

Macbeth Quotations

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"Fair is foul, and foul is fair."

Explanation:

The witches say this in Act 1, Scene 1. It means that appearances are often deceiving—what seems good may be bad, and what seems bad may be good.

"First Witch: All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee Thane of Glamis."

Second Witch: All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee Thane of Cawdor."

Third Witch: All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter."

Explanation:

The three witches greet Macbeth in Act 1, Scene 3 with these prophecies. They are predicting his titles—first as Thane of Glamis (his current title), then Thane of Cawdor (which he will soon get), and finally as King (which he will later become). This prophecy starts Macbeth's ambition and sets the plot in motion.

"Look like th' innocent flower, but be the serpent under 't."

Explanation:

Lady Macbeth says this in Act 1, Scene 5. She tells Macbeth to pretend to be kind and innocent, but secretly be dangerous.

"Is this a dagger which I see before me, The handle toward my hand?"

Explanation:

Macbeth says this in Act 2, Scene 1, before killing Duncan. He is hallucinating a bloody dagger, showing his guilt and fear.

"Macbeth does murder sleep."

Explanation:

Macbeth says this in Act 2, Scene 2, after killing Duncan. It means that Macbeth has destroyed his own peace and will not have restful sleep anymore.

"Out, damned spot! Out, I say!"

Explanation:

Lady Macbeth says this in Act 5, Scene 1, while sleepwalking. She imagines blood on her hands, showing her deep guilt that she cannot erase.

"Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow"

Explanation:

Macbeth says this in Act 5, Scene 5, after hearing about Lady Macbeth's death. He reflects on how meaningless and short life is.

"None of woman born shall harm Macbeth."

Explanation:

The witches (apparition) say this in Act 4, Scene 1. Macbeth feels he is invincible, but this is actually misleading—Macduff reveals he was not born naturally.

"Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player..."

It is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing."

Explanation:

Macbeth says this in Act 5, Scene 5 after learning of Lady Macbeth's death. He feels hopeless, describing life as meaningless—a fleeting shadow, an actor on stage quickly forgotten, and a noisy story told by a fool that means nothing.

"I have no words; My voice is in my sword."

Explanation:

Macduff says this in Act 5, Scene 8, during his final confrontation with Macbeth. He is so full of anger and grief that he does not want to talk anymore; instead, he will show his feelings and seek justice through action—by fighting Macbeth with his sword.

“Double, double toil and trouble:”

Explanation:

The witches chant this in Act 4, Scene 1 while making a magic potion. It means “more and more hard work and trouble”—they are creating greater chaos and dark magic, which will bring more problems for Macbeth.

“What's done cannot be undone.”

Explanation:

Lady Macbeth says this in Act 5, Scene 1. She means that what’s already happened (their crimes) cannot be changed or erased, so there is no point in regretting it now.

“All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.”

Explanation:

Lady Macbeth says this in Act 5, Scene 1. She is overcome with guilt for her crimes and imagines that her hands still smell of blood, and that no amount of perfume can remove the scent.