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Macbeth Study Guide Questions

- Act1, scene i
1. What effect is Shakespeare creating by beginning the play with this scene?
 2. What do you suppose is suggested by the line, "Fair is foul, and foul is fair"?
 3. What poetic device is used in this scene and to what effect?
- Act1, scene ii
1. What is the purpose of this early scene?
 2. What image do we have of Macbeth's bravery and ability as a warrior?
 3. What is his responsibility to King Duncan?
 4. Whom had Macbeth and Banquo been fighting?
 5. What does King Duncan tell them to do?
- Act1, scene iii
1. What does the audience learn about the Weird Sisters from their conversation at the beginning of the scene?
 2. When Macbeth says, "So foul and fair a day I have not seen," to what is he referring? What could be the dramatic irony in this line?
 3. Describe the physical appearance of the Weird Sisters.
 4. What prophecies do the Weird Sisters make regarding Macbeth? How does he react?
 5. What do the Weird Sisters see in the future for Banquo?
 6. How do Macbeth and Banquo react to the experience after the Weird Sisters vanish?
 7. What "horror" does Ross indicate accompany the death of Cawdor?
 8. As the others talk, what does Macbeth's aside reveal about his thinking?
 9. How does Banquo's comment support the "fair is foul, foul is fair" theme?
 10. What does Macbeth mean in his aside about two truths being prologue to the act of the imperial theme?
 11. What dramatic conventions does Shakespeare use to establish character and begin to lay out his tragedy?
- Act1, scene iv
1. Why was the former Thane of Cawdor executed?
 2. What effect does Shakespeare create by having Macbeth and Banquo enter just as they are discussing the execution of the former Thane of Cawdor?
 3. What announcement does the King make to everyone present and what is Macbeth's reaction?
 4. In his last speech in this scene, what does Macbeth reveal?
- Act1, scene v
1. What is the purpose of the letter?
 2. What do we learn about Macbeth from Lady Macbeth's reaction to the letter?
 3. What do we learn about Lady Macbeth from her reaction to the letter?
 4. Does Lady Macbeth fear Macbeth will not be king if he does not murder Duncan?

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