

**Macbeth: The Most Revealing Moments**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Act 1** | | |
| Moment | Quotation | What is revealed |
|  | “thunder and lightning”  “multiplying villainies of nature” | +reveals the main themes of the play at the beginning. |
|  | “Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more.” | +revealing the Witches’ skill in taking possession of Macbeth using words rather than magic. |
|  | “Why do I yield to that suggestion…?” | +revealing the weakness inside Macbeth is his **ambition** – and he is beginning to give into it. |
|  | “That is a step on which I must fall down or else o’erleap” | +revealing that Macbeth feels jealous and betrayed by Duncan – despite being rewarded by the King. |
|  | “Thou art too full of the milk of human kindness” | +reveals Lady Macbeth’s twisted view of morality – she views empathy and innocence as a weakness. |
|  | “take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers”. | +revealing how Lady Macbeth associates innocence with the female body – and how she rejects nature. |
|  | “look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it”. | +reveals Shakespeare’s specific reference to the story of Genesis – connecting the Macbeths to Lucifer and the Fall of Man. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Act 2** | | |
| Moment | Quotation | What is revealed |
| Macbeth’s Third Soliloquy – Macbeth changes his mind. | “[Duncan’s] virtues will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued against [his murder]”. | +revealing that Macbeth’s **conscience** recognises the sin that he will commit and the danger of giving into ambition. |
| Lady Macbeth’s uses emotional blackmail to corrupt Macbeth. | “Woulds’t thou live a coward ... like the poor cat?” | +revealing Lady Macbeth’s intelligence and her skill in **manipulating** and corrupting her husband. |
| Banquo prays to God to stop his dreams of the Wyrd Sisters. | “Merciful powers, restrain in me the cursed thoughts” | +reveals a contrast to Macbeth. Banquo is tempted, but he is seeking God’s help to resist the **corruption** of ambition. |
| Macbeth’s Fourth Soliloquy –  Macbeth embraces dark images and chooses to follow the bloody dagger. | “witchcraft celebrates pale Hecate’s offerings” | +reveals Macbeth’s fall to the forces of darkness. |
| Macbeth cannot say “amen” because of his murderous thoughts. | “the word stuck in my throat” | +reveals Macbeth’s **damnation** and God’s judgement. |
| Macbeth recalls hearing a ghostly voice cursing him for his murder of Duncan. | “Macbeth shall sleep no more” | +reveals Macbeth’s loss of innocence – as a good night’s sleep is associated with a clear conscience. Macbeth will not sleep again. |
| Macbeth and Lady Macbeth wash Duncan’s blood from their hands. | “All Great Neptune’s water”  “A little water clears us” | +reveals the contrast between Macbeth and his wife in the immediate aftermath of Duncan’s death. |
| Macbeth embraces his **Machiavellian** **deceptions**. | “Here lay Duncan, his silver skin laced with his golden blood” | +reveals a major twist in Macbeth’s character. A moment ago, he was panicking – now he is putting on a “false face”. |
| Malcolm and Donalbain feel threatened and flee. | “There’s daggers in mens’ smiles” | +reveals a theme of the play – do not trust people based on their superficial appearance. |
| The Old Man and Ross discuss the strange turmoil in nature. | “dark night strangles the [sun]”  “A falcon” was killed by a “mousing owl” | +reveals the effect of Macbeth’s treachery – nature has been corrupted. The falcon symbolises Duncan, the owl symbolises Macbeth. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Act 3** | | |
| Moment | Quotation | What is revealed |
| Banquo’s Soliloquy Opens Act Three – He suspects Macbeth. | “Played most foully” | +reveals Banquo’s suspicions that Macbeth has been **corrupted** by **treachery**. |
| Macbeth’s Fifth Soliloquy | “defiled my mind”  “seed of Banquo”  “Barren sceptre” | +reveals Macbeth’s fears that he has **corrupted** his mind to benefit Banquo’s **legacy** |
| Macbeth convinces the murderers that Banquo is their enemy. |  | +reveals Macbeth’s ability to corrupt and manipulate others. |
| The murder of Banquo and the escaper of Fleance. |  | +revealing the role of fate in thwarting Macbeth’s plans. It suggests that he cannot escape his tragic **inevitability**. |
| Macbeth hints at scorpions in his mind, but wants to protect Lady Macbeth from his **treacherous** plans. | “full of scorpions is my mind”  “Be innocent of the knowledge dearest chuck” | +reveals Macbeth’s growing obsession and corruption.  +also reveals **either** his growing distance from LM…  +**or** his love and care for her. |
| Macbeth hypocritically “toasts” Banquo – and invokes his friend’s ghost. | “Our dear friend Banquo, who we miss” | +This moment reveals Macbeth’s lack of remorse and suggests that he may be:  Guilty  Ashamed  Selfishly Afraid  Cursed by God |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Act 4** | | |
| Moment | Quotation | What is revealed |
| Hecate communicates with the witches. |  | +revealing the darker powers that the Witches work for are real and powerful. |
| Macbeth seeks out the witches and desires further prophecies. | “None of woman born shall harm Macbeth” | +revealing Macbeth’s obsession with his **legacy** and his reliance of dark and **corrupting** forces.  +revealing his trust in the Witches (clearly) riddling language. |
| The parade of Banquo’s heirs are presented to Macbeth. | “Thy crown does sear my eye-balls” | +revealing Macbeth’s realisation that his **legacy** is now doomed. He has no future left to fight for. |
| The graphic murder of Lady Macduff and her children. | “Mother, I am slain” | +reveals Macbeth’s true cowardice and corruption – he will destroy innocence to protect himself. |
| Malcolm compares Macbeth to Lucifer. | “Angels are bright still, though the brightest [Lucifer] fell – all things foul would wear the [mask] of grace”. | +reveals that Malcolm understands how corrupt souls hide behind attractive facades. His father did not grasp this. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Act 5** | | |
| Moment | Quotation | What is revealed |
| Lady Macbeth’s fear of the dark and her sleepwalking | “Hell is murky” | +reveals Lady Macbeth’s true nature – she feels guilt and regret. It suggests that Shakespeare sympathises with her. |
| Lady Macbeth cannot wash her hands clean of invisible blood. | “all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand” | +reveals that Macbeth was right about “Neptune’s Ocean” back in Act 2. |
| The Doctor’s lesson for Macbeth. | “The patient must minister to himself” | +revealing that the only way to cure a corrupted soul or mind is through true repentance from the sinner. Macbeth does not see the need to repent. |
| Macbeth’s Sixth and final soliloquy. | “Life’s but a walking shadow” | +revealing Macbeth’s tired and weary belief that life is meaningless. After everything – his power means nothing. |
| Macbeth’s bravery in the final battle. | “Blow wind! Come wrack! At least we’ll die with harness on our back” | +reveals Macbeth’s lost valour. It reminds the audience of what he was and should have been. |
| Macduff’s Revenge | “Despair thy charm” | +revealing the witches’ true treachery – they knew all along. It also reveals the restoration of order and justice through MacDuff’s actions. |
| Malcolm is Crowned King | “The time is free” (MacDuff) | +revealing the true conclusion of tragedy – the restoration of order and justice. |