

Act 3

- To explore the shifting relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth
- To understand the contribution imagery makes to the dramatic and thematic effects
- To track the links between separate scenes within the play



Act 3 Scene 2 to 4

Act 3

One of the key points to consider about Act 3 is the manner in which power shifts towards Macbeth away from his wife, though Macbeth suffers torment for what he has done. Start

Is there any evidence then that Macbeth was beginning to take the lead in events?

Act 3 Scene 2 to 4

Summary

- Lady Macbeth expresses her unhappiness.
- Both she and Macbeth are suffering from troubled sleep, nightmares and loss of appetite.
- They are determined to hide their agitation and to be welcoming and jovial at the banquet.
- Macbeth hints to Lady Macbeth that he has made some plans for significant action, but refuses to give her any details.

**Focus
questions
during
reading of
the scene.**

Act 3 Scene 2 to 4

- What does Lady Macbeth say Macbeth has become at the beginning of Act 3 Scene 2?
- How does Macbeth explain his behavior?
- It may seem strange but Macbeth says he would rather be dead like Duncan. Why does he want to be like Duncan?
- How does Lady Macbeth want Macbeth to behave at the banquet?
- What does Macbeth say will happen tonight?
- Why does Shakespeare have Macbeth say that he cannot wait for night time and darkness?

Act 3 Scene 2 to 4

What contribution does *imagery* makes to the tone and action of the play in this scene?

Act 3 Scene 2 to 4

*..night's yawning
peal*

In Act 3 Scene 2 Macbeth uses a number of powerful images to describe situations and feelings. Match the images below to their meaning.

We have scorched the snake, not
killed it;
She'll close, and be herself, whilst
our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former
tooth

After life's fitful fever,
he sleeps well

Let the frame of
things disjoint

...we
Must lave our honours in these
flattering streams
And makes our faces vizards to
our hearts

...full of
scorpions is my
mind...!

Come, sealing night,
Scarf up the tender
eye of pitiful day

Let it get dark, so the sun's rays are blocked and disappear

We'll have to pretend to be pleasant and praise people, and mask what we're really feeling.

We have wounded our enemies, but haven't defeated them. If we're not careful, they'll recover and come back to attack us.

The first sounds of the night-time

Let the world shatter into pieces

I'm torn apart by my thoughts

Following a difficult, painful life death now brings him peace

Act 3 Scene 2 to 4

Act 3 Scene 2 to 4

- 1. How much more powerful the images are than the explanations.**
- 2. What does the language tell us about their respective states of mind?**
- 3. What effect do these images have on the tone and atmosphere of the scene?**
- 4. Do they make it light-hearted and silly?**

Act 3 Scene 2 to 4

Task: look at Macbeth's final speech in Act 3 Scene 2, and Lady Macbeth's speech beginning 'The raven himself is hoarse...' in Act 1 Scene 5. Using the table below:

- provide examples of the similarities suggested.
- in the empty rows, add any *other* similarities you notice plus examples.

Similarities

- References to 'night' and its effects
- References to evil/dark forces that they need to 'help' them
- Similar or repeated words and phrases
- References to blindness/seeing etc

Act 3 Scene 2 to 4

What *differences* are there between the two extracts?

Act 3 Scene 2 to 4

What *differences* are there between the two extracts?

- the fact that Lady Macbeth's speech is a *soliloquy*, and is almost like a spell or prayer to evil forces. Macbeth's speech is in the presence of his wife, though it also sounds like a spell or incantation
- Lady Macbeth's references to her needing to be 'unsex'-ed – whilst Macbeth's speech has no obvious reference to his gender, or manliness

Plenary

Act 3 Scene 2 to 4

This scene is especially important in the way it starts to signal a shift between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. The first line of Macbeth's final speech indicates his intention not to tell her what he has planned.

- Why doesn't Macbeth tell his wife what fate he has planned for Banquo?
- How are we supposed to view Banquo, following what he says at the start of the act in reference to what the witches promised him?
- Who might the third murderer be who appears to help with the murder of Banquo?