

## Soliloquies in Macbeth

Act 1 Scene 5:

### **Lady Macbeth**

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be  
What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;  
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness  
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;  
Art not without ambition, but without  
The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,  
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,  
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'ldst have, great Glamis,  
That which cries 'Thus thou must do, if thou have it;  
And that which rather thou dost fear to do  
Than wishest should be undone.' Hie thee hither,  
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;  
And chastise with the valour of my tongue  
All that impedes thee from the golden round,  
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem  
To have thee crown'd withal.

### **Tasks:**

1. Write a summary of what Lady Macbeth says in this soliloquy.
2. This is the first time the audience sees Lady Macbeth – what first impression does this soliloquy build of her character? Find at least 2 quotations to prove your ideas.
3. What does Lady Macbeth suggest about Macbeth in this soliloquy? Select 3 quotations and explain why you have chosen them.
4. Answer the following question using PEA/PEACE:  
“How does Shakespeare present the character of Lady Macbeth in this extract?”

Act 1 Scene 5:

**Lady Macbeth:**

The raven himself is hoarse  
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan  
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,  
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full  
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;  
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between  
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,  
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,  
Wherever in your sightless substances  
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,  
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,  
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

Tasks:

1. Write a summary of what Lady Macbeth says in this soliloquy.
2. How does this soliloquy develop our understanding of Lady Macbeth's character? Choose at least 2 quotations and explain them.
3. How can this soliloquy be linked to context in terms of witchcraft and the supernatural? What does this suggest about Lady Macbeth? Explain at least 2 quotations.
4. Answer the following question using PEA/PEACE  
"How does Shakespeare present Lady Macbeth as an evil character in this soliloquy?"

## Act 1 Scene 7:

### **Macbeth:**

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly: if the assassination  
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
With his surcease success; that but this blow  
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,  
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,  
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases  
We still have judgment here; that we but teach  
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return  
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice  
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice  
To our own lips. He's here in double trust;  
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,  
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,  
Who should against his murderer shut the door,  
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan  
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been  
So clear in his great office, that his virtues  
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against  
The deep damnation of his taking-off;  
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,  
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed  
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,  
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself  
And falls on the other.

### **Tasks:**

1. Write a summary of Macbeth's soliloquy.
2. What does this soliloquy suggest about Macbeth's character and Macbeth's feelings here? Select at least 3 quotations and explain them.
3. Answer the question using PEA/PEACE:  
"How does Shakespeare present Macbeth as indecisive in this soliloquy?"

Act 2 Scene 1:

**Macbeth:**

Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
Proceeding from the heat-oppresed brain?  
I see thee yet, in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw.  
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;  
And such an instrument I was to use.  
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,  
Or else worth all the rest; I see thee still,  
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,  
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:  
It is the bloody business which informs  
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one halfworld  
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse  
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates  
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,  
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,  
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace.  
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design  
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,  
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear  
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,  
And take the present horror from the time,  
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:  
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.  
*[A bell rings]*  
I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.  
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell  
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

Tasks:

1. Write a summary of this soliloquy from Macbeth.
2. How does Shakespeare present Macbeth's fear in this extract? Choose at least 3 examples to support your ideas and explain them.
3. Select at least 3 quotations where Shakespeare uses violent/gory or dark imagery in this soliloquy. What do these suggest about Macbeth's state of mind?
4. Answer the question using PEA/PEACE:  
"How does Shakespeare present the theme of madness in Macbeth's soliloquy?"

## Act 3 Scene 1:

### Macbeth:

To be thus is nothing;  
But to be safely thus.--Our fears in Banquo  
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature  
Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares;  
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,  
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour  
To act in safety. There is none but he  
Whose being I do fear: and, under him,  
My Genius is rebuked; as, it is said,  
Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters  
When first they put the name of king upon me,  
And bade them speak to him: then prophet-like  
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:  
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,  
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,  
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,  
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,  
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;  
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;  
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace  
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel  
Given to the common enemy of man,  
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!  
Rather than so, come fate into the list.  
And champion me to the utterance!

### Tasks:

1. Write a summary of Macbeth's soliloquy.
2. How has Macbeth's character changed by this point in the play? Choose at least 3 quotations and explain how they show his changing character.
3. What does Macbeth mean by: "mine eternal jewel, Given to the common enemy of man"? What does this suggest Macbeth is aware his actions have done?
4. Answer the question using PEA/PEACE:  
"How does Shakespeare present Macbeth's out of control ambition in this soliloquy?"