

## 10.4.2

## Lesson 2 – Discussion Questions

Listen to a masterful reading of Act 1.3 in its entirety (from “Where hast thou been, sister?” to “Till then, enough.—Come, friends”). As you listen, focus on what the Witches are saying about Macbeth and how he is reacting. (One free source of *Macbeth* on Audio is Librivox: <https://librivox.org/the-tragedy-of-macbeth-by-william-shakespeare/> )

What do you notice about the words Macbeth uses in his first line in the play?

What do the Witches tell Macbeth about his future?

What do the Witches tell Banquo about his future?

How does Macbeth react to this information? Why?

Re read lines 105–139 (from “We are sent / To give thee from our royal master thanks” to “Cousins, a word, I pray you”)

What are Ross and Angus sent to do (line 107)?

What does Ross “call” (line 110) Macbeth? Who “bade” (line 110) Ross to do so, and why?

How do Banquo and Macbeth respond to Ross’s message?

What tension do Banquo and Macbeth’s responses introduce?

Refer to lines 132–138 (from “That, trusted home, / Might yet enkindle you unto the crown” to “Win us with honest trifles, to betray’s / In deepest consequence”). What does Banquo mean when he says “to win us to our harm”?

What does Banquo tell Macbeth in lines 132–138?

Reread lines 140–159 (from “Two truths are told / As happy prologues” to “chance may / Crown me / Without my stir”)

In line 144, Macbeth states that the information from the Witches “Cannot be ill, cannot be good.” Why does he say it “cannot be ill”? Why does he say it “cannot be good”?

What is the “suggestion” Macbeth contemplates in line 147?

Why is the murder of King Duncan “but fantastical”? What does *fantastical* mean in this context?

Why is Macbeth’s “function smothered in surmise” (line 154)?

Refer to lines 158–159: “If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me / Without my *stir*.” What is the meaning of *stir* in these lines?

What does Macbeth mean in lines 157–159 that “chance may / crown me / Without my stir”?

What conflicting ideas does Shakespeare introduce in lines 157–159?