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Period ½
Act II

Success: Made of Gold

In Act II of *Macbeth*, Shakespeare uses allusions of rarity and power to define Macbeth's masculinity and reveal its correlation to success. As the group stands around, shocked by Duncan's death, Macbeth soon calls for the rest of the men to "put on manly readiness, And meet i' the hall together" (II, ii, 156-157). Shakespeare refers to the preparedness to deal with such grievous a blow as 'manly', likening the ability to take charge and deal with situations as a masculine trait. Macbeth and the men become the only people with the power to solve the tragedy left by Duncan's death. Such 'manly readiness' gives the group the power to move forward, searching for a solution. Success comes to those that seek it, and Shakespeare emphasizes the masculinity in doing just so.

When Duncan's body is first discovered, Macbeth puts on the dramatic airs of horror, describing the corpse's "silver skin laced with his golden blood," and how his "gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature" (II, ii, 131-133). Their deceased king was made of both silver and gold, a man so great that his blood is a glittering ore. Shakespeare hints to the glory of men as well as emphasizes the level of Macbeth's success in felling Duncan. The king is one of God's given leaders to the people, and Macbeth easily makes a 'breach in nature' to reach his goals. Shakespeare depicts how Macbeth casually takes success from both Duncan and God itself, a man above men ruthlessly fulfilling his dreams. Macbeth holds a rare power, both as himself and as a man; Shakespeare employs such gifts, and Macbeth receives his success through a masculine strength akin to gold.