

Macbeth Act 5 Questions

1. Act V contains a very famous Lady Macbeth scene- the sleepwalking scene. You can probably guess this is about more than hand hygiene. Using evidence from the text to support your answer, explain what this handwashing is a symbol of.
2. In Act V, Scene iv, Malcolm talks about those who are still following Macbeth saying, “none serve Macbeth but constrained things” (l. 13). What is he saying about these men?
3. Macbeth carries on fighting even when it has become clear that the Birnam Wood prophecy (which he thought would protect him) has come to pass and actually been a sign of his downfall. Why does he continue to trust that the other prophecies will protect him?
4. After he learns of Lady Macbeth’s death, Macbeth delivers one of his most pivotal speeches – often called the Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow Speech. Like the Dagger Speech before it, it is *loaded* with figurative language. While the Dagger Speech uses mostly personification, this one makes use of vivid metaphors. Pick TWO metaphors from this speech and explain what Macbeth is trying to communicate about human existence through these comparisons.
5. While the actual death of Macbeth occurs off stage, Shakespeare’s stage directions have Macduff returning to the stage with Macbeth’s head on the end of a pole or spear. What is the effect of displaying the play’s protagonist in this manner for our last glimpse of him?