

Tragedy and Moral Values in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: A Structural Analysis

Sigit Cahyo Saputro

STKIP PGRI PACITAN

Jl Cut Nya' dien 4A Ploso Pacitan

adimas_sigit@yahoo.com

I. Irawati

STKIP PGRI PACITAN

Jl Cut Nya' dien 4A Ploso Pacitan

iisrohlii@yahoo.com

Abstract

This research is aimed to find out the structural elements and the moral values of the play. The subject of the research is the play *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare and the object of research is its intrinsic elements of the play and the moral values of it. To analyze the structural elements of the play *Macbeth*, the writer uses the objective approach that anatomizes the work of art itself without relating to external factors such as the universe, the artist and audience.

The findings of the research show that (1) The theme of the play is a blind ambition. Macbeth is goaded by his more ambitious wife, Lady Macbeth, to be king by evil way. He uses 'the goal which justifies the means' to obtain it. But it causes the downfall. (2) There are two main characters namely Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and seven minor characters namely King Duncan, Banquo, Three Witches, Macduff, Malcolm, Fleance, and Lady Macduff. (3) The setting of time happens in eleventh century ; Meanwhile, the setting of place happens in Scotland and in England, Though, Shakespeare uses the setting of place in

beginning of every act. (4) The plot of the play starts from exposition, then it moves to rising action and reaches the climax or turning point. Later, it goes to falling action and the resolution. 5). Shakespeare as author always uses the third person point of view such as He, She, and the name of the character. (6) The language that is used is dialog language in the stage and it is old classic English. (7) The symbolisms of play which are standing out are blood and darkness. (8) The moral values are divided into positive moral values such as bravery, loyalty, affection, modesty as well as honesty, and negative moral values such as ambition, atrocity, temptation, vengeance.

Keywords: *Tragedy, Moral Values, Structural Analysis*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui unsur-unsur struktural dan nilai-nilai moral drama tersebut. Subyek penelitian adalah drama *Macbeth* karya William Shakespeare dan objek penelitian adalah unsur-unsur intrinsik dan nilai-nilai moral dari drama tersebut. Untuk menganalisis unsur-unsur struktural drama *Macbeth*, penulis menggunakan pendekatan objektif yang menguraikan karya seni itu sendiri tanpa mengaitkan dengan faktor eksternal seperti alam semesta, seniman dan penonton.

Temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa (1) Tema drama tersebut adalah ambisi buta. *Macbeth*, terpengaruh oleh istri yang lebih ambisius (*Lady Macbeth*) menjadi raja dengan cara yang jahat. Dia menggunakan 'segala cara untuk mencapai tujuan' untuk mendapatkannya. Tapi itu menyebabkan kejatuhan. (2) Ada dua karakter utama yaitu *Macbeth* dan *Lady Macbeth* dan tujuh karakter minor yaitu Raja Duncan, Banquo, Tiga Penyihir, *Macduff*, Malcolm, Fleance, dan *Lady Macduff*. (3) Latar waktu terjadi di abad kesebelas; Sementara itu, latar tempat terjadi di Skotlandia dan di Inggris meskipun Shakespeare menggunakan setting tempat di awal setiap pertunjukan. (4) Plot drama dimulai dari eksposisi, kemudian bergerak ke alur menanjak dan mencapai klimaks atau titik balik. Kemudian, mengarah kepada penyelesaian dan resolusi. 5). Shakespeare sebagai penulis selalu menggunakan sudut pandang orang ketiga pandang seperti dia (laki-laki), dia (perempuan), dan nama karakter. (6) Bahasa yang digunakan adalah bahasa dialog di panggung dan itu adalah bahasa Inggris klasik lama. (7) Simbolisme drama

yang menonjol adalah darah dan kegelapan. (8) Nilai-nilai moralnya terbagi menjadi nilai-nilai moral positif seperti keberanian, kesetiaan, kasih sayang, kesederhanaan serta kejujuran, dan nilai-nilai moral negatif seperti ambisi, kekejaman, godaan, balas dendam.

Kata Kunci : *Tragedi , Nilai Moral, Analisis Struktural*

Introduction

Literature contains universal ideas of human interest and it also can be the imitation of human life. It is the clear representation of author's reflection upon the reality of life. What the writer normally comprehends about literature is any writing that has power to move the reader's hearts or to stir his/her emotions. Some people define literature as the expression of beautiful thoughts or ideas in the beautiful language.

In some literary books, it is found that the use of particular literary thoughts that by means of the normal, the conventional standards are not beautiful at all. Moreover, it is within the language. Many examples are able to be quoted from William Shakespeare's great literary works. The point of his literature appeals to the emotion and to the imagination. In addition, it gives the readers the certain pleasure or particular satisfaction. The strongest emotional appeal is found in the poetry but, novels or plays (drama) also have the emotional appeal.

In realm of poetry, the effect is reached through the use of words such as their meanings, sound, position, connotations, etc. In the literary works like novel or play, the representation of events and persons also contribute to the emotional effect. Similar to any other form of art, literature is an artistic expression of the life or an artistic expression of the truth. In painting, the expression takes the form of lines and colors.

So, in literature, the mode can be taken from the words and sounds. The setting of the story may be confined to the particular place and period.

The problem of the particular individual, the underlying theme is one that is not limited by time and space. For instance, William Shakespeare's plays or drama, though written nearly for hundred years ago, are still read and enjoyed by many readers around the world. William Shakespeare is known as the greatest dramatist that creates many masterpieces in his works. The plays that become his masterpieces are like *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Henry*, *Macbeth*, etc. In brief, it can be stated that literature is artistic, permanent, and universal.

By learning the literary works like world drama, our understanding of the world deepens. Also our sense of humanity and interrelationship increases. People study that other people living in distant place under different climatic and cultural conditions may have the human problems and aspirations quite similar to others. On the other hand, the new emotions and value may also be learned that the writer of this paper would never have realized if he had remained out of touch with the foreign literature.

Talking about literature, the writer must be familiar with English literature. In English literature, there are many periods such as Old English period, Anglo Norman period, Elizabethan Age, etc. Among the eras in English, the writer of the paper wants to take one of the famous works entitled the play *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare. The writer thinks that William Shakespeare is the great English man of letters in Elizabethan era. Then, the research about him and his works especially in term of tragedy point of view is seldom done .

The play *Macbeth* is his masterpiece and interesting to research from structural approach. Moreover, William Shakespeare is famous for dramatic instinct, a deep knowledge of human nature. He is able to develop the story base on the love and ambition. This research is aimed to reveal the ambition the protagonist Macbeth has. But it causes the downfall and it becomes the tragic story of the play. In doing the research, he is interested in taking the topic related with tragedy. He wants to discuss deeply about the structural elements including the major character, Macbeth as a tragic hero in the play and analyze the moral values from the play. We can learn and take the moral values after comprehending the play *Macbeth*.

Besides, William Shakespeare is well-known poet and greatest dramatist in England who is a well-know and legendary figure. He certainly had the capacity and intelligence to read the works of the great masters of the past that can be seen from his wide variety of topics in his plays. One of his famous plays is *Macbeth* that is most valuable and great tragedy written by him.

The main idea of the play *Macbeth* is about the ambition. Macbeth is an ambitious man and his wife, Lady Macbeth, is more ambitious. Macbeth was goaded by his wife to be a King in Scotland by the evil way. Though, he succeeds to kill the king Duncan, but it becomes the downfall of Macbeth and his wife. In the end of story, he was killed by, Macduff, general of palace. So, that is why the story becomes the great tragedy and Macbeth is a tragic hero of the play.

This topic is so interesting to be analyzed by scrutinizing the structural elements including the relationship among them. It will be

focused on the story in the view of intrinsic element. It does not talk about the extrinsic aspects and it is not only positive moral values that will be elaborated but the negative moral values as well.

The genres of drama

There are many thoughts related to the genres of play. Each source has different opinion. According to Tennyson (1967, 59), the genres of drama are divided into three kinds; namely tragedy, comedy and melodrama. By and large, Shakespeare's dramatic work is traditionally and rather arbitrarily divided into three main genres: comedies, histories, and tragedies.

The word 'comedy' has a Greek origin. It signifies a festive musical and dancing procession and the ode song on such as occasion. Comedy has a ritual origin not one associated with the death of a god (like tragedy), but one conjoined with the marriage of a youthful god of a vegetation or life cult. The festival from which comedy grew was a joyous and happy one, marked by jokes and laughter.

Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is admirable, complete (composed of an introduction, a middle part and an ending), and possesses magnitude; in language made pleasurable, each of its species separated in different parts; performed by actors, not through narration; effecting through pity and fear the purification of such emotions.

History as a separate genre was popularized by William Shakespeare. One might think the genre of the history play would be more stable than that of the comedy. The history play as a genre was when Shakespeare began to create his version of English history. One includes plays about Britain's legendary history such as *Cymbeline* or

King Lear or plays about the history of Rome like *Titus Andronicus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony* and *Cleopatra*. For Shakespeare, history is an altogether more human and murky experience. However, he simply presented some hybrid of Hall's and Holinshed's versions of English history.

The next genre is tragedy. The word 'Tragedy' derives from a Greek word meaning *goat song*. Its origins are so ancient that no one now knows whether the association with the goat arose because a goat was sacrificed during the performance, or because a goat was the prize. In common understanding, a tragedy is simply a play that ends unhappily. But in the study of drama, it is customary to distinguish between that which is tragic and that which is merely sad.

In tragedy, there is a sense of dignity and importance beyond that of everyday life or, even, of exceptionally unfortunate situations. A tragedy will inspire in the spectators a sense of pity and fear and that it will purge these emotions. It depends on a view of life as a partial and dependent dimension of a larger reality. It requires a belief in a world of transcendence, a world that exists and has meaning beyond the world we know and understand. Tragedy is man's encounter with that great and ultimate meaning which the transcendent world embodies. More specifically, tragedy is man's casting himself athwart the purposes of the world beyond.

Thus, tragedy is more than a play that ends unhappily, it is also a play that meaningfully comes to grips with the ultimate questions of life, that exhibits man in his most exalted moments and that somehow leaves the spectator a better man than he was.

Morality and moral values

AS.Hornby (1974: 548-549) in his *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, states that moral is concerning principles of right and wrong, the power of distinguishing right and wrong, the ability to understand the difference between right and wrong. So, it can be stated that moral is relating to character or conduct considered as good or evil: ethical: conformed to or directed towards right, virtuous: esp. virtuous in matters of sex: capable of knowing right and wrong: subject to the moral law.

Meanwhile, he defines that morality is the standards, principles of good behavior or the particular system of morals. Morality is quality of being moral: that which renders an action right or wrong: the practice of moral duties apart from religion: virtue: the doctrine of actions as right or wrong. Morality is the quality of being in accord with standards of right or good conduct or a system of ideas that fall into those same categories.

A moral is a message conveyed or a lesson to be learned from a story or event. The moral may be left to the hearer, reader or viewer to determine for themselves, or may be explicitly encapsulated in a maxim. The use of characters is a means of conveying the moral of the story by eliminating complexity of personality and so spelling out the issues arising in the interplay between the characters, enabling the writer to make clear the message. With more rounded characters, such as those typically found in Shakespeare's plays, the moral may be more nuanced but no less present, and the writer may point it up in other ways.

Moral values are the standards of good and evil, which govern an individual's behavior and choices. Individual's morals may derive from

society and government, religion, or self. When moral values derive from society and government they, of necessity, may change as the laws and morals of the society change. Moral values also derive from within one's own self. This is clearly demonstrated in the behavior of older infants and young toddlers. If a child has been forbidden to touch or take a certain object early on, they know enough to slowly look over their shoulder to see if they are being observed before touching said object.

Research Method

The researcher uses library research in data collecting process. There were some steps in the collecting data. The first step was reading carefully the primary data for several times in order to understand the content of the book. The second step, the researcher gained all the information related to the topic that was being analyzed in order to complete the analysis. The next method of collecting data was a documentation method; all the data were collected from international network and other supporting sources which were relevant and related to the subject matter of the research. The methods were used to determine the intrinsic elements and moral values in play *Macbeth*. All of the data from the methods are gathered, studied, and then compiled suitably based on determined pattern.

The subject of the research is play *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare and the object of research is the intrinsic elements of the play and the moral values of it. To analyze the structural elements of the play *Macbeth*, the writer uses the objective approach that anatomizes the

work of art itself without relating to external factors such as universe, artists, audience.

Discussion

Theme

After reading many times, comprehending, and analyzing the play, it can be concluded that the theme of play *Macbeth* is about *the blind ambition*. It is the ambition of Macbeth to be the king of Scotland by the clout of evil prophesy and his devilish wife to kill the king Duncan. That ambition causes the downfall. It is real bad and horrified ambition.

The play is a variety of underlying motifs, such as the supernatural, the temptation of evil, etc. The tragedy of Macbeth is a story of power and destruction. The two main character, Macbeth and his wife, Lady Macbeth, are driven by ambition to commit the evil actions. Lady Macbeth, a more ambitious person than her husband, plots to have her husband murder the king of Scotland, so that he can take the throne of Scotland.

The ambition pushes Macbeth to see all that has come before as merely prologue; the crown is his goal. What's past, and what must come to pass to get the crown, are unimportant. Macbeth is completely consumed with his ambitions. Though he does feel fear, all he can think of is "What Is Not" – namely that he is not yet king, but soon will be. Ambition got Macbeth to where he now stands, and he now has nothing but ambition to fall back on. It can be seen from the quotations below:

Macbeth

[Aside.] *Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme. I thank you, gentlemen.
[Aside.] This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good: if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man, that function
Is smother'd in surmise; and nothing is
But what is not.*

(Act I, Scene III, 128)

Ambition is central to *Macbeth*, as it can be used to justify every act – and yet the actions it encourages are unjustifiable. He is blinded by the good promised him, and feels that following his ambition, no matter the cost, is the best way to fulfill his destiny. Moreover, the horrible blandishments come from his wife, lady Macbeth.

Character and characterization

Nurdiyantoro (1998:165) distinguishes between the character and characterization that Character indicates the person; meanwhile, characterization indicates the characteristics and attitude of the characters like what is interpreted by the readers. The characterization is

imagination of character in story certainly. A character is any person, persona, identity, or entity that exists in a work of art. The process of conveying information about characters in fiction is called characterization. Characters may be entirely fictional or based on real, historical entities. Characters may be human, supernatural, mythical, divine, animal, or personifications of an abstraction. A character may be based on a particular archetype.

Character is an important element of building the play. Characterization is a way of making clear about the character, as character is a creation of the author. Characterization is the important part in embodying the good story that will give both mental and physical feature of individuals or figures involved in the story, for it gives both mental and physical features of individual or figures. (Sudjiman, 1992: 16)

In the play *Macbeth*, the characters can be divided into two groups, they are major or main characters and minor characters. Two major characters in the play are Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Meanwhile, the minor characters are King Duncan, Banquo, Macduff, Three Witches, and Malcolm.

Setting

Stanton (1965, 18) states that setting is environment of its events, the immediate world in which they occur. Usually, the setting is presented through descriptive passage, and many readers are impatient with these because, understandably enough, they want to get on with the narrative. The story always happens in a place and in a time. Setting is

usually divided into two namely setting of place and setting of time. In the William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the setting of time happens in eleventh century; meanwhile, the setting of place happens in Scotland and in England.

Moral Values of The Play Macbeth

Moral is concerning principles of right and wrong, the power of distinguishing right and wrong, the ability to understand the difference between right and wrong (Hornby, 1974: 548). Moral values are the standards of good and evil, which govern an individual's behavior and choices. Individual's morals may derive from society and government, religion, or self. Reading and Analyzing the play *Macbeth*, the writer of the paper divides the moral values on the play into two parts namely positive moral values and negative moral values.

Positive moral values

a. Bravery

Bravery means the principle in willing to face danger, pain, or trouble, not afraid, having courage. It implies fearlessness in meeting danger or difficulty. *Macbeth* is a brave and good general in battlefield. It can be seen when he has won the battle with his friend, Banquo.

Macbeth is introduced as the brave man who led King Duncan's forces to victory against the traitorous Thane of Cawdor, Macdonwald and The King of Norway, in a battle that could have gone either way were it not for *Macbeth*'s leadership. We learn that *Macbeth* killed

Macdonwald himself in battle. King Duncan, overjoyed, decides to make Macbeth his new Thane of Cawdor.

Malcolm

This is the sergeant

Who, like a good and hardy soldier, fought

'Gainst my captivity.—Hail, brave friend!

Say to the king the knowledge of the broil

As thou didst leave it.

(Act I, Scene II, 04)

Soldier

For brave Macbeth,—well he deserves that name,—

Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,

Which smok'd with bloody execution,

Like valor's minion,

Carv'd out his passag' till he fac'd the slave;

And ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,

Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,

And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

(Act I, Scene II, 18)

b. Loyalty Or Obedience

Loyalty or obedience means doing or willing to do what one is told. It suggests a giving in to the orders or instructions of one in authority or control. Loyalty is one of moral values on play *Macbeth*. Macduff, the thane of Fife, is portrait of loyal and patriotic person. He puts country above home and family when he flees to England and leaves his castle a the mercy of the tyrannous usurper.

Malcolm

*Why in that rawness left you wife and child,—
Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,—
Without leave-taking?—I pray you,
Let not my jealousies be your dishonors,
But mine own safeties:—you may be rightly just,
Whatever I shall think.*

(Act IV, Scene III, 30).

c. Affection and love

Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth love each other. Although they are blinded by the evil ambition, they are a good couple. Macbeth loves his wife and so does she. Macbeth accepts her guidance and advice and consults her concerning his plans. He shares his joy with his wife. Moreover, he is affectionate in his action toward her and uses terms of endearment when speaking to her.

Macbeth

My dearest love,

(Act I, Scene V, 58)

Macbeth

So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you:

(Act III, Scene II, 33)

It is proved that when Macbeth is told of Lady Macbeth's death, he is too weary to feel more than just a dull sense of loss and regret.

Though, Lady Macbeth is more ambitious woman in prompting in killing the king Duncan and makes him in downfall, Lady Macbeth also loves much his husband, Macbeth. She greets him in their first

affectionate meeting. She shows the good portrait of woman in welcoming her husband returning from battlefield.

Lady Macbeth
Great Glamis! Worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
(Act I, Scene V, 56)

Lady Macbeth
My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold
(Act III, Scene IV, 36).

d. Modesty

Modesty means the principle in having or showing a moderate opinion of one's own value, abilities, achievements, etc; not vain or boastful. In the play *Macbeth*, Banquo has the portrait of modest person. He and Macbeth won the battle. And the king Duncan gives the honor and praises Banquet:

Duncan
Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserv'd, nor must be known
No less to have done so, let me infold thee
And hold thee to my heart.
Banquo modestly replies:
There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.
(Act I, Scene IV, 32)

e. Honesty

Honesty means the principle is held in respect, honorable. It is respectable, creditable, commendable. Banquo is not only the modest person but the honest one as well. His honesty is shown in his struggles against temptation and the evil thoughts that beset him. Only in sleep does his power of resistance weaken.

Banquo

*A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep:—merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
(Act II, Scene I, 06)*

Negative moral values

a. Ambition

Ambition means the strong desire to gain a particular objective. Actually, Ambition has good moral values if it is used in right and proper aim. For example, if we are teachers, then we want to reach the higher level in a position such as headmaster or headmistress, we should work hard to reach the best achievement in gaining the position by struggling and praying. But, when we reach the position by a bad or evil ambition with short cut like bribing, the result will be bad; even, it will be a downfall for us.

In play *Macbeth*, the main character, Macbeth is the ambitious person; indeed, his wife, Lady Macbeth is more ambitious. She is a prompter to do evil ambition to Macbeth. She motivates him to kill the king Duncan and the story of the play becomes the tragedy. Macbeth

does a tragic event by being killed by Macduff in the end of story. He does downfall in his life.

Lady Macbeth

*Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't. He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put*

(Act I, Scene V, 65)

Lady Macbeth

*To alter favor ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me.*

(Act I, Scene V, 74)

b. Atrocity

The cruelty or tyranny is a best description for Lady Macbeth. She is the main role in motivating Macbeth to kill the king Duncan. In his hesitation, she whispers that the king would be us. Finally, Macbeth is killing Duncan.

Lady Macbeth

*Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here;
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty!*

(Act I, Scene V, 41)

The cruelty can also be seen when Macduff fights with Macbeth.

Macduff is able to cut Macbeth's head.

Macduff

*Behold, where stands
The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl*

(Act IV Scene VIII, 64.)

c. Temptation

The big temptation is encountered by Macbeth. As his wife, Lady Macbeth has the evil ambition to tempt Macbeth. By his goading, Macbeth finally is crushed and does in killing Duncan. Lady Macbeth holds him to his vow to kill Duncan, telling him. This is the great temptation for Macbeth

Lady Macbeth

I have given suck, and know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:

I would, while it was smiling in my face,

Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums

And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you

Have done to this.

(Act I, Scene VI, 62)

d. Vengeance

Vengeance is vividly shown by the portrayal of Macduff, the thane of Fife. He loves his wife and family. Macduff's love of his family propels him to vengeance to Macbeth.

Macduff

That way the noise is.—Tyrant, show thy face!

If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,

My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.

(Act V, Scene VII, 14)

The play Macbeth is regarded as a tragic story

After analyzing the play *Macbeth*, the researcher can take some reasons why this play can be told as tragedy. Macbeth as a victim of supernatural conspiracy: One of the important elements of a

Shakespearian Tragedy is the supernatural element. It's the witches who sow the seed of treason in Macbeth's mind, though we do get a feeling that the thought of 'replacing' King Duncan was in his mind all the time. Later on they even give wrong information of his impending death. The Birnam wood does move to Dunsinane hill & Macduff who is 'born of no woman' does kill Macbeth who was snug due to the witches' ambiguous prophesies. But the blame does not lie squarely on the witches, as it is Macbeth who 'chooses' to murder the king.

Macbeth as a victim of human soliciting: It is Lady Macbeth who actively encourages Macbeth to commit the 'ghastly deed'. She challenges his masculinity with a battering of arguments & a Blitzkrieg of bitter & stinging words. Later she entices him by saying that the blame of the murder could be put on the king's guards & so their crime won't be discovered.

Macbeth as a tyrant: After Duncan's murder, Macbeth would be expected to calm down. But he becomes a tyrant. He kills Banquo & wipes off Macduff's family. But Macbeth becomes a tyrant out of desperation.

Death. He fails to defend the king of Scotland and Macduff is able to hand over the crown. His head is cut by Macduff. It is so tragic.

Conclusion

William Shakespeare is one of the well-known world wide English authors. So, there are many writings dealing with him such as critics about him, his writings or articles and also his biography. Additionally, many actual facts about him can be proved so far. William Shakespeare

was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, England. His birth was April 23, 1564.

The play *Macbeth* is a tragedy by William Shakespeare written around 1606 and Macbeth, the main character, is the tragic hero of the play. The play follows the story of General Macbeth, a nobleman who hears a prophecy that he will become king and is tempted to evil. Finally, he goes through the downfall for his devilish ambition.

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