
Quotes About Blood in Macbeth

Lesson Transcript

William Shakespeare's play "Macbeth" contains many images and quotes about blood. These quotes help develop one of the main themes of the play - guilt. In this lesson, we look at quotes about blood in the play and discuss their importance.

Why Is Blood Important?

From the beginning of *Macbeth* until the very (1) _____ end, blood is everywhere. We see real blood through the battles and murders that take place. Even more importantly, we see (2) _____ blood that both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth envision in the play. This imaginary blood becomes a (3) _____ in the play of the characters' guilt about their actions.

Macbeth pictures blood on the dagger before he kills King Duncan, and both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth worry that they will never be able to (4) _____ the blood from themselves. As Lady Macbeth becomes more deranged, her visions of blood became stronger. Sleepwalking, she tries to (5) _____ the blood from her hands. In the final act of the play, all the violence and bloodshed ends with Macbeth's (6) _____ head being carried across the stage.

Macbeth and Blood

Macbeth first experiences his visions of blood in Act II, as he contemplates killing King Duncan. While waiting for the signal to enter the king's chambers, Macbeth sees a (7) _____ before him. As he stares at the dagger, he watches it become covered in blood and says, *'I see thee still, And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood.'* This is the first sign that Macbeth feels guilt about the murder he is about to commit. However, he tells himself that it is fine and just the 'bloody business' worrying him.

After Macbeth kills King Duncan, he runs from the chamber and looks at his bloody hands, saying, *'This is a sorry sight.'* As Lady Macbeth tries to calm him down and tells him to go (8) _____ the dagger with the drugged guards, he cannot move. Macbeth continues to feel guilty, staring at his bloody hands, reflecting, *'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood Clean from my hand?'*

During the play, Macbeth's (9) _____ that someone will find out about the king's murder continues to grow. Eventually, he becomes worried that his friend Banquo will take his place as king. He then plots the murder of Banquo to take place during a banquet he has planned for his noblemen. As the murderers enter, after having

killed (10) _____, Macbeth notes, *'There's blood on thy face.'* Feeling more guilt about this murder, Macbeth soon imagines Banquo's ghost at the banquet. The ghost, not surprisingly, is covered in blood. As he begs the ghost to leave, Macbeth reflects *'they say, blood will have blood.'* Macbeth believes that the blood of Banquo will expose him.

When it becomes clear to his men that Macbeth is a murderer, they begin to plot to overthrow him. Macduff even cries over the state of affairs in (11) _____, saying, *'Bleed, bleed, poor country!'* and later, *'an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd.'*

In the last scene of the play, Macbeth is under attack and knows he cannot win. However, he continues to fight, even saying that he likes to make people bleed, *'whiles I see lives, the gashes Do better upon them.'* Macbeth has a final moment of guilt before his death when (12) _____ enters to confront him. Having killed Macduff's family, Macbeth cannot bring himself to kill him, *'get thee back; my soul is too much charged With blood of thine.'*

Lady Macbeth and Blood

At the beginning of the play, Lady Macbeth is strong and determined. She seems to feel no remorse as she encourages Macbeth to kill King Duncan and plots the murder with him. On the night of the murder, she tells herself, *'make thick my blood; Stop up the access and passage to remorse.'* Lady Macbeth does not want to feel guilty for what she is about to do. She asks for her blood to become thick, and her heart to become cold. She wants to close off her soul so that she does not feel (13) _____.

After Macbeth kills King Duncan, he comes to Lady Macbeth with guilt. However, she does not seem to feel any. She takes the dagger from Macbeth and returns to the chamber to place the dagger on King Duncan's guards and to (14) _____ the king's blood on them. When she returns, she shows Macbeth her hands, saying, *'My hands are of your colour, but I shame to wear a heart so white.'* Although her hands are just as bloody as Macbeth's, she would be embarrassed if she felt any of the remorse he feels at that moment.

We really do not see too much of Lady Macbeth again until Act V. By then, she is so overcome by guilt that she sleepwalks, trying to wash imaginary blood off her hands, *'Out, (15) _____! out, I say!'* As she relives the murder of King Duncan, she says, *'who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?'* Although Lady Macbeth particularly wanted King Duncan murdered, and initially felt no remorse, she is now overcome by her feelings of guilt and cannot seem to get her hands clean. As the scene continues, Lady Macbeth again tries to wash her hands, *'What, will these hands ne'er be clean?'* It is this guilt that drives her to madness and, eventually, to (16) _____.

Lesson Summary

Blood is an important and (17) _____ of *Macbeth*. In the play, we see real blood during the many murders and battles. However, the imagined blood becomes even more important. The blood that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth imagine represents their guilt and remorse following their actions.

For Macbeth, he first shows guilt, before he even kills Duncan, when he pictures a bloody dagger. After he kills the king, he stares at his hands, commenting that not all the water in the ocean could make his hands clean again. When Macbeth kills Banquo, he sees Banquo's (18) _____ and worries that the blood of others will

expose him as the murderer he has become. After Macbeth's men realize he is a tyrant, they lament that Scotland has become so bloody. Finally, in the last scene before his death, Macbeth shows one last moment of remorse when he tells Macduff that he cannot kill him because the blood of his family is already on him.

When we first meet Lady Macbeth, she has brought up the idea of killing (19) _____. As Macbeth hesitates, she asks for her blood to become thick so that she does not feel guilt. When Macbeth returns and stares at his hands in guilt, she mocks him and goes to stage the murder scene. She comes back with bloody hands but tells Macbeth she feels no remorse. However, when we next see Lady Macbeth, her guilt has led her to madness. She now washes her hands while (20) _____, imagining blood that is not there. She cries that her hands will never be clean.

Learning Outcomes

Complete understanding of the main points of this lesson could enable you to:

- Analyze the importance of blood in Macbeth Discuss Macbeth's experiences with blood Consider Lady
- Macbeth's experiences with blood
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***Macbeth's Word Hoard:* gory -- bleeding -- back and leave -- Banquo -- Macduff
imaginary -- clean -- dagger -- wash -- symbol -- paranoia -- bloody ghost --
sleepwalking -- Scotland -- remorse -- smear -- damned spot -- suicide -- integral
part --King Duncan**