

Q: Describe Macbeth's second meeting with the witches. What did he learn from them?

Ans. When Macbeth met the Weird Sisters the second time, he saw them clustered round a huge cauldron. They were uttering magical words to call forth evil spirits as they boiled some foul liquid in the cauldron. Macbeth asked them to tell him whatever he would ask them, be it good or bad for him. They promised him to fulfil his desire, but bade him say nothing but listen to what they had to say.

Upon Macbeth's enquiry, there emerged from the darkness a strange head. It called Macbeth three times by his name and told him to beware of Macduff, the Thane of Fife. With these words, the head vanished from his sight. Then there popped up before him the figure of a Bloody Child. It also addressed him three times by his name and told him to be bold and resolute, and assured him that 'none of woman born' should ever harm him. Macbeth took great comfort from these words. Since none of woman born could harm him, he should not fear Macduff. Thereupon, a third figure appeared in the smoke of the huge vessel. It was child with a golden crown on its head and bearing a tree in its hand. It told Macbeth that he would never be defeated until Great Birnam Wood came to Dunsinane Hill against him. These words pleased Macbeth still more, for it seemed impossible that a forest should move itself.

For all this, Macbeth was not fully satisfied, and therefore he wanted to know from the witches if ever Banquo's son should ascend the throne of Scotland. Upon Macbeth's insistence, the witches showed him a procession of eight crowned kings, all looking like Banquo. The last held in its hand a mirror, which reflected many more kings. Macbeth was greatly shocked by the last vision. But, before he could ask anything more, the witches had all vanished from his sight.