

ACT III SCENE V. A Heath.

Pathetic fallacy. Like the Three Witches, Hecate's arrival is punctuated with bad weather. This not only acts as an indicator to her evil nature but helps to create an atmosphere of fear and curiosity for the Jacobean audience.

Rather than falling properly under their spell, Macbeth has become 'spiteful and wrathful' and is independently working 'for his own ends' rather than bowing to the dark fate assigned to him.

In ancient Greek mythology, Acheron was known as the "river of woe" and was one of the five rivers of the Greek underworld.

In Jacobean England Witches were thought to have the ability to see into the future. Hecate is therefore aware that Macbeth is coming.

Hecate will obtain a magical drop from the moon, treat it with a secret art, and thus create spirits (artificial sprites) that will lead Macbeth to his destruction (confusion).

She plans to give Macbeth false security, which is a man's worst enemy because it makes him complacent and he may become unguarded in his actions. This foreshadows Macbeth's later feelings of invincibility.

This spirit is likely Hecate's familiar, similar to the ones listed in Act 1, Scene 1.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches meeting HECATE

First Witch  
Why, how now, Hecate! you look angerly.

Hecate was the goddess of witchcraft in Greek mythology. Here, she acts as the guide or leader of the three witches.

HECATE

Have I not reason, beldams as you are,  
Saucy and overbold? How did you dare  
To trade and traffic with Macbeth  
In riddles and affairs of death;

Hecate is indignant that the three 'weird sisters' have been attempting to manipulate Macbeth without her special touch, and apparently doing a poor job of it by sorcerous' standards.

And I, the mistress of your charms,  
The close contriver of all harms,  
Was never call'd to bear my part,  
Or show the glory of our art?

Hecate exclaims that she's the leader of the Witches, and that she's the reason they have their powers. Shakespeare emphasises her evil and controlling nature, though the Ancient Greeks regarded her as good-natured. Many later Christian writers saw Hecate as evil; a pawn of Satan due to her witchcraft.

And, which is worse, all you have done  
Hath been but for a wayward son,  
Spiteful and wrathful, who, as others do,  
Loves for his own ends, not for you.

But make amends now: get you gone,  
And at the pit of Acheron  
Meet me i' the morning: thither he

Will come to know his destiny:

Your vessels and your spells provide,  
Your charms and every thing beside.  
I am for the air; this night I'll spend  
Unto a dismal and a fatal end:

The Jacobean audience would have believed Hecate's soul purpose to be the destruction and torment of humanity. Hecate says that her plans will not only prove disruptive, but fatal to Macbeth.

Great business must be wrought ere noon:  
Upon the corner of the moon

There hangs a vaporous drop profound;

I'll catch it ere it come to ground:

And that distill'd by magic sleights  
Shall raise such artificial sprites

As by the strength of their illusion  
Shall draw him on to his confusion:

He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear  
He hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear:

Hecate implies that Macbeth's hopes will put him beyond the influence of prudence, divine forgiveness, or terror. She plans to give him false confidence.

And you all know, security  
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

Music and a song within: 'Come away, come away,'

'come away, come away' is a song sung in the form of opera in the beginning, generally starting passive. This form of vocals contradicts the graceful form of opera, emphasizing on the unnatural and unfeminine qualities of these 'Women'/witches.

Hark! I am call'd; my little spirit, see,  
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me.

Exit

First Witch  
Come, let's make haste; she'll soon be back again.

Exeunt