

## **Macbeth(Praveen Bhatia 1996)**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The book titles "Macbeth" would be source of information to the readers and scholars. An emphasis has been laid on the Shakespears Works, story of the play, act-wise summary, passages for explanation Supernatural elements in Macbeth.

The first and second chapters of the book deals with the life and works of shakespeare.

William Shakespeare was an English poet and playwright who is considered one of the greatest writers to ever use the English language. He is also the most famous playwright in the world, with his plays being translated in over 50 languages and performed across the globe for audiences of all ages. Known colloquially as "The Bard" or "The Bard of Avon," Shakespeare was also an actor and the creator of the Globe Theatre, a historical theatre, and company that is visited by hundreds of thousands of tourists. His works span tragedy, comedy, and historical works, both in poetry and prose. And although the man is the most-recognized playwright in the world, very little of his life is actually known. No known autobiographical letters or diaries have survived to modern day, and with no surviving descendants. This has led to many interpretations of his life and works, creating a legend out of the commoner from Stratford-upon-Avon who rose to prominence and in the process wrote many of the seminal works that provide the foundation for the current English language.

#### **Life Before The Stage**

The exact date of Shakespeare's birth is unknown, but it is accepted that he was born in April of 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, England, and baptized in the same month. He was the son of John Shakespeare, an alderman, and Mary Arden, the daughter of the family's landlord and a well-respected farmer. He was one of eight children and lived to be the eldest surviving son of the family.

Shakespeare was educated at the King's New School, a free chartered grammar school that was located in Stratford. There he studied the basic Latin text and grammar, much of which was standardized across the country by Royal decree. He was also known to partake in the theatre while at the school as was the custom at the time. As a commoner, Shakespeare's education was thought to finish at the grammar school level as there is no record of him attending university, which was a luxury reserved for upper-class families.

Shakespeare wrote at least 38 plays and over 150 short and long poems, many of which are considered to be the finest ever written in English. His works have been translated into every major living language, and some others besides (the Folger's holdings include translations in Esperanto and Klingon), and nearly 400 years after his death, they continue to be performed around the world.

#### **Comedies**

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All's Well That Ends Well  
As You Like It  
The Comedy of Errors  
Love's Labor's Lost  
Measure for Measure  
The Merchant of Venice  
The Merry Wives of Windsor  
A Midsummer Night's Dream  
Much Ado About Nothing  
The Taming of the Shrew  
Twelfth Night  
The Two Gentlemen of Verona

The Two Noble Kinsmen

**Histories**

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Henry IV, Part 1  
Henry IV, Part 2  
Henry V  
Henry VI, Part 1  
Henry VI, Part 2  
Henry VI, Part 3  
Henry VIII  
King John  
Richard II  
Richard III

**Tragedies**

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Antony and Cleopatra  
Coriolanus  
Hamlet  
Julius Caesar  
King Lear  
Macbeth  
Othello  
Romeo and Juliet  
Timon of Athens  
Titus Andronicus  
Troilus and Cressida

**Romances**

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Cymbeline  
Pericles  
The Tempest  
The Winter's Tale

**Poems**

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Lucrece  
The Phoenix and Turtle  
Sonnets  
Venus and Adonis

The chapter third deals with the story of the play. On a bleak Scottish moorland, Macbeth and Banquo, two of King Duncan's generals, discover three strange women (witches). They prophesy that Macbeth will be promoted, eventually becoming King of Scotland, while Banquo's descendants shall be kings (Banquo is not promised any kingdom himself, which isn't much fun for Banquo). The generals want to hear more, but the "weird sisters" disappear. Afterwards, King Duncan names Macbeth Thane of Cawdor (a rank of the aristocracy bestowed by grateful kings) in thanks for his success in the recent battles, which seems to support the prophecy. He then proposes to make a brief visit that night to Macbeth's castle at Inverness.

Lady Macbeth receives news from her husband about the prophecy and his new title, and she vows to help him become king by whatever means are necessary (\*ominous music\*). Macbeth's return is followed almost at once by Duncan's arrival and a feast is prepared. The Macbeths plot together to kill Duncan, and wait until everyone is asleep. At the appointed time, Lady Macbeth gives the guards drugged wine while Macbeth kills the King. He regrets doing so almost immediately, but is reassured by his wife. She leaves the bloody daggers by the dead king just before Macduff arrives. When the murder is discovered, Macbeth kills the drunken guards in rage and retribution. Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, flee, fearing for their own lives; but they are nevertheless blamed for the murder.

Macbeth is elected King of Scotland, but is plagued by feelings of insecurity. Knowing of the prophecy that Banquo's descendants will inherit the throne, he arranges for Banquo and his son Fleance to be killed. In the darkness, Banquo is murdered but the boy, his son, escapes the assassins. That night, at his state banquet, Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo and worries the courtiers with his mad response. Lady Macbeth, now Queen, dismisses the court and tries unsuccessfully to calm her husband.

Macbeth seeks out the witches and learns from them that he will be safe until a local wood marches into battle against him. He need not fear anyone born of woman (that sounds secure, no loop-holes here); but the

Scottish succession will come from Banquo's son. Macbeth embarks on a reign of terror and many, including Macduff's family, are slaughtered. Macduff, pained with grief, has himself gone to seek Malcolm (one of Duncan's sons who fled) at the court of the English king. Malcolm is young and unsure of himself, but Macduff persuades him to lead an army against Macbeth. Macbeth feels safe in his remote castle at Dunsinane until he is told that Birnam Wood is moving towards him--Malcolm's army is carrying branches from the forest as camouflage for their assault on the stronghold. Meanwhile, an overwrought and conscience-ridden Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep and tells her secrets to her doctor. As the final battle commences, Macbeth hears of Lady Macbeth's death and is struck with mourning. In the midst of a losing battle, Macduff challenges Macbeth. On learning that his adversary is the child of a caesarean birth (loophole!), Macbeth realises that he is doomed and submits to his enemy. Macduff triumphs and brings the head of the traitor Macbeth to Malcolm, who declares peace and goes to Scone to be crowned king in his turn. The next chapter consists of act-wise summary of the play which helps the reader to understand the play more precisely.

The last chapter deals with the different questions and answers related to the play like Macbeth as a tragedy, conflict in Macbeth, role of the supernatural elements etc. Consider the use that Shakespeare makes magnificent use of the supernatural elements in the play Macbeth.

In the Shakespearean era, there was an eruption of superstition and alleged witchcraft. The people of that time had strong hatred for the 'devil worshipping' witches and had various trials and tests to determine their fate. Shakespeare used this as inspiration for his play 'Macbeth'

We see the character of Macbeth go through a personality transformation after a powerful predicament from Three witches. Starting as the highly thought of thane of Glamis, Macbeth is told he shall become thane of Cawdor and then king. The witches, quickly portrayed as evil, could have predicted these events, or simply planted the idea in Macbeth's head, to exploit his fatal flaw.

As the play begins, we are introduced to the witches. They speak in rhyming couplets, just as all supernatural elements in Shakespeare's work do. This could have been to let the audience, which would have been aware of this technique, that the witches are in fact, or simply appear magical. The stage directions indicate "thunder and lightning," every time the witches appear, this same stage direction is given throughout the play to set the intended atmosphere, this is pathetic fallacy. The witches discuss the soon to come meeting with Macbeth, "apon the heath" "there to meet Macbeth"(Act1,scene1) Thus showing the witches knew about Macbeth before the meeting and the predictions were intentionally given.

As Macbeth returns from a victorious war, he is unaware of the forthcoming encounter with the witches. Before he arrives 'apon the heath' the witches show a first glimpse of evil, one tells a tale of a woman whose husband she will now curse. "he shall live a man forbid." ...

At this moment Macbeth realises his fate, and fights to his death with Macduff. Malcolm then becomes the king of the scotland and the Macbeth's head was placed on a steak.

To conclude Shakespeare used the supernatural, to show how easily someone's fatal flaw can be exploited to bring them to an end. This is extremely relevant to his audience at that time as well, no one knows, but Shakespeare could have been a non believer in the supernatural and wanted to show it as a figment of the mind, that can only result in insanity or he could have believed the popular opinion that the supernatural did exist and caused terror and evil throughout that period. Either way he wrote Macbeth in such a way to leave some questions about the supernatural in peoples mind.