

Act II, Scene i

Synopsis

It is past midnight when Macbeth meets Banquo and his son, _____ in the palace courtyard. Banquo is feeling uneasy and is reluctant to go to sleep. When Macbeth is left alone, he imagines he sees a dagger in the air leading him towards the sleeping king. Suddenly, a bell rings, a prearranged signal from Lady Macbeth that Duncan's guards are asleep and that the time is right for Macbeth to enter Duncan's chamber and kill him.

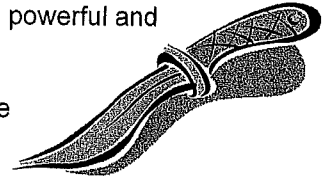
Questions

- 1) Why is Banquo afraid to go to sleep?

- 2) How would you describe Macbeth's state of mind in this scene? In what ways is he different than the man we saw at the end of Act I?

The "Is this a dagger" soliloquy is perhaps Macbeth's most famous soliloquy. It is powerful and full of frightening imagery.

- 3) Why is Macbeth hallucinating? What conclusion does he reach about what he sees?



- 4) In what ways does this soliloquy represent a change in Macbeth's character?

Act II, Scene ii

Synopsis

Write a brief synopsis of this scene:

Questions

- 1) Note the numerous references to blood in this scene. What role does blood play in this scene and in the play in general?

- 2) Lady Macbeth admits to not being able to kill Duncan herself. What does this say about her character?

- 3) What is the importance of lines 33-34: "These deeds must not be thought after these ways; so, it will make us mad?"

- 4) What does Macbeth mean when he says he has murdered sleep (line 36)?

5) How is water used as an image in this scene?

6) How would you describe Macbeth's feelings at the end of the scene?

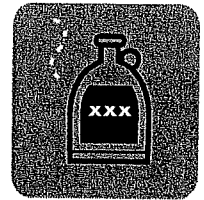
Act II, Scene iii

Synopsis

Macduff and Lennox, Scottish noblemen, knock at Macbeth's gate. They have been asked by Duncan to wake him early. A porter lets them in, where they meet Macbeth. Macduff goes ahead into Duncan's bedchamber and returns hysterically, having found Duncan dead. Macbeth and Lennox go to view the scene, and Macbeth kills the (supposedly guilty) guards, claiming he acted in a loyal rage. Lady Macbeth faints when she hears what has happened. Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, sense danger and plan to slip away quietly and leave the country.

Questions

1) **Comic relief** is a technique used to relieve the tension that has been built up in the audience so that they are emotionally able to cope with the tension that is to follow. The porter in this scene provides comic relief. Give three examples of how he does this.



2) Describe the reactions of the Macbeth's to the "news" of Duncan's murder. What do their reactions say about their characters?

1) How does Banquo respond to the murders?

Act II, Scene iv

Synopsis

Macduff tells an Old Man that the king's sons, who have fled, have been accused of _____

Macduff also reports that: _____

Ross decides to attend Macbeth's coronation, but Macduff refuses.

Questions

1) Give three examples of supernatural occurrences discussed in this scene.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

2) How are these supernatural occurrences significant to the play? What do they symbolize?

3) What does Macduff's decision not to attend the coronation suggest about his attitude toward Macbeth?

4) What does "Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!" (line 38) mean?

