" (Act 2, Scene 1, Line 78). Macbeth hears a bell, which Lady Macbeth has rung to signal that the guards are asleep and it is time for him to commit the murder.

Scene 2: Lady Macbeth waits anxiously for Macbeth to return after killing Duncan. When Macbeth arrives, he is horrified and guilt-ridden, carrying the bloody daggers he used. Lady Macbeth helps him clean up and smears the blood on the sleeping guards to frame them for the murder.

- **Quote:**
 - "Methought, I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more! / Macbeth does murder sleep'" (Act 2, Scene 2, Lines 34-35). Macbeth hears a voice declaring that he will never sleep peacefully again, reflecting his guilt and fear.
- **Quote:**
 - "A little water clears us of this deed" (Act 2, Scene 2, Line 65). Lady Macbeth's attempt to downplay the gravity of the crime contrasts with Macbeth's deepening sense of guilt.

Scene 3: Macduff arrives at Macbeth's castle to see the king, but Macbeth intercepts him, claiming that Duncan has been murdered. The discovery of Duncan's body causes chaos. Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, flee the castle, suspecting that they may be next. Macbeth is crowned king, and the scene hints at the instability and fear that will characterize his reign.

- **Quote:**
 - "O horror, horror, horror! / Tongue nor heart / Cannot conceive nor name thee!" (Act 2, Scene 3, Lines 72-74). Macduff's reaction to Duncan's murder underscores the horror and disruption the regicide has caused.
- **Quote:**
 - "Where we are / There are daggers in men's smiles; the near in blood, / The nearer bloody" (Act 2, Scene 3, Lines 162-164). Donalbain's comment about the treachery among men reflects the play's theme of deception and the peril of being near those who might be plotting against you.

Scene 4: Ross and an old man discuss the strange occurrences following Duncan's murder, such as unnatural events and ominous signs. Macbeth is now king, but his rise to power is marked by suspicion and unease. Ross reports that Duncan's sons have been blamed for the murder and have fled. Macbeth is depicted as increasingly paranoid, and the seeds of further violence are sown.

- **Quote:**
 - "By the clock 'tis day, / And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp" (Act 2, Scene 4, Lines 6-7). The unnatural darkness reflects the disruption of the natural order caused by Duncan's murder.
- **Quote:**
 - "To be thus is nothing; / But to be safely thus" (Act 2, Scene 4, Lines 56-57). Macbeth's realization that being king is meaningless if he is not secure on the throne highlights his growing insecurity and the lengths he will go to maintain power.

Conclusion

Act 2 of *Macbeth* is pivotal as it portrays the immediate aftermath of Duncan's murder and the psychological and political consequences for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth's increasing paranoia and guilt, alongside Lady Macbeth's attempt to maintain control, set the stage for further conflict and tragedy. The act explores themes of ambition, guilt, and the breakdown of natural order, driving the narrative toward the ensuing chaos and violence.

SUMMARY OF ACT 3:

Scene 1: Macbeth, now king, feels insecure about his position and is troubled by the witches' prophecy that Banquo's descendants will inherit the throne. He fears Banquo as a threat and hires murderers to kill him and his son, Fleance. Macbeth reflects on the futility of his kingship if he is to have no legacy.

- **Quote:**
 - "To be thus is nothing; / But to be safely thus" (Act 3, Scene 1, Lines 4-5). Macbeth expresses his anxiety about being king without security and legacy, highlighting his growing paranoia.
- **Quote:**
 - "Banquo, thy soul's flight, / If it find heaven, must find it out tonight" (Act 3, Scene 1, Lines 168-169). Macbeth resolves to have Banquo killed, showing the extent of his descent into tyranny and moral corruption.

Scene 2: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth discuss their fears and the instability of their position. Macbeth hints at a plan but does not reveal it fully to Lady Macbeth. His paranoia and sense of insecurity are palpable as he plots further violence to secure his rule.

- **Quote:**
 - "Good things of day begin to droop and drowse, / Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse" (Act 3, Scene 2, Lines 47-48). Macbeth's reference to night's agents reflects his role as a perpetrator of darkness and evil.
- **Quote:**
 - "We are yet but young in deed" (Act 3, Scene 2, Line 168). Macbeth acknowledges that their murderous deeds are just beginning, indicating his commitment to further bloodshed.

Scene 3: The murderers ambush Banquo and Fleance. Banquo is killed, but Fleance escapes. The murderers inform Macbeth of Banquo's death, but the escape of Fleance troubles Macbeth because it means the witches' prophecy about Banquo's lineage is still a threat.

- **Quote:**
 - "O, treachery! / Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!" (Act 3, Scene 3, Lines 23-24). Banquo's last words reflect his concern for his son, Fleance, highlighting the peril and treachery surrounding them.
- **Quote:**
 - "The worm that's fled / Hath nature that in time will venom breed" (Act 3, Scene 4, Lines 24-25). Macbeth uses the metaphor of a worm to refer to Fleance, indicating that the escaped heir could still pose a threat in the future.

Scene 4: At a banquet, Macbeth is haunted by the ghost of Banquo, which only he can see. His erratic behaviour alarms the guests, and Lady Macbeth tries to cover for him. Macbeth's growing instability becomes apparent, and he is increasingly consumed by fear and paranoia.

- **Quote:**
 - "Thou canst not say I did it: never shake / Thy gory locks at me" (Act 3, Scene 4, Lines 50-51). Macbeth's reaction to Banquo's ghost underscores his guilt and deteriorating mental state.
- **Quote:**
 - "Are you a man?" (Act 3, Scene 4, Line 70). Lady Macbeth questions Macbeth's manhood, revealing her frustration with his weakness and instability.

Scene 5: Hecate, the goddess of witchcraft, rebukes the witches for meddling with Macbeth without consulting her. She plans to lead Macbeth into a false sense of security with further prophecies, ensuring his downfall. This scene foreshadows Macbeth's increasing delusions and the witches' role in his eventual ruin.

- **Quote:**
 - "And which is worse, all you have done / Hath been but for a wayward son" (Act 3, Scene 5, Lines 10-11). Hecate expresses her displeasure that the witches' actions have benefited Macbeth without her involvement.
- **Quote:**
 - "Security / Is mortals' chiefest enemy" (Act 3, Scene 5, Lines 32-33). Hecate reveals her plan to make Macbeth overconfident, underscoring the theme that excessive security and complacency lead to downfall.

Scene 6: In this scene, Lennox and another lord discuss the political situation. They express suspicion about Macbeth's role in the murders of Duncan and Banquo. Malcolm, now in England, is rallying support to challenge Macbeth's rule. This scene sets up the next phase of the conflict, with Malcolm preparing to reclaim the throne.

- **Quote:**
 - "The son of Duncan / Is fled like a bird from fear" (Act 3, Scene 6, Lines 9-10). Lennox's remark about Malcolm's flight indicates the widespread distrust of Macbeth and the growing opposition to his reign.
- **Quote:**
 - "By the clock 'tis day, / And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp" (Act 3, Scene 6, Lines 16-17). This line reflects the unnatural state of Scotland under Macbeth's rule, emphasizing the theme of disorder and moral darkness.

Conclusion

Act 3 of *Macbeth* demonstrates the deepening of Macbeth's moral corruption and paranoia. Macbeth's actions to secure his power through violence and treachery lead to increasing instability both in his mind and in the kingdom. The act highlights themes of ambition, guilt, and the destructive nature of power, setting the stage for the escalating conflict and eventual downfall that follows.

SUMMARY OF ACT 4:

Scene 1: Macbeth visits the witches again, seeking more information about his future. The witches conjure three apparitions:

1. A floating head warns Macbeth to beware of Macduff.
2. A bloody child tells Macbeth that no man born of a woman will harm him.
3. A crowned child holding a tree informs Macbeth that he will not be vanquished until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane Hill.

The witches also show Macbeth a vision of a line of kings descended from Banquo, confirming the prophecy that Banquo's heirs will inherit the throne. This vision further fuels Macbeth's paranoia and drives him to act more ruthlessly.

- **Quote:**
 - "Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff; / Beware the thane of Fife." (Act 4, Scene 1, Lines 71-72). This warning highlights Macbeth's fear of Macduff and his resolve to eliminate this threat.
- **Quote:**
 - "None of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth." (Act 4, Scene 1, Lines 79-80). The prophecy of being invincible is misleading, as it assures Macbeth that he cannot be killed by any man born of a woman.
- **Quote:**
 - "Birnam Wood come to Dunsinane" (Act 4, Scene 1, Line 106). Macbeth is disturbed by this seemingly impossible prophecy, which foreshadows the future fulfilment of the witches' words.
- **Quote:**
 - "Show his eyes and grieve his heart; / Come like shadows, so depart!" (Act 4, Scene 1, Lines 165-166). Macbeth's demand for further visions demonstrates his increasing desperation and reliance on the witches' prophecies.

Scene 2: At Macduff's castle, Lady Macduff and her son discuss Macduff's flight to England. A messenger warns Lady Macduff of impending danger, but before they can escape, murderers sent by Macbeth arrive and kill them. This brutal act underscores Macbeth's increasing tyranny and the collateral damage of his ambition.

- **Quote:**
 - "What had he done, to make him fly the land?" (Act 4, Scene 2, Line 12). Lady Macduff's confusion about her husband's flight highlights the personal consequences of Macbeth's actions and the impact on those loyal to him.
- **Quote:**
 - "The castle of Macduff I will surprise; / Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword / His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls / That trace him in his line." (Act 4, Scene 2, Lines 168-171). Macbeth's order to kill Macduff's entire family reveals his ruthless nature and determination to eliminate any threat to his power.

Scene 3: In England, Malcolm tests Macduff's loyalty by pretending to be a worse tyrant than Macbeth. When Macduff reacts with horror, Malcolm reveals that he was testing

Macduff's sincerity. They discuss the dire state of Scotland under Macbeth's rule and prepare to return and overthrow him. Ross arrives with the news of the murder of Macduff's family, which deeply affects Macduff and strengthens his resolve to challenge Macbeth.

- **Quote:**
 - "Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there / Weep our sad bosoms empty." (Act 4, Scene 3, Lines 210-211). Macduff's reaction to the news of his family's murder reflects his deep grief and the personal stakes of the conflict.
- **Quote:**
 - "But I must also feel it as a man." (Act 4, Scene 3, Line 225). Macduff's acceptance of his grief and his readiness to act against Macbeth signify his transformation from a man seeking justice to one driven by personal loss.

Conclusion

Act 4 of *Macbeth* intensifies the play's central conflicts. Macbeth's increasing tyranny leads him to commit further atrocities, including the murder of Macduff's family. The witches' prophecies continue to drive Macbeth's actions, though their true meanings are revealed in ways that undermine his confidence. Meanwhile, Malcolm and Macduff prepare to challenge Macbeth, setting the stage for the final confrontation. The act highlights themes of ambition, guilt, and the consequences of unchecked power, leading up to the dramatic resolution in Act 5.

SUMMARY OF ACT 5:

Scene 1: Lady Macbeth, consumed by guilt, is observed sleepwalking and speaking about the murders she and Macbeth have committed. Her doctor and a gentlewoman watch as she tries to wash imagined bloodstains from her hands, revealing her deep psychological torment. The scene illustrates her mental disintegration and guilt over the bloodshed.

- **Quote:**
 - "Out, damned spot! out, I say!" (Act 5, Scene 1, Line 37). Lady Macbeth's desperate attempt to wash away the imaginary blood symbolizes her guilt and inability to escape the consequences of her actions.
- **Quote:**
 - "What, will these hands ne'er be clean?" (Act 5, Scene 1, Line 43). Lady Macbeth's despair about her hands being perpetually stained with blood signifies her recognition of the irreversible nature of her crimes.

Scene 2: In this scene, Scottish rebels, including Menteith, Caithness, Angus, and Lennox, discuss the approaching English army led by Malcolm and Siward. They are preparing to march to Birnam Wood, where Malcolm's forces are gathering to challenge Macbeth. The scene reflects the growing opposition to Macbeth's tyrannical rule and foreshadows the impending conflict.

- **Quote:**
 - "Those he commands move only in command, / Nothing in love" (Act 5, Scene 2, Lines 15-16). The rebels discuss the lack of genuine support for

Macbeth's rule, highlighting the widespread dissatisfaction and alienation among his subjects.

Scene 3: Macbeth, confident due to the witches' prophecy that no man born of a woman will harm him, is dismissive of the reports of the advancing English army. He is increasingly isolated, as his once-supportive allies are now his enemies. Macbeth's overconfidence is evident, and he continues to cling to the witches' prophecies.

- **Quote:**
 - "I will not yield, / To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet" (Act 5, Scene 3, Lines 31-32). Macbeth's refusal to surrender demonstrates his stubbornness and pride, which ultimately contribute to his downfall.
- **Quote:**
 - "I have lived long enough: my way of life / Is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf" (Act 5, Scene 3, Lines 23-24). Macbeth reflects on the futility of his life and achievements, signifying his realization of the impending end.

Scene 4: Malcolm's army disguises themselves with branches from Birnam Wood to appear as a moving forest, fulfilling part of the witches' prophecy. The scene highlights Malcolm's strategic acumen and the clever way in which his army disguises their numbers, making their approach seem more formidable.

- **Quote:**
 - "Let every soldier hew him down a bough / And bear's before him" (Act 5, Scene 4, Line 6). Malcolm's strategy to camouflage his army with branches from Birnam Wood cleverly fulfils the witches' prophecy, enhancing the psychological impact on Macbeth.

Scene 5: Macbeth receives news of Lady Macbeth's death and is informed that Birnam Wood appears to be moving toward Dunsinane, fulfilling another part of the witches' prophecy. Macbeth realizes that the prophecies are coming true and that his end is near. He continues to fight, though his resolve is shaken by the realization that he is not invincible.

- **Quote:**
 - "She should have died hereafter; / There would have been a time for such a word" (Act 5, Scene 5, Lines 17-18). Macbeth's detached reaction to Lady Macbeth's death reflects his emotional desensitization and acceptance of the inevitability of his downfall.
- **Quote:**
 - "I will not yield / To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet" (Act 5, Scene 5, Lines 31-32). Macbeth's defiant stance, despite his growing awareness of his imminent defeat, underscores his pride and stubbornness.

Scene 6: Malcolm's forces storm Macbeth's castle. The battle begins as Malcolm's army, disguised as Birnam Wood, advances against Macbeth's stronghold. This scene sets the stage for the final confrontation between the forces of Malcolm and Macbeth.

- **Quote:**

- "Turn, hellhound, turn!" (Act 5, Scene 6, Line 1). Macbeth is referred to as a "hellhound" by Macduff, reflecting the intensity of the battle and the moral judgment against Macbeth's tyranny.

Scene 7: Macbeth fights valiantly but is increasingly aware that his end is near. He encounters various opponents and kills many, but he is confronted by Macduff. Macbeth is confident that he cannot be killed by anyone "born of a woman," but Macduff reveals that he was "from his mother's womb untimely ripped" (i.e., born via Caesarean section).

- **Quote:**
 - "I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hacked. / Give me my armour" (Act 5, Scene 7, Lines 2-3). Macbeth's determination to fight until the end reflects his desperation and refusal to surrender.
- **Quote:**
 - "Macduff was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped" (Act 5, Scene 8, Lines 15-16). The revelation that Macduff was not "born of a woman" fulfils the witches' prophecy and signifies the fulfilment of the prophecy leading to Macbeth's downfall.

Scene 8: In the final confrontation, Macduff kills Macbeth. Malcolm is declared king, and order is restored to Scotland. The scene concludes with Malcolm inviting everyone to his coronation, signalling the end of Macbeth's tyranny and the restoration of legitimate rule.

- **Quote:**
 - "Hail, King of Scotland!" (Act 5, Scene 8, Line 72). Malcolm's coronation as king represents the restoration of order and justice in Scotland after Macbeth's destructive reign.
- **Quote:**
 - "Macbeth is dead" (Act 5, Scene 8, Line 69). Macduff's announcement marks the end of Macbeth's tyrannical rule and the restoration of rightful leadership.

Conclusion

Act 5 of *Macbeth* brings the play to its dramatic conclusion. Lady Macbeth's guilt leads to her death, Macbeth's overconfidence and misinterpretation of the witches' prophecies result in his downfall, and Malcolm's forces reclaim the throne. The act underscores themes of justice, retribution, and the restoration of the natural order, concluding the tragic arc of Macbeth's rise and fall.