***Macbeth***

***Notes on Act 5, scenes 1, 2 and 3***

**Scene 1**

1. Lady Macbeth is going mad. Her servant has called the doctor and reported her behaviour, which includes many strange activities done while she is asleep. However, the servant is afraid of revealing everything she has heard (15). She realizes that she could get in trouble for speaking out against the Macbeths.
2. (21) Lady Macbeth enters with a lit candle. When he asks, the doctor is told that Lady Macbeth has ordered that a light be nearby at all times. This is **ironic,** since earlier in the play she had been calling on the powers of darkness (night, evil) to help her.
3. She reveals her guilt - and that of her husband’s - while talking in her sleep.

blood on her hands (32)

1. amount of blood in Duncan (35-37)
2. the mention of Macduff’s dead wife (39)
3. reassuring her husband that Banquo is dead

All of these are hallucinations/dreams, but the servant and the doctor realize what they mean. The doctor claims that she needs a priest (‘the divine’-69). He implies that her illness stems from her guilt, though he is afraid to speak of this (74).

**Scene 2**

* The forces are gathering against Macbeth, who is said to be quite agitated.
* The metaphor used in lines 17-18 compare Scotland to a diseased person, so far gone and bloated that a “belt” (Macbeth’s power) no longer fits around it. This implies that Macbeth’s power is now useless, because Scotland has fallen so far.
* (23-25) Clothing Metaphor/Imagery: Angus suggests that Macbeth’ title of King is unsuitable, comparing it to a giant’s robe hanging on a dwarf.
* (30-34) Medical Metaphor/Imagery: The country is said to be sick, and Malcolm and his followers are the medicine. Together, they will “purge” Scotland of its illness, identified as Macbeth. The use of “purge” in this context means “laxative”. In effect, they are comparing Macbeth to fecal matter.
* Note where they are: Birnam Wood. Remember what the witches said about this place, and the role it will play in Macbeth’s downfall.

**Scene 3**

* (1-10) Macbeth shows his over-confidence when he relies on the prophecies brought forth by the witches’ apparitions. He does not believe that a forest can move, nor does he doubt that Malcolm was “born” of woman. Therefore, he believes he is safe.
* He treats his servants very badly when he sees they are afraid (11-19). He is probably trying to hide some of his own fears. He seems very frantic here.
* Very upset with the whole situation. He feels he deserves more love and happiness in his life (27-29). His wife remains ill.
* (58-64) Another laxative reference. This time, it is Macbeth who refers to his enemies as feces.