

Macbeth

Discuss the ways in which Shakespeare is able to tell us a dramatic story. Consider the developing plot up until the death of Duncan.

Introduction

Macbeth is one of Shakespeare's most famous tragedies and it is a good example of how Shakespeare can produce a dramatic story for the audience using the development of the characters, the intricacies of the plot, poetic devices and other elements of a play. By analysing a short section of the play i.e. up to the death of Duncan, we can find many different examples of such dramatic story telling which add to the value of the play and the pleasure derived from it. It would be best if an examination is made of the play in a scene by scene manner so as to clarify the points of interest in each scene.

The Witches and the King

The first group of characters which are introduced to the audiences are the three witches who come across as forerunners of the story. They set up the situation for their meeting with Macbeth after the battle has been won and lost. Of course at this point the audience has little idea about the battle which will be won by one side and lost by the other and neither do they know about Macbeth. However, even from these words it can be assumed that Macbeth would be the winner of the coming battle since the witches will meet him after a battle has been won and lost. Macbeth could not meet them if he lost the battle and resultantly died.

This foreshadowing is confirmed in Act 1, Scene 2 where the injured soldier confirms that brave Macbeth has been successful in defeating the rebels against Duncan and is victorious in battle. In the same scene, Duncan comes across as another important character and he seems to be a just and noble king based on the respect he is given and the rewards he gives to his cousin Macbeth for the victory over the rebels. Duncan sends a messenger to Macbeth telling him that he shall become the Thane of Cawdor.

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