

Macbeth Act 2 notes - Kirsty Clyne

SCENE 1

Banquo is with his son Fleance, but is on high alert in Macbeth's castle. He gives his sword to Fleance but the second Macbeth enters, Banquo takes it back showing that he no longer trusts Macbeth.

Throughout the play, Shakespeare uses sleep imagery to show two different things about the characters if they cannot sleep:

The first is that they must be worried about something.

The second is that their conscience is troubling them.

Banquo cannot sleep because he is worried about Macbeth's reaction when the witches told them the prophecy, and he is not happy with Macbeth's "cursed thoughts". He saw Macbeth's reaction when the witches told him that he would be king and Banquo knows this is not the reaction of someone who should be pleased about hearing this news.

The relationship between the two men has become very strained, and there is a clear crack in their friendship due to the witches foreseeing that Banquo's descendants shall become king, meaning that Macbeth's children will not.

As the two men talk, the presence of Lady Macbeth is clearly felt by the audience as they are aware of the plan that she carefully conducted. Although she is not in the scene, a part of her is still present. This occurs throughout the play as although she is only in 7 or so scenes, she is able to make a huge impact without even being on stage.

Banquo hands Macbeth a diamond, a gift from Duncan for Lady Macbeth. This is ironic because Duncan is giving them even more wealth but they are about to kill him to get his title.

The audience knows that the ring of the bell signals that Macbeth shall kill Duncan. The tension rises as the audience know this bell might ring at any moment throughout his soliloquy.