

By the end of studying Macbeth – **Act 3, Scene 1** I need to know;

**Plot:** In this Act 3 scene 1, Banquo remembers the Witches' prophecies and suspects Macbeth of Duncan's murder. Macbeth arranges for the murder of Banquo and his son Fleance.

**Key Ideas:** Macbeth trying to gain an insight into Banquo's plans/travel as he plans to have him murdered.

<p><b>Vocabulary</b></p>	<p><b>Stand..posterity</b> (4) continue in your family    <b>Sennet</b> (s.d) a set of notes played on the trumpet    <b>verities</b> (8) true predictions    <b>all-thing</b> (13)totally  <b>solemn</b> (14) ceremonious    <b>still</b> (21) always    <b>grave and prosperous</b> (21) weighty and profitable    <b>invention</b> (32) lies    <b>craving us jointly</b> (34)  <b>parricide</b> (31) murder of a parent    <b>our time...upons</b> (36) It is time for us to go    <b>While</b> (44) till    <b>Thus</b> (47) king    <b>Would</b> (50) must  <b>Dauntless temper</b> (51) fearless quality    <b>Genius is rebuked</b> (55) guardian spirit is held down    <b>Chid</b> (56) challenged    <b>Sceptre</b> (61) symbol of the king  <b>Unilineal</b> (62)outside my family    <b>Issue</b> (64) descendants    <b>Filed</b> (64) defiled, corrupted    <b>fil'd my mind</b> (64) defiled my guiltless conscience  <b>rancours...peace</b> (66) bitterness in my calm of mind    <b>eternal jewel</b> (67) immortal soul    <b>Enemy of Man</b> (68) the Devil    <b>List</b> (70) struggle (tournament)  <b>Champion...utterance</b> (71) fight me to the death    <b>Made good</b> (78) explained    <b>Passed in probation</b> (79) showed the proof  <b>borne in hand . . . cross'd</b> (80) deceived, double-crossed    <b>half ...crazed</b> (82) a simpleton    <b>so gospelled</b> (87) such Christians    <b>yours</b> (90) your families  <b>hounds...demi-wolves</b> (92-93) different breeds of dogs    <b>clept</b> (93) called    <b>valued file</b> (94) list showing the qualities and value  <b>particular addition</b> (99) individual description    <b>file...rank</b> (101-102) the position of men in the army; file suggests more quality    <b>grapples</b> (105) holds you tight  <b>his</b> (106) Banquo's    <b>tugged with</b> (111) pulled about by    <b>in such bloody distance</b> (115) of such a fatal closeness    <b>near'st of life</b> (117) very being  <b>avouch</b> (119) justify    <b>for</b> (120) because of    <b>wail</b> (121) must lament    <b>sundry</b> (125) various    <b>perfect spy</b> (129) exact information  <b>something</b> (131) some distance    <b>thought</b> (131) bearing in mind    <b>clearness</b> (132) clean reputation    <b>rubs nor botches</b> (133) flaws or mistakes  <b>material</b> (135) important    <b>embrace</b> (136) share    <b>resolve</b> (137) make your plan    <b>Straight</b> (139) immediately</p>	<p><b>Reading:</b></p> <p>Read to the punctuation</p> <p>Macbeth speaks in a rhyming couplet in the last two lines of the scene. This makes him sound decisive and reminds the audience of the last lines of Act 2 scene 1</p>
<p><b>Context</b></p>	<p>The question whether one person's ambition should or could be more important than the common good is clearly evident in act 3 scene 1 as, Macbeth's ambitious thoughts are slowly forcing him to commit heinous murders. Macbeth says some very flattering things about Banquo in this scene. Macbeth claims that Banquo has a 'royalty of nature' (line 48) "wisdom" and "valour" (line 51) One of the reasons why Shakespeare might have Macbeth say these lines is that the real Banquo was thought to be an ancestor of King James I</p>	<p><b>Links across the text:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act V</li> <li>• Change in Macbeth's character from Act 1 scene 3, to act 3 scene 1.</li> <li>• In Act 1, Macbeth was shocked by the thought of murdering Duncan but there's no hesitation when he orders the killing of Banquo. Murder has become easy.</li> <li>• Line 90-Macbeth's speech echoes Lady Macbeth's in Act 1 scene 7. He questions the murderers' masculinity to make them do what he wants.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Themes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ambition</b> – Macbeth's ambition and desires to continue to be king. Banquo hopes the predictions will come true. He's ambitious, but unlike Macbeth, he isn't corrupted by his ambition.</li> <li>• <b>Reality and appearance</b>- Macbeth flatters Banquo to make him feel safe and to find out his whereabouts so he can have him murdered that evening.</li> <li>• <b>Guilt</b> - The murder of Duncan, which weighs so heavily on Macbeth's conscience</li> <li>• <b>Deception</b> – Macbeth deceives Banquo as he is plotting his murder</li> <li>• <b>Fear</b> – Macbeth's fear of losing the crown to Banquo's sons</li> <li>• <b>Fate</b> – As Macbeth becomes obsessed with fate and the witch's prophecy he speaks as if he's challenging fate to a fight. He believes that he can challenge fate by killing Banquo and his children.</li> <li>• <b>Violence</b> - the violence through which Macbeth takes the throne. As Macbeth himself says after seeing Banquo's ghost, "blood will to blood." Violence leads to violence, a vicious cycle.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Deeper understanding</b></p>	<p>Banquo's short soliloquy has two purposes: It reminds the audience of the details of the Witches' prophecy in Act I, and it reveals his own suspicion that Macbeth is Duncan's murderer. Ironically, his tone also recalls the ambitious tone of Macbeth in earlier scenes.</p> <p>Macbeth and his wife make arrangements for the feast with all the confidence of their new rank. Note particularly Macbeth's adoption of the royal "we," The use of the plural in place of the singular pronoun is a traditional figure of speech by which the monarch expresses not only unity with his people but also his absolute authority over them. Banquo, once equal in status with Macbeth, acknowledges Macbeth's new position by addressing him throughout the scene as "my lord."</p> <p>Other aspects of language confirm Macbeth's new status: strong verse rhythms, for example, appear in lines such as "Here's our chief guest" and "Fail not our feast." Macbeth's apparent disregard for time — of which he now has plenty — is clear in expressions such as "but we'll take tomorrow" and "But of that tomorrow." The word "tomorrow," like "hereafter," is full of irony in <i>Macbeth</i>. Tomorrow should be full of hope for the future, but the word comes back to haunt him later in the play. His use of the word here foreshadows the famous "Tomorrow and tomorrow" speech in Act V.</p> <p>Even with his new title and robes of office, Macbeth does not feel entirely at ease: The security of his kingship rests partly on his own children's succession to the crown of Scotland. However, because he has no children of his own, his treacherous act of regicide — the murder of a king — appears pointless and has been committed on behalf of <i>Banquo's</i> promised successors. The soliloquy that Macbeth delivers is filled with the language of contrast. His split with Banquo is emphasized by opposing pronouns: "They hailed <i>him</i> father to a line of kings: / Upon <i>my</i> head they placed a <i>fruitless</i> crown, / And put a <i>barren</i> sceptre in <i>my</i> grip . . ." (60-62).</p>	

	<p>The line "To make <i>them</i> kings, <i>the seed of Banquo</i> kings!" (70) is almost incredulous, as if Macbeth is trying to convince himself that the Witches could not possibly have spoken the truth. Whereas Banquo still trusts in the fateful prophecy, Macbeth is all too ready to dismiss it. In Act I, Scene 2, the wounded captain reported that Macbeth the warrior-hero was prepared to disdain Fortune. Now Macbeth the murderer goes one step further by literally challenging Fate itself to a tournament (or "list"): "Rather than so, come, fate, into the list / And champion me to the utterance" (71-72). Note that the verb "to champion" here has its original meaning: to fight <i>against</i>, not <i>for</i>.</p> <p>The entry of the hired murderers is a crucial element in the development of Macbeth's character. His use of others to do his dirty work presents him as politically powerful but morally weak. Long gone are the days when Macbeth would meet his enemy "front to front." Now he must commit murder with the seeming protection of distance — "something [distant] from the palace" (133). Shakespeare also contrasts ironically the murderers' pragmatic reaction to the idea of murder with Macbeth's conscience-stricken one.</p> <p>The dialogue of the first part of the scene reveals that Macbeth has met the murderers before. Both then and now, he must convince them to work on his behalf. Whether true or not (we have no evidence), he kindles, or re-kindles, in them, a hatred of Banquo: "Know that it was he . . . ," "This I made good to you in our last conference," "Do you find your patience so predominant in your nature that you can let this go?" The tone of these quotations is more than simply interrogative; Macbeth must ensure that the men are not persuaded by the slightest moral scruple, the slightest sympathy for Banquo, to betray the plan. Such a reaction would be entirely natural and human, but that humanity is precisely what Macbeth cannot now allow. Therefore, when the First Murderer replies, "We are men, my liege," Macbeth cuts off his speech and, in a sequence of powerful metaphors, reduces the humanity of these murderers to the level of beasts: "Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men, / As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs / . . . and demi-wolves are clept [called] / All by the name of dogs" (93-96).</p> <p>Although Macbeth flatters the Murderers by suggesting that the business of Banquo's murder will elevate them above the common rank, his ironic tone reveals that he thinks of them as little more than beasts. Doubly ironic, then, is that this entire speech is admission to himself of his own inhumanity and imperfection: Macbeth himself is acting like a "demi-wolf." The lines are triply ironic when we see that indeed the murderers are, themselves, imperfect in carrying out his instructions for the "perfect" crime.</p> <p>This notion of perfection is one that now comes to dominate Macbeth's thoughts. Banquo's death would make Macbeth's "health . . . perfect"; and the crime must be committed at "the perfect'st spy of the time" (the exact hour). Both of these quotations foreshadow Macbeth's line in Act III, Scene 4, when, hearing of the botched attempt to kill Fleance, he remarks "I had else been perfect." The tragic assumption that one can commit a perfect crime and escape the consequences is about to be tested.</p> <p>As if to impress us with the connection between the killing of the king (the blame for which could, after all, be laid at the door of Fate) and the killing of Banquo (blame for which most definitely cannot), the final couplet ("It is concluded: Banquo, they soul's flight, / If it find heaven, must find it out tonight") ironically recalls the words spoken by Macbeth immediately prior to his killing of King Duncan: "Hear it not Duncan, for it is a bell / That summons thee to Heaven, or to Hell."</p>
<b>Quotes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banquo acknowledges Macbeth's new position by addressing him throughout the scene as <b>"my lord."</b></li> <li>• <b>"Here's our chief guest"</b> and <b>"Fail not our feast."</b></li> <li>• Expressions such as <b>"but we'll take tomorrow"</b> and <b>"But of that tomorrow."</b> The word <b>"tomorrow,"</b> like <b>"hereafter,"</b> is full of irony in Macbeth. Tomorrow should be full of hope for the future, but the word comes back to haunt him later in the play. His use of the word here foreshadows the famous "Tomorrow and tomorrow" speech in Act V.</li> <li>• <b>"They hailed him father to a line of kings: / Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown, / And put a barren sceptre in my grip . . . "</b></li> <li>• <b>"to be thus is nothing/but to be safely thus!"</b> The manipulation of others is a sign of a tyrant. His elaborate briefing is Macbeth convincing himself of his plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Terminology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soliloquy</li> <li>• Symbolism</li> <li>• Irony</li> <li>• Imagery of night 'I must become a borrower of the night / For a dark hour, or twain.'</li> <li>• Climax of Macbeth's turning point - Marks the turning point of the play. Up to this point things have gone well for the main character – now things will go rapidly downhill</li> <li>• Tyrant</li> <li>• Fate</li> </ul>