

MACBETH

1. What is meant by, “When the hurlyburly’s done” in the opening scene of *Macbeth*?

Ans—In William Shakespeare’s tragic play *Macbeth* the Second Witch mentions the phrase “When the hurlyburly’s done”. Essentially, ‘hurlyburly’ means tumult or confusion. It is possible to think that the Witch refers to the sedition that is currently taking place in Scotland in light of the rebellion and the subsequent war that is taking place.

2. What is the significance of the phrase “Fair is foul, and foul is fair”?

Ans— Fair and foul are contrasting situations in life and signify the duality of justice and injustice. However, the Witches in the opening scene of the play *Macbeth* fuse this duality of order. The phrase, therefore, sets the tone for the moral bordering of the play and shows to us that henceforth the moral grounding in Scottish political and public life shall be at stake.

3. Which are the familiars of the three witches?

Ans-The first witch has as her familiar a small gray cat, the second a paddock i.e. a toad, and the third a Harpier.

4. What is the significance of the reference to ‘Bellona’s bridegroom’?

Ans—In Classical mythology, Bellona is the Goddess of War. In this extract Shakespeare refers Macbeth as ‘Bellona’s bridegroom’. Obviously he wishes to point out that the war-like qualities of Macbeth make him likeable for the Goddess of War, Bellona. The reference is made so as to bring about an injection of valour and its impetus in the mentality of Macbeth.

5. Explain: “ You should be women,/And yet your beards forbid me to interpret/That you are so”.

Ans— Macbeth and Banquo, the generals of the Scottish army, meet three witches on a heath while coming back from battle. Banquo is the first to recognize these airy-fairy wild creatures and looking at them says that by appearance the witches seem feminine. Yet, they sport beards and so he cannot call them as women. The extracted lines could well refer to the Elizabethan cult of looking down upon the trans-genders as witches. The description seems to suit the contemporary attitude of the public towards the Third Gender.

6. What are the predictions that the Witches make for Macbeth?

Ans—The Witches make three predictions for Macbeth. The first of these is that he is hailed as the Thane of Glamis; the second is that he shall be Thane of Cawdor while the final prediction is that he shall be King of Scotland in future. Both Macbeth and Banquo are taken aback by the suddenness of the predictions as well by their unusual nature.

7. What prediction do the Witches make for Banquo?

Ans— When the Witches make the incredulous predictions for Macbeth, Banquo refuses to believe in them. He challenges the Witches to make predictions for him too. Before disappearing the Witches predict that Banquo shall never be King but his sons shall be kings. This literally seals Banquo's fate because the prediction regarding Banquo is likely to place a fruitless crown on Macbeth's head if he does become King.

8. Why does Macbeth say that 'present fears are less than horrible imaginings'?

Ans—When Macbeth gets to know about the three predictions his latent desire for power is aroused as his hamartia. He feels the desire to fulfill the third prediction but on the other hand he has this 'horrible imagining' that his wish fulfillment shall be at the cost of the life and safety of Duncan.

9. What is meant by 'Golgotha'?

Ans-- 'Golgotha' means a place of skulls. It is the name of a place near Jerusalem where public executions took place.

10. Comment on Macbeth's letter and Lady Macbeth's reply?

Ans-- Macbeth has written in a clear and ordered manner and has kept his excitement in check. The letter is in prose and Lady Macbeth's response to it is in blank verse. His language is largely non-figurative (literal). Lady Macbeth's speech is strong in both rhythms and imagery. She is immediately more passionate about the prospect before them than Macbeth has so far been.

11. Explain the lines:

I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way:

Ans- Rather than the simple meaning of 'Lady Macbeth thinks Macbeth is too kind to kill Duncan,' it can be a general reflection human nature .Lady Macbeth fears Macbeth's '*nature*', she says. But she doesn't simply mean that he's too weak for the job. It is his *human* nature which is at fault. According to her speech , it can be said that To become truly great we must be prepared to deny our inheritance and act ruthlessly in our own self-interest. So Lady Macbeth, in other words, wants Mankind to take a different path in his evolution.

12. Does Macbeth have a conscience?

Ans- Conscience is often confused with guilt. Macbeth has both, but it helps to distinguish between the two when analyzing Macbeth's character and behavior. Conscience is our innate sense of right and wrong. Our conscience guides our decision-making process, particularly when the decision involves considerations of right and wrong. Guilt arises from a realization that we've done something wrong or that we've harmed someone, whether we intended to harm them or not. Conscience comes into play *before* we do something. Guilt is the feeling we have *after* we've done something that our conscience tells us was wrong.

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