

Macbeth

Read this extract from Act 5, Scene 5. The final battle is at its height when Macbeth hears the news that his wife has died.

MACBETH

Wherefore was that cry?

SEYTON

The queen, my lord, is dead.

MACBETH

She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Hereafter: at a later time

Petty: trivial, meaningless

Player: actor

Frets: raves

‘On his wife’s death Macbeth finally realises how completely he has lost all that once mattered to him: he is left in despair.’

Starting with this speech explore how far you agree with this statement.

Write about:

- what Macbeth says in this speech
- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth in the play as a whole.

[30 marks] AO4 [4 marks]

‘On his wife’s death Macbeth finally realises how completely he has lost all that once mattered to him: he is left in despair.’

- **how Shakespeare presents Macbeth in the play as a whole.**

Which quotations will you use and how will you use them? Remember to address AO2 - Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to *create meanings and effects*, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

‘Brave Macbeth’: the hero and the prophecies...

- I.i. “brave Macbeth – well he deserves that name – “
- I.ii “what he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.”
- I.iii “Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.”
- I.iii “This supernatural soliciting/ cannot be ill, cannot be good.”

Macbeth murders his King and faces the consequences to his peace of mind...

- I.iv “Stars hide your fires/ let not light see my black and deep desires...”
- I.v. “My dearest love/ Duncan comes here tonight.”
- I.vii. “I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent, but only/ Vaulting ambition...”
- “We will proceed no further in this business.”
- II.i “...art thou but/ A dagger of the mind, a false creation / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?”
- II.ii “Sleep no more: Macbeth doth murder sleep”
- “Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood /clean from my hand?”
- “My hands are of your colour but I shame/ To wear a heart so white.”

Macbeth’s mind grows more troubled and he questions the benefits of what he has done ...

- III.i “To be thus is nothing/ But to be safely thus.”
- “Upon my head they plac’d a fruitless crown...”
- III.ii “Better to be with the dead/ Whom we...have sent to peace...”
- “O full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!”
- III.v. “It will have blood they say: blood will have blood.”
- “..I am bent to know/ By the worst means...the worst.”

Macbeth’s final scenes – his tarnished reputation and fatalistic attitude ...

- IV. iii “Not in the legions/ of horrid hell can come a devil more damn’d/ In evils to top Macbeth.”
- V.iii “I am sick at heart...”
- “I have liv’d long enough. My way of life/ Is fall’n into the sere...”
- V.v “At least we’ll die with harness on our backs.”
- V.viii “...be those juggling fiends no more believ’d/That palter with us in a double sense.”
- V. ix “...this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen.”