

act three scene 4

overview

to establish himself as king, Macbeth welcomes his guests to a banquet...

Questions on the Banquet Scene – section by section

First Section – Lines 1-8 ('they are welcome')

1. Write down three thoughts going on in the minds of the new king and queen as they welcome their guests in. Use lines from III.2 to help you.

Second Section – Lines 9-37 ('...bare without it')

2. When Macbeth first sees the murderer, what might his thoughts be?

3. Link Macbeth's comment, 'There's blood on thy face' to his cry after the murder of Duncan: 'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hands?' What do you think the blood represents in both cases?

4. Read over the words of the murderer. If you were the director, how would you instruct the actor playing him to play the part? Think about:

- a) his voice / tone of delivery
- b) gestures as he speaks
- b) his posture and body language

Link all of these to the lines he delivers.

5. What is Macbeth's reaction when he finds out that Fleance has escaped? Explain this reaction.

Third Section – Lines 38-73 ('...the maws of kites.')

6. Discuss with a partner how you would portray the ghost if you were directing this scene. List arguments for and against making the ghost visible for the audience. Which do you think Shakespeare intended?

7. Find and write down three separate lines that show that no one but Macbeth can see Banquo's ghost.

8. Suggest three ways in which you could show the reaction of the lords to Macbeth's behaviour. Remember that these shouldn't distract too much attention away from Macbeth and Banquo's Ghost!

Fourth Section – Lines 74-107 ('...Unreal mock'ry hence.')

9. In groups of three, take it in turns to whisper Macbeth's reflections on the ghost between lines 75 and 83 ('Blood hath been shed...such a murder is.')

As one person whispers the lines, the others should note which words should be given particular stress.

10. In this section, use **adjectives** to describe Macbeth's different tones. Firstly, write down the line that indicates a change of tone of voice, then use the adjective to indicate what tone should be used.

11. What do you think Lady Macbeth's thoughts might be by the end of this section?

Fifth Section – Lines 108-end of scene

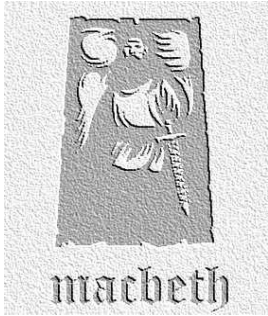
12. Lady Macbeth suggests that her husband has 'broke the meeting'. What does this mean, and how could you get the actors playing the lords to indicate this?

13. 'Blood will have blood.' What do you think Macbeth means by this? How many references to blood can you count in this scene alone?

14. Explain these lines delivered by Macbeth in this section:

- 'I am in blood / Stepped in so far that I should wade no more, Returning were as tedious as go o'er.'
- 'We are yet but young in deed'

What do these lines indicate might happen?



act three scene four

set
SATS
scene!

overview

to establish himself as king, Macbeth welcomes his guests to a banquet...

Activities based on the Whole Scene

1. *Writing to Inform, Explain, Describe*

Imagine you are one of the lords at the banquet. Write a diary extract written on the night after the banquet. Describe your new king's behaviour, explain what you think it might mean, and write about your reaction to it. **(Accompanying worksheet available)**

2. *Writing to Explore, Imagine Entertain*

Write an extra scene that shows the conversation that took place between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in their chamber after the banquet on the same night. Try to capture the mood, fears and motivation of the characters. Use Modern English, and pretend it is a modern-day version of the play.

3. *Writing to Analyse, Review, Comment* **(Accompanying worksheet available)**

How does Shakespeare build up an increasing sense of horror and confusion in this scene? In your answer, consider:

- the various reactions of the characters to the ghost and to Macbeth's behaviour;
- the language of Macbeth as he responds to seeing the murderer and then the ghost;
- Shakespeare's use of stage directions and the actions of characters within the scene.

4. *Drama / Speaking and Listening*

Consider how you might design a set for this scene. You will need to bear in mind the following:

- how the audience can see everything that takes place
- how you will direct the entrances of the lords / the murderer / Banquo's ghost;
- Macbeth's various positions during the scene, including when he and other characters should be sitting or standing.

You could draw an overhead view of the stage, using a key to indicate where characters are seated and where they move. Your ideas could be described to your teacher, or acted out by half the class.