

## **'MACBETH' ACT 1 SCENE 3- A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GIVEN PASSAGE**

### **ANGUS**

*We are sent  
To give thee from our royal master thanks;  
Only to herald thee into his sight,  
Not pay thee.*

### **ROSS**

*And, for an earnest of a greater honour,  
He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor:  
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane!  
For it is thine.*

### **BANQUO**

*What, can the devil speak true?*

### **MACBETH**

*The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me  
In borrow'd robes?*

### **ANGUS**

*Who was the thane lives yet;  
But under heavy judgment bears that life  
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined  
With those of Norway, or did  
line the rebel  
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both  
He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not;  
But treasons capital, confess'd and proved,  
Have overthrown him.*

### **MACBETH**

*[Aside] Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!  
The greatest is behind.*

**Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 3 of Macbeth and then answer the question that follows.**

**At this point in the play Macbeth and Banquo are on their way home after the battle, they have just met the three witches and now meet messengers from King Duncan.**

**Starting with this scene, how does Shakespeare present Macbeth's feelings about the news? Write about:**

- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth's feelings in this speech
- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth's behaviour in the play as a whole.

**[30 marks] AO4 [4 marks]**

<p><b>Introduction:</b> In the given passage Shakespeare displays the first reactions of Macbeth on hearing the news sent by King Duncan through the two messengers, Angus and Ross.</p>	
<p><b>“The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me in borrow’d robes?”</b> This shows the use of the <b>interrogative tone</b> and the <b>robe imagery</b> used elsewhere in the play and bears a lot of significance.</p>	<p>Macbeth seems surprised at being addressed as the thane of Cawdor. This was because Macbeth thought the Thane of Cawdor lived, so why was he being <b>‘dressed in borrow’d robes’</b>, which meant that why was he being addressed with a title, that did not belong to him.</p>
<p><b>ANGUS:</b>  <b>“And, for an earnest of a greater honour, He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor: In which addition, hail, most worthy thane! For it is thine.”</b></p>	<p>The <b>adjective phrase</b>-<b>“an earnest of a greater honour,”</b> shows how Angus breaks the great news to Macbeth and honours him by calling him the <b>“most worthy thane”</b>.</p>
<p><b>“He labour’d in his country’s wreck,”</b> verb phrase</p>	<p>Macbeth’s surprise is answered with the explanation rendered by Angus revealing the facts that how the former Thane had been accused of treason for supporting the opponent, the King of Norway. <b>“He labour’d in his country’s wreck,”</b>- The <b>verb phrase</b> represents how Macbeth was rewarded because of his bravery and loyalty, while the former thane of Cawdor had been accused of betrayal and thus, <b>“overthrown”</b>.</p>
<p><b>[Aside] “Glamis, and thane of Cawdor! The greatest is behind.”</b>- A very important <b>theatrical device</b> which revealed to the audience the thoughts and feelings within the speaker’s mind.</p>	<p>The very important <b>theatrical device</b> of the <b>Aside</b> reveals Macbeth’s acknowledgement about the exciting news of becoming the Thane of Glamis and the Thane of Cawdor. It ignites his ambition further, as he begins to think ahead about becoming the King.</p>
	<p>The <b>superlative adjective phrase</b>, <b>“the greatest is behind.”</b> underscores his ambition to become King.</p>

	Macbeth expresses his excitement as he wonders that the two predictions of the witches had already been proven true, while the greatest still remained to be fulfilled.
	Both his curiosity and ambition are fired as the instant fulfilment of the first two predictions of the witches arouses his hope for <b>“the greatest.”</b>
BANQUO: <b>“What, can the devil speak true?”</b> The interrogative tone reveals astonishment and disbelief.	Macbeth’s surprise is heightened by Banquo’s response, <b>“What, can the devil speak true?”</b> The use of the <b>interrogative tone</b> expresses Banquo’s amazement and disbelief as he too wondered whether the prediction of the witches, whom he addresses as the <b>“devil,”</b> could speak any truth.
	<b>The tone of surprise and disbelief</b> exhibited in Macbeth’s dialogue underscores a mixture of feelings. He was as excited as he was taken aback by such a quick fulfilment of the witches’ prediction.
	The speech exemplifies an <b>atmosphere</b> of surprise and disbelief which shall appear and reappear a number of times at the different stages of the plot.
	The seriousness of Macbeth’s response denotes how intensely the news affected him.
	No sooner was the message delivered than he began to relate it to the predictions of the witches, which highlights his temptation and ambition.

**{THE SECOND SEGMENT OF THE ANSWER TO BE HANDLED SUBSEQUENTLY.}**

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