

PG TRB ENGLISH

UNIT-V

UNIT-V-SHAKESPEARE

Drama

For Detailed Study

- 1) Macbeth
- 2) The Tempest

For Non- Detailed Study

- 1) Henry-IV Part-I:
- 2) Measure for Measure
- 3) Antony and Cleopatra

A general knowledge of the other plays, poems and sonnets of Shakespeare is expected of the candidates.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare's Birth and parentage

Shakespeare was born in 1564 at Stratford-on-Avon in England. His father John Shakespeare was a well-to-do farmer and trader of the village. His mother Mary Arden came of a noble family. He entered the village grammar school at the age of six. He left school at the age of 12 when his father's fortunes began to decline.

Shakespeare goes to London to seek his fortune

When he was nineteen, William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, eight years' his senior. The marriage was not altogether a happy one. They were blessed with three children, Susanna, Hamnet and Judith. We next learn about Shakespeare that he went to London to seek his fortune. There the drama was gaining popularity through the University Wits. Shakespeare first became an actor. He soon started on his career as a playwright by recasting plays and changing them to suit the tastes of the playgoers of the day. He dedicated his lone poem 'Venus and Adonis' (1593) to the Earl of Southampton and won favours from the court. He soon reached the top of the ladder of fame. He retired to his village in 1612 and died in 1616.

Period of apprenticeship

Shakespeare wrote and produced plays from 1590 to 1612, a period of twenty –two years. His career as a playwright may be clearly divided into four periods. The first period 1588 to 1594 was a period of apprenticeship. He altered old plays or worked in collaboration with popular dramatists. His first independent plays was Love's Labour's Lost. The plot of the plays was, unlike the plots of other plays, very probably his own. He wrote next The comedy of Errors, a farce full of fun and frolic. His next play The Two Gentlemen of Verona, was a delightful romantic comedy. He then wrote Richard II, his first successful historical tragedy. In this of course, he followed the method of Marlowe's success in Edward II. He next wrote Romeo and Juliet, a moving poetic tragedy of love. The last play he wrote in the period of his apprenticeship was A Midsummer Night's Dream rich in fantasy, poetry and humour.

Shakespeare is now in the world

During the second period 1595 to 1600, he wrote mature, joyous comedies and his great English historical plays. In this period, Shakespeare had shed much of this crudeness and affections. His work is robust and strong. It is in this period that he wrote his three exquisitely delightful romantic comedies-Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It and Twelfth Night. He also wrote the two boisterous farcical comedies-Merry wives of Windsor

and *The Taming of the Shrew*. He next wrote *The Merchant of Venice*, a tragi-comedy, based on three fantastic tales of 'the caskets', 'the pound of flesh', and 'the ring'. During this period, Shakespeare also wrote his great English histories –Richard II, Henry V. These Plays unroll before our eyes she splendid panorama of the history of England.

Shakespeare 'in the depths'

The third period, 1600-1608, is marked by the production of the four great tragedies- *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear* as also his great Roman plays *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*. During this period, Shakespeare also wrote what are called his dark comedies. *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida*.

Shakespeare 'on the heights'

We come next to the fourth and last period Shakespeare's creative activity, (1608-1611). This is the period of Shakespeare's great dramatic romances *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. In these plays the dramatist shows that he has acquired perfect serenity after the darkness and tragic suffering of his great tragedies.

Shakespeare as a poet

This resume of Shakespeare's creative work is not complete if we do not refer to the two long poems *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis* and the highly controversial 154 sonnets, addressed to *The Fair youth*, and *The Dark Lady*.

MACBETH

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Characters

- DUNCAN, King of Scotland
- MALCOLM } his sons
- DONALBAIN }
- MACBETH } generals of the King's army
- BANQUO }
- MACDUFF } noblemen of Scotland
- LENNOC }
- ROSS }
- MENTEITH }
- ANGUS }
- CAITHNESS }
- FLEANCE, son to Banquo
- SIWARD, Earl of Northumberland, general of the English forces
- Young SIWARD, His son
- SEYTON, an officer attending on Macbeth
- Boy, son to Macduff
- An English Doctor
- A Scotch Doctor
- A Sergeant
- A Porter
- An old Man.
- Lady MACBETH
- Lady MACDUFF
- Gentleman attending on Lady Macbeth.
- Lords, Gentleman , Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants, and Messengers
- Hecate
- Three Witches
- Apparitions
- Scene – Scotland ; England

A Brief Outline of the story of Macbeth

Macbeth is King Duncan's General. He defeats Duncan's enemies and, on his way back home with his lieutenant Banquo, meets three witches who predict that Macbeth will be made the Thane of Cawdor and will finally become the King of Scotland. The prediction of the witches partially comes true, as King Duncan, pleased with Macbeth's valour, promotes him to the position of the Thane of Cawdor. Duncan is invited by Macbeth to spend the night in his castle. Egged on by his wife, Macbeth murders the sleeping Duncan and, smearing the blood on the sleeping guards, puts the blame on them. To save himself, Macbeth murders the guards also. Duncan's elder son flees to England.

The witches have predicted that Banquo's descendants will become the future rulers of Scotland. So Macbeth suspects Banquo and has him also murdered. Macbeth is now made king of Scotland. At the banquet arranged to felicitate him, Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo which is, however, invisible to others. The ghost is a hallucination produced by Macbeth's fevered imagination. Banquo wants to murder Macduff also but the latter escapes to England and joins hands with Malcolm there. Lady Macbeth, wrung by her guilty conscience, betrays her involvement in her husband's crime during her sleep-walking. Macbeth consults with the witches again. They assure him that he will die only when the Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane. They also tell him that he cannot be defeated by any man born of a woman.

Malcolm and Macduff leave England and invade Scotland with their army. They are in Birnam Wood. Emboldened by the witches' prophecy, Macbeth thinks that he is quite safe, as Birnam Wood can never move to Dunsinane. But, instructed by Malcolm, his soldiers move forward, covering themselves with the branches of trees. So, the illusion of a moving forest is created. Hearing about this, Macbeth is still hopeful of winning, as, according to the witches, no man born of a woman can defeat him. Macduff challenges him to a single combat. Now, Macduff was not born in a normal manner. He was ripped from his mother's womb prematurely. Macduff beheads Macbeth. Malcolm is crowned King of Scotland.

ACT WISE SUMMARY**Act I****Scene 1****Appearance of the three witches**

Three witches appear in a desert place amidst thunder and lightning. They have just concluded a witches' Sabbath. They seem to be waiting for somebody. They aim at perverting nature. To them 'fair is foul and foul is fair'. The witches hold wickedness to be good and goodness to be wicked. This sinister statement implies that the moral world is shortly going to be turned topsy-turvy.

The opening scene strikes the keynote of the whole drama. It sets the stage for the forthcoming commotion in the moral order. Some critics have said that the opening scene is not by Shakespeare and that it is an interpolation. But Coleridge considers the opening scene authentic. Coleridge says that the witches "blend in themselves the fates and furies of the ancients with sorceresses of popular superstition".

Scene 2**News about the battle**

King Duncan appears with his sons, Malcolm and Donalbain. The King is informed by a wounded soldier that they have gained victory. Macdonald, who rebelled against King Duncan, was defeated by Macbeth and Banquo. The Thane of Cawdor, another traitor to King Duncan, was also captured by Macbeth. Duncan sentence Cawdor to death and bestows Cawdor's estates and title on Macbeth.

Scene 3**Prophecy of the witches**

The place of action is a blasted heath. Macbeth and Banquo suddenly come upon the three witches. The witches do not pay any attention to Banquo, even though he hails them. The witches turn to Macbeth and call him the Thane of Glamis, the Thane of Cawdor and the future king of Scotland. Macbeth is surprised and shocked to hear this. Banquo asks the witches to foretell his future. The witches reply that he is both lesser and greater than Macbeth. Banquo will not become a king, but his descendants will. When Macbeth puts more questions to the witches, they vanish. Now, the King's messengers Ross and Angus, arrive. They inform Macbeth that he has been made Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth now sees that the prophecy of the witches has been partially fulfilled. He is now tempted to seek its complete fulfilment.

Many critics consider the first 37 lines of this scene spurious, as these lines make out the witches to be mere practitioners of sorcery. But Coleridge feels that the witches play several different roles simultaneously. Their prophecy strengthens the evil forces in Macbeth.

The witches are capable of tempting only those who have tempted themselves. Even before meeting the witches, Macbeth has already become ambitious of becoming the future king of Scotland and that is why the witches' prophecy so readily sinks into his mind. The witches only encourage the decision that Macbeth has already taken. Banquo has no foul ambition and so he is not influenced by the witches' prophecy.

Scene 4

Macbeth's disappointment

King Duncan with his sons welcomes Macbeth and Banquo and expresses his gratitude to them. He proclaims his elder son, Malcolm, as prince of Cumberland and heir to the throne. Macbeth invites the king to his castle, Inverness, Macbeth leaves in advance to prepare for the king's reception. When left alone, Macbeth expresses his disappointment at the proclamation about Malcolm. This is a serious hindrance to Macbeth's seizing the throne and it must be removed.

Scene 5

Lady Macbeth's resolve to murder King Duncan

Lady Macbeth appears reading her husband's letter. Her husband has written to her about his meeting with the witches and their prophecy regarding his promotion. Lady Macbeth immediately decides on encouraging her husband to brush aside his scruples and take the short cut to the throne. A messenger now announces that King Duncan is going to spend the night at the castle. She decides to murder Duncan that night. When Macbeth reaches home, she tells that Duncan will never leave the castle. Macbeth must appear innocent like the flower but be the serpent under it. Macbeth is not as resolute as his wife. He begins to waver. He pleads for further consideration.

Scene 6

Duncan at Macbeth's castle

Duncan arrives at Macbeth's castle with his sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, and noblemen like Banquo, Lennox, Macduff, Ross and Angus. He praises the pleasant air of the castle. Lady Macbeth welcomes him warmly and thanks him for the honours bestowed on her husband. Duncan, delighted, promises to bestow more honours on Macbeth.

Scene 7**Lady Macbeth goads Macbeth to kill Duncan**

When the King dines, Macbeth goes out to think over his wife's instructions. He thinks of the consequences of his king who is also his kinsman and now his guest. He tells his wife not to proceed with their plot. Lady Macbeth accuses her husband of cowardice. He wants the kingdom but is afraid of the means to secure it. The time is favourable to Macbeth but Macbeth is too unnerved to use the opportunity now made available to him. Lady Macbeth boasts of her courage and manliness. She will prefer to dash to the ground her suckling boy rather than go back on her decision to murder the king. Now, Macbeth is a little emboldened and does not talk of the perils of his conscience. Instead, he talks of the difficulties in carrying out their murderous plan. Lady Macbeth proposes to help her husband by drugging the guards of the king's bed-chamber and making them fall asleep. The guards will be asleep. The king also will be in deep sleep from the strain of his journey. So, they can easily kill the king and put the blame on the servants.

Act II**Scene 1****Signs for the preparation of the murder of Duncan**

The place of action is the courtyard of the castle of Inverness. Banquo is restless. He tells his son, Fleance, about his restlessness and misgivings. He then gives Macbeth a diamond as a present from the king to Lady Macbeth. He then adds that he dreamt of the witches of the previous night. Macbeth says that he is not thinking about them at all. Anyhow, he would like to discuss them with Banquo at leisure. After Banquo and Fleance leave, Macbeth asks his servant to request Lady Macbeth to ring the bell when his drink is ready.

When he is left alone Macbeth sees the hallucination of a dagger in the air. Its handle is turned towards his hand. Thus, his imagination produces before him vision of the weapon which he proposes to use for the murder of King Duncan. He also sees drops of blood on the blade. Now the bell rings, indicating that the time has come for him to murder the King. He goes out on his chosen mission.

Scene 2**Macbeth murders Duncan**

In this scene, Macbeth trembling reports his wife how he has murdered the king. Lady Macbeth has already drugged the grooms. She would have herself murdered the King, if he had not resembled her father. Macbeth now comes and reports to his wife that the murder has

been committed. His hands are blood-d stained. He has brought with him the blood-stained dagger. The grooms wake up from a nightmare. One of them calls for the blessings of God. The other says 'Amen'. But Macbeth cannot say 'Amen', though he is in dire need of God's blessing. He also hears a voice that he has murdered sleep. Lady Macbeth brushes aside her husband's worries. She asks him not to fuss but to wash his hands and return the dagger to the bedroom. The servants also must be smeared. Macbeth refuses to do so. Lady Macbeth scorns her husband's scruples and undertakes to do the job herself. She takes the dagger and leaves for the bedroom of the King.

Macbeth gazes at his hands and says that nothing can wash away the blood stain. At this time, a knock at the gate is heard. Macbeth is startled. Lady Macbeth returns, with her hands also stained with blood. She wants to go to their room, so that they can wash their hands. She asks her husband to put on his gown and prepare to meet the visitor.

Scene 3

Flight of Duncan's sons

The porter is sleepy and so he resents the knocking at the gate. He imagines himself to be the porter of hell-gate. He says that perhaps a profiteering farmer, and equivocator or a deceiving tailor is knocking at the gate. He opens the door and admits Macduff and Lennox. These two people have come to wake up Duncan early in the morning. Macbeth pretends to have just woken up. Macduff goes to the King's room to wake him. Lennox says that screams and lamentations were heard at night, suggesting impending calamities.

Macduff returns from the bedroom horrified. He cannot describe what he has seen. He asks Macbeth and Lennox to see it for them. Macduff raises the alarm by getting a bell rung and shouting for Banquo, Malcolm and Donalbain. Lady Macbeth and Banquo rush to the place and hear the new. Macbeth says that life has lost its value for him. Lennox suspects the blood-stained servants. Macbeth says that he has killed them, unable to restrain his fury.

Lady Macbeth feels like fainting. Malcolm and Donalbain wonder whether they will be free to express their grief at their father's death. Danger seems to be threatening them. They resolve to flee Malcolm to England and Donalbain to Ireland.

Coleridge condemned the porter's speech as spurious. But now it has been accepted as genuine. It provides much needed relief to the tension built up in the previous scene. There is irony in the porter's speech that he is a sentinel at the gate of hell. Macbeth's castle has literally become hell. Also, knocking at the gate and the porter's sleepy speech given time to Macbeth and his wife to wash their hands and change their dresses before meeting the visitors.

Scene 4**Macbeth to be crowned as king**

An old man and Ross meet in front of Macbeth's castle. They talk about the unnatural phenomena following Duncan's death. Ross speaks of darkness during day time and the late king's horses killing and eating one another. The old man talks of a small owl killing a big falcon. Macduff joins them and tells them that the grooms killed by Macbeth might be guilty. The princes are now suspecting, on account of their flight. Ross says that in the absence of the two princes, the next best claimant to the throne is Macbeth. Macduff says that Macbeth has already been named king and that he is going to be crowned shortly at Scone. Ross wants to attend the coronation but Macduff is going to his home at Fife.

Act III**Scene 1****Banquet in honour of Macbeth**

Banquo is talking about the witches' prophecies. They have become true in Macbeth's case. Banquo suspects Macbeth to have murdered Duncan. He wonders whether the prophecy that his descendants will rule Scotland may not also prove true. At this time Macbeth and his wife come, accompanied by noblemen. They invite Banquo to attend a great banquet to be held in their honour that night. Banquo promises to attend the banquet. He adds that before the evening he will take a ride with his son Fleance.

Left alone, Macbeth expresses his fear of Banquo's descendants supplanting his own. Also, the only man that he has to fear is Banquo. So, he decides to kill Banquo. He gives instructions to certain murderers to kill Banquo and Fleance that evening.

Scene 2**Lady Macbeth comforts Macbeth's tortured mind**

Lady Macbeth asks her husband not to brood over the past. Macbeth says that they are not quite safe. They have only scotched the snake, but not killed it. He envies Duncan who, being dead, is free from cares. Lady Macbeth tries to cheer up her husband. She asks him to stop his gloomy reflections and be cheerful among the guests. But he says that his mind is full of scorpions because Banquo and his son live. He does not tell his wife that he has arranged for the murder of Banquo and his son.

Scene 3**Banquo killed**

Three men hired by Macbeth attack Banquo and Fleance near a park. Banquo is killed but Fleance escapes to Wales. Thus murderers resolve the matter to Macbeth.

Scene 4**Banquo's ghost at the Banquet**

Macbeth welcomes the guests to the banquet. He asks them to sit at the table according to their rank. He has a private talk with the murderers outside the door and is informed that Banquo is dead but that his son Fleance has fled. Returning to the table Macbeth finds Banquo's ghost occupying his seat. Only he sees the ghost. Nobody else sees it. Macbeth is shocked. He asks the ghost not to shake its bloody hair. He says that he did not commit the crime. Lady Macbeth explains to the guests that her husband's strange illness is due to an old illness. He behaves thus every now and then. Then she tells her husband that he is addressing only an empty chair.

Macbeth challenges the ghost to speak. He says that he does not care for it. At once, the ghost disappears. Then Macbeth explains to his wife that he saw the victim of a murder with his fatal wounds. Lady Macbeth asks him to attend to the guests. So, Macbeth turns to them, excuses himself for his illness and drinks to the joy of all including to that of Banquo.

The ghost now reappears. Macbeth once again asks it to go away. He says that he can fearlessly fight with any man and any animal but not with a ghost. For, a ghost cannot be hurt by weapons. The ghost vanishes once again. Macbeth is surprised to see that Lady Macbeth is not at all affected by the terrible ghost. Ross wants to know why Macbeth behaves so strangely. Lady Macbeth silences him saying that any enquiry will aggravate Macbeth's condition. She winds up the banquet, on the grounds that Macbeth is too ill to attend to the guests.

Macduff did not attend the banquet. So, Macbeth suspects that Macduff knows the truth. He says that he has appointed spies to watch all his noblemen. He proposes to meet the witches on the following day to know more about his future. He has to commit more murders to strengthen his position. He has waded so far in blood that it is as tedious to go backward as forward.

The ghost may just be a hallucination. It may not be real. For, when Macbeth recovers his courage, the ghost disappears. So, the ghost is produced by Macbeth's excited mind only. The others are not upset, and so they do not see any ghost.

Scene 5**Meeting of the witches with Hecate**

The witches meet Hecate, their patron goddess, on a heath. Hecate upbraids the witches for dealing with Macbeth without informing her. Macbeth loves evil not for its own sake but for selfish purposes. Hecate asks the witches to meet her at the pit of Acheron in the morning. Macbeth also will consult them there. Hecate will distil a drop of vapour from the moon and use it to raise spirits that will confuse Macbeth.

This scene is considered spurious. Even if Hecate is cut off from the play, they will not suffer. It is said that the Hecate scenes were interpolated by Middleton.

Scene 6**Enlisting support for Malcolm**

Lennox tells a Lord that Macbeth has murdered both Duncan and Banquo and forced their sons to flee, making them suspect. The nobleman says that Malcolm and Macduff are in England. Macduff is trying to get the help of the King of England to restore Malcolm to the Scottish throne.

Act IV**Scene 1****Macbeth's meeting with the witches**

The witches appear at a cavern where a cauldron is boiling over a fire. The witches are singing some incantations, dancing round the cauldron. All kinds of strange objects such as toads, frog's toes, tongue, blind-worm's sting, Turk's nose and lizard's legs are used to prepare a broth.

Hecate is also present. Macbeth demands answers to his questions. The witches conjure up some dreadful apparitions. The first is an armed head. Without any prompting from him, it asks him to beware of Macduff. A bloody child is the next to appear. It bids Macbeth to be bloody, bold and resolute. It also says that none born of women can do him any harm. A crowned child with a tree in its hands then asks him to be proud like a lion. It says that Macbeth cannot be defeated till Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane. This makes Macbeth feel absolutely safe. The Macbeth asks the witches whether Banquo's descendants will succeed him. The witches produce before Macbeth a show of eight kings, with Banquo's ghost following them. The kings look like Banquo and are clearly his descendants. The eighth king shows others in a mirror, some of whom are to rule more than Scotland. The

show makes Macbeth very dejected. The witches try to cheer him up by dancing. They vanish with Hecate after sometime.

Lennox reports to Macbeth about the flight of Macduff to England. Macbeth regrets the delay in killing. He decides to act quickly hereafter. He proposes to capture Macduff's castle and kill his wife and children.

Scene 2

Macduff's wife and son killed

Ross informs Lady Macduff and her son that Macduff has left for England. After Ross leaves, a messenger warns them to flee because of the danger lying in wait for them. Macbeth's hirelings appear. Calling Macduff a traitor, they kill his son. Lady Macduff tries to run to her other children.

Scene 3

Macduff resolves on vengeance

Before the king's palace in England, Macduff meets Malcolm and asks him to invade Scotland and seize its throne. But Malcolm suspects Macduff to be Macbeth's friend and spy. Malcolm also says that he is full of lust and greed and so, if he comes to power he will be worse than Macbeth. Macduff tells Malcolm that he left Scotland fearing Macbeth's tyranny and wickedness. If Malcolm, the rightful king of Scotland is worse than Macbeth, then Scotland is doomed. Only now Malcolm believes that Macduff is not Macbeth's spy but that he really hates Macbeth. He also tells Macduff that his suspicion of Macduff and his attributing vices to himself were intended to test Macduff. Malcolm also informs Macduff that he has planned an invasion of Scotland.

Ross now meets them and tells them of the atrocities committed by Macbeth. Already there is a revolt brewing against Macbeth in Scotland. Malcolm may use this opportune moment and invade Scotland. Ross then informs Macduff of the murder of all the members of his family including his wife, by Macbeth. Macduff says that Macbeth, being childless, kills children callously. Macduff resolves on vengeance.

Act V

Scene 1

Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking

The scene of action is the castle of Dunsinane. Lady Macbeth's maid servant informs a doctor that Lady Macbeth is given to sleep-walking. Now Lady Macbeth is seen sleep-

walking with a light in her hand. She is wringing her hands as if washing them. She says that her hands are spotted with blood which cannot be removed. She adds that she never thought the old man would have so much of blood. Not all the perfumes of Arabia can remove the nasty smell of blood from her hand. Then she sighs and says that Banquo cannot leave his grave. The doctor now understands that Macbeth and his wife have killed both Duncan and Banquo. The doctor feels that only a clergyman can treat her infected mind. He asks the maid-servant to watch the Queen carefully and remove from near her objects that can hurt her.

Scene 2

Mobilizing the troops against Macbeth

In the country near Dunsinane, some Scottish noblemen are leading an army against Macbeth. They decide to meet the other army led by Malcolm and Macduff near Dunsinane.

Scene 3

Macbeth gets ready for the battle

Macbeth, staying at Dunsinane is not at all perturbed by the reports about the invasion. He has absolute belief in the witches' prophecy that he cannot be defeated by any man born of a woman and that no danger will befall him until Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane. Anyway Macbeth gets ready for battle. At this time the doctor informs him that Lady Macbeth is beyond medical treatment.

Scene 4

Malcolm's strategy

Malcolm at Birnam Wood orders his soldiers to cut branches and conceal themselves behind them. He thus plans to mislead the enemy about his real strength.

Scene 5

Lady Macbeth's death

Macbeth receives the news of his wife's death calmly. He has experienced so many horrors that no bad news can affect him. He says that he would have felt her death, if she had died hereafter. But life is meaningless. Life is a shadow without substance, a tale told by an idiot, full of noise and passion but meaning nothing. A messenger now informs Macbeth that Birnam Wood is moving towards Dunsinane. Macbeth thinks he has been tricked by the witches. He bursts into an angry condemnation of the witches.

MATERIAL தேவைக்கு

TNPSC: GR –I & II (P), GR –IV

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