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Our idolatry of Shakespear (not to say our admiration) comes with his plays. In his other productions, he was a mere author, though not a common author. It was only by representing others, that he became himself. He could go out of himself, and express the soul of Cleopatra; but in his own person, he appeared to be always waiting for the prompter's cue. In expressing the thoughts of others, he seemed inspired; in expressing his own, he was a mechanic. The licence of an assumed character was necessary to restore his genius to the privileges of nature, and to give him courage to break through the tyrannical shackles, the trammels of custom. In his plays, he was "as broad and casting as the general air;" in his poems, on the contrary, he appears to be "cooped, and caged in" by all the technicalities of art, by all the petty intricacies

which follows when Cæsar enters with his train.

Brutus. The games are done, and Cæsar is returning,
Cassius. As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve,
And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you
What has proceeded worthy note to day.

Brutus. I will do so; but look you, Cassius—
The angry spot doth glow on Cæsar's brow,
And all the rest look like a chidden train.
Calphurnia's cheek is pale; and Cicero
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes,
As we have seen him in the Capitol,
Being cros't in conference by some senators.

Cassius. Casca will tell us what the matter is.

Cæsar. Antonius—

Antony. Cæsar?

Cæsar. Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights:
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look,
He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.

Antony. Fear him not, Cæsar, he's not dangerous:
He is a noble Roman, and well given.

Cæsar. Would he were fatter; but I fear him not:
Yet if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;
He is a great observer; and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music:
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit,
That could be mov'd to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
Whilst they behold a greater than themselves;

civilized life, is an admirable philosophical counterpart to Caliban.

Shakespear has, as it were by design, drawn off from Caliban the elements of whatever is ethereal and refined, to compound them in the unearthly mould of Ariel. Nothing was ever more finely conceived than this contrast between the material and the spiritual, the gross and delicate. Ariel is imaginary power, the swiftness of thought personified. When told to make good speed by Prospero, he says, "I drink the air before me." This is something like Puck's boast on a similar occasion, "I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes." But Ariel differs from Puck in having a fellow feeling in the interests of those he is employed about. How exquisite is the following dialogue between him and Prospero!

Ariel. Your charm so strongly works 'em,
That if you now beheld them, your affections
Would become tender.

Prospero. Dost thou think so, spirit?

Ariel. Mine would, sir, were I human.

Prospero. And mine shall.

Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
Passion'd as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?"

It has been observed that there is a peculiar charm in the songs introduced in Shakespear,

Play by William Shakespear This article is about Shakespear's play. For the historical Scottish king, see Macbeth, King of Scotland. For the title character of the play, see Macbeth (character). For other uses, see Macbeth (disambiguation). "The Tragedy of Macbeth" redirects here. For the film, see The Tragedy of Macbeth (2021 film). The Tragedie of Macbeth Title page of the part in the First Folio.AuthorWilliam ShakespearCountryLondon, EnglandLanguageEnglishGenreShakespearian tragedyTragedySet inScotland and England (Act IV, Scene II)PublisherEdward Blount and William JaggardPublication date1623TextThe Tragedie of Macbeth at Wikisource A poster for a c. 1884 American production of Macbeth, starring Thomas W. Keene. Depicted, counter-clockwise from top-left, are: Macbeth and Banquo meet the witches; just after the murder of Duncan; Banquo's ghost; Macbeth duels Macduff; and Macbeth. Macbeth (/makˈbeɪ/, full title The Tragedie of Macbeth) is a tragedy by William Shakespear. It is thought to have been first performed in 1606.[a] It dramatises the damaging physical and psychological effects of political ambition on those who seek power. Of all the plays that Shakespear wrote during the reign of James I, Macbeth most clearly reflects his relationship with King James, patron of Shakespear's acting company.[1] It was first published in the Folio of 1623, possibly from a prompt book, and is Shakespear's shortest tragedy.[2] A brave Scottish general named Macbeth receives a prophecy from a trio of witches that one day he will become King of Scotland. Consumed by ambition and spurred to action by his wife, Macbeth murders King Duncan and takes the Scottish throne for himself. He is then wracked with guilt and paranoia. Forced to commit more and more murders to protect himself from enmity and suspicion, he soon becomes a tyrannical ruler. The bloodbath and consequent civil war swiftly take Macbeth and Lady Macbeth into the realms of madness and death. Shakespear's source for the story is the account of Macbeth, King of Scotland, Macduff, and Duncan in Holinshed's Chronicles (1577), a history of England, Scotland, and Ireland familiar to Shakespear and his contemporaries, although the events in the play differ extensively from the history of the real Macbeth. The events of the tragedy are usually associated with the execution of Henry Garnet for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.[3] In the backstage world of theatre, some believe that the play is cursed, and will not mention its title aloud, referring to it instead as "The Scottish Play". The play has attracted some of the most renowned actors to the roles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, and has been adapted to film, television, opera, novels, comics, and other media. Characters Duncan - king of Scotland Malcolm - Duncan's elder son Donalbain - Duncan's younger son Macbeth - a general in the army of King Duncan Banquo - Thane of Glamis, then Thane of Cawdor, and later king of Scotland Lady Macbeth - Macbeth's wife, and later queen of Scotland Banquo - Macbeth's friend and a general in the army of King Duncan Fleance - Banquo's son Macduff - Thane of Fife Lady Macduff - Macduff's wife Macduff's son Ross, Lennox, Angus, Menteth, Calthness - Scottish thanes Siward - general of the English forces Young Siward - Siward's son Seyton - Macbeth's armourer Hecate - queen of the witches Three Witches Captain - in the Scottish army Murderers - employed by Macbeth Third Murderer Porter - gatekeeper at Macbeth's home Doctor - Lady Macbeth's doctor Doctor - at the English court Gentlewoman - Lady Macbeth's caretaker Lord - opposed to Macbeth First Apparition - armed head Second Apparition - bloody child Third Apparition - crowned child Attendants, Messengers, Servants, Soldiers Plot Macbeth and Banquo encounter the witches for the first time. Act I Amid thunder and lightning, Three Witches decide that their next meeting will be with Macbeth. In the following scene, Macbeth and Banquo discuss the weather and their victory. As they wander onto a heath, the Three Witches enter and greet them with allied forces of Norway and Ireland, who were led by the traitorous Macdonwald, the Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth, the King's kinsman, is praised for his bravery and fighting prowess. In the following scene, Macbeth and Banquo discuss the weather and their victory. As they wander onto a heath, the Three Witches enter and greet them with prophecies. Though Banquo challenges them first, they address Macbeth, hailing him as "Thane of Glamis," "Thane of Cawdor," and that he will "be King hereafter". Macbeth appears to be stunned to silence. When Banquo asks of his own fortunes, the witches respond paradoxically, saying that he will be less than Macbeth, yet happier, and less successful, yet more. He will father a line of kings, though he himself will not be one. While the two men wonder at these pronouncements, the witches vanish, and another thane, Ross, arrives and informs Macbeth of his newly bestowed title: Thane of Cawdor. The first prophecy is thus fulfilled, and Macbeth, previously sceptical, immediately begins to harbour ambitions of becoming king. King Duncan welcomes and praises Macbeth and Banquo, and Duncan declares that he will spend the night at Macbeth's castle at Inverness; Duncan also names his son Malcolm as his heir. Macbeth sends a message ahead to his wife, Lady Macbeth, telling her about the witches' prophecies. Lady Macbeth suffers none of her husband's uncertainty and wishes him to murder Duncan in order to obtain kingship. When Macbeth arrives at Inverness, she overrides all of her husband's objections by challenging his manhood and successfully persuades him to kill the king that very night. He and Lady Macbeth plan to get Duncan's two chamberlains drunk so that they will black out; the next morning they will blame the chamberlains for the murder. Since the chamberlains would remember nothing whatsoever, they would be blamed for the deed. Act II While Duncan is asleep, Macbeth stabs him, despite his doubts and a number of supernatural portents, including a hallucination of a bloody dagger. He is

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