

Essay on Macbeth

by

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Candles, fires, lights and flames have been a necessity in many of literature's most famous works. Their symbolic meaning is the most useful description of life and death in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, which revolves around this very theme. One of the most memorable speeches in the literary world mentions a candle. Although it is only a few words in the midst of a philosophy and scrutiny of life, it stands out.

Macbeth is an extremely troubled man. The burden of death and guilt accumulates throughout the entire play until, finally, it is summed up in one profound paragraph. "Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets upon the stage and then is heard no more."

This excerpt from his speech is a metaphor for his life. Macbeth believes that his life was merely a play in which anxious actors tumble around and then disappear out of sight, out of mind.

"It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing." Macbeth is speaking his mind quite frankly here. He says that life is a simple story directed, created, and narrated by God, the idiot, and is glamorized by sound, drama, and emotions that symbolize absolutely nothing. Macbeth feels as if his life was an act, with senseless roles, made for entertainment only. And when all is said and done, it's apparent that it was all for no purpose.

"Out, out brief candle..." These were Macbeth's words, uttered in despair. The death of the queen was the last straw for Macbeth. His game had gone on long enough and took the lives of too many, including his own. The candle he mentions was a metaphor for life, and putting it out signified death. It was a most fitting description of the entire play.

Macbeth is a tragic play that carries great meaning involving morals, sins, lies, and deceit. To conclude this story would best be done by reading this one, important speech. It is, by far, the most significant scene in Shakespeare's works.