

Honors English 10  
Macbeth Act 1 close reading passages

Passage 1 (1.3.128-143)

MACBETH

[Aside] Two truths are told,

As happy prologues to the swelling act

Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentlemen.

Cannot be ill, cannot be good: if ill,

Why hath it given me earnest of success,

Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:

If good, why do I yield to that suggestion

Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair

And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,

Against the use of nature? Present fears

Are less than horrible imaginings:

My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,

Shakes so my single state of man that function

Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is

But what is not.

Questioning  
Reality

this is good yet why? oxymoron

Why did I receive this

metaphor

Afraid of what's to come

Comparison

Devious + uncharacterlike thoughts

suppose that something without having  
evidence to confirm it — (The witches)

Passage 2 (1.4.49-54)

MACBETH

[Aside] The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step

On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap

For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;

Let not light see my black and deep desires:

The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,

Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

Realization

Choice to be made

heroic coup! etc!

Falling into desires

4 Wilson 3

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artificial  
parallelism  
(anaphora)  
heroic couplet  
change  
weird girls  
virgins  
fortune

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Macbeth:  
✓ Thane of Glamis  
✓ Thane of Cawdor  
... King of Scotland

can't be good if bad

If good, why do I yield to that suggestion  
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Why does he hesitate?

lesser and greater  
not so happy yet  
happier regret  
kings but not be  
one

his hair stands up his heart beats harder

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Prince is in his way

Read scenes on web page 4-7

he hides his desires - Lady Macbeth

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alliteration

antithesis  
parallelism  
heroic couplet

Winged sisters

personification

Disdaining Fortune

fighting fortune

great

cannot be ill,

suppose something cannot be good.  
is true.

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light & black - contradict

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Chaos

wierd sisters  
wyrd = fate / Fortune

Orymoron  
Why have they foretold of his success?  
Why does he take precalation?

There is truth in what he is told

fear is only imagining the most horrible  
- Considering murder and how it will benefit his title and wealth

Macbeth

present ✓ Thane of Glamis  
                  ✓ Thane of Cawdor  
                  ↓  
Future? King of Scotland

cannot be ill,  
cannot be good

status Banquo  
lesser and greater - morally  
not so happy yet happier  
be get kings but not be one

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BEGET = give birth