

- A. It is now time for Macbeth to stab the king.
- B. Meanwhile, at Macbeth's ball, the seat for Banquo is empty (because he's dead). In the empty seat, the ghost of Banquo appears, frightening Macbeth to death.
- C. Seyton returns and announces the death of Lady Macbeth. Seemingly unfazed, Macbeth comments that she should have died later, at a more appropriate time. He stops to muse on the meaning of life:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
 And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
 Signifying nothing. (23-27).

- D. While Macbeth and Banquo are walking, they encounter three chanting witches.
- E. By using their daggers to kill the king and putting the king's blood on them, Lady Macbeth will frame the guards.
- F. Macbeth and Banquo have defeated their enemies in battle, leading King Duncan to give the title of thane of Cawdor to Macbeth (who doesn't know this yet).
- G. The next morning, the murder is blamed on the guards. Macbeth kills them before they can protest, explaining that he killed them out of rage.
- H. Though he has bad visions and feelings, Macbeth kills the king. Afterwards, he is troubled. "I am afraid to think what I have done; Look on 't again I dare not," he says.
- I. The king's sons, however, are still fearful for their lives and runaway.
- J. Macbeth wonders about this prediction as the king's messenger arrives. He tells him that he has been appointed thane of Cawdor. Macbeth is momentarily tempted to kill the king in order to fulfill the prophesy, but decides not to.
- K. Macbeth is crowned king.
- L. On the heath, the witches meet Hecate, queen of witches, who chastises them for meddling in Macbeth's affairs without involving her or showing him any fancy magic spectacles. She tells them that Macbeth will visit them tomorrow and that they must put on a more dramatic show for him.
- M. Macduff has joined Malcolm at the English court. The two men have apparently asked Siward to lead an army against Macbeth. Lennox and the lord send their prayers to Macduff and Malcolm.
- N. When Macbeth learns that Banquo and his son are riding, he sends men out to kill them. They are only half successful in their job, and Banquo's son escapes.
- O. As Banquo points at this line of kings, Macbeth realizes that they are indeed his family line. After the witches dance and disappear, Lennox enters with the news that Macduff has fled to England. Macbeth resolves that he will henceforth act immediately on his ambitions: the first step will be to seize Fife and kill Macduff's wife and children.
- P. Lady Macbeth, however, urges her husband to kill the king. Since the king is staying at their castle overnight, that must be when they kill him. She plans the whole thing, making the king's guards drunk.
- Q. Lady Macduff engages her son in a conversation about his missing father. A messenger interrupts them with a warning to flee the house immediately. But before Lady Macduff can escape, murderers attack the house and kill everyone including Lady Macduff and her son.
- R. When Macduff asks how his wife and children are faring, Ross first responds that they are "well at peace" (180). When pressed further, he relates the story of their death. Macduff is stunned speechless and Malcolm urges him to cure his grief by exacting revenge on Macbeth.
- S. The witches speak to Macbeth as thane of Glamis, thane of Cawdor, and king hereafter. They also tell Banquo that though we will not be king, he will beget kings (i.e., his sons will be kings).
- T. Macduff enters, carrying Macbeth's severed head and shouting "Hail, King of Scotland!" The men echo this shout and the trumpets flourish as Malcolm accepts the kingship.
- U. As they approach the forest, Malcolm instructs the soldiers to cut off branches and hold them up in order to disguise their numbers
- V. The doctor and the gentlewoman watch as Lady Macbeth rubs her hands as if washing them and says "Yet here's a spot. . . Out, damned spot; out I say" (27-30). As she continues to "wash" her hands, her words betray her guilt to the two onlookers. Lady Macbeth seems to be reliving the events on the night of Duncan's death. She cannot get the stain or smell of blood off her hand: "What, will these hands ne'er be clean. . . All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand" (37-43).
- W. A messenger enters and reports that he has seen something unbelievable: as he looked out toward Birnam Wood, it appeared that the forest began to move toward the castle.
- X. When Duncan pronounces his son Malcolm the Prince of Cumberland, Macbeth understands that he needs to take action.
- Y. Macbeth kills Young Siward in the ensuing duel, commenting that Young Siward must have been "born of woman" (12).