

Macbeth Act 5.
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Act 5 Scene 1

In this scene, we see Lady Macbeth for the final time in which her strength has completely been used up to protect Macbeth. He has distanced himself from her in an attempt to protect her but as she cannot live without him, this has had a large negative effect on her and she is merely a shell of what she once was. She is no longer the ruthless character met in act 1, but isolated and insane. Macbeth does not understand that she must have him in her life to survive, and therefore she cannot live. She is completely spent, with her delusions and troubles having accumulated and damaged her mentally.

In this scene, she now speaks solely in prose - very different to the poetic way of speaking she used previously. This is a good way of showing her sheer confusion and lack of self. Previously (Act 2 Scene 2) Macbeth noted the importance of sleep and that a good night's sleep heals the mind (also referenced by the doctor as he says "the benefit of sleep"), and in this scene Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking. This carries on the sleep imagery shown throughout the play. As she is sleepwalking and therefore unaware of the doctor and gentlewoman, she is speaking the truth and nothing else. She also is carrying a light, a symbol that she cannot be in the dark as Duncan was murdered in the dark and she is using the light to find peace in herself.

Lady Macbeth cannot seem to stop imagine the smell of Duncan's blood on her hands, and this is what destroys her. ("Out, damned spot! Out I say!"). In a way this is ironic as when Macbeth murdered Duncan and they were covered in blood, she claimed that a "litter wither" would cleanse them of the act committed. She cannot get this out of her head and is trying to wash imaginary blood off her hands. ("accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands")

Not only has the castle become hell after Duncan's murder, but Lady Macbeth's mind has in turn become her own personal form of hell. ("hell is murky").

Lady Macbeth now has a conscience, having wrapped her evilness with her husband's conscience. Due to this, the doctor realises that she must have had a part in the murder of Duncan. She also addresses the sheer slaughter of Macduff's family. ("The Thane of Fife has a wife. Where is she now?")

Disease imagery is used again as the doctor informs the gentlewoman that he cannot fix her. ("This disease is beyond my practise"). The disease he is referring to is Lady Macbeth's conscience that has ruined her.

She finishes by saying "what's done cannot be undone" referring to when she told Macbeth that they shouldn't worry as there was no going back.

Act 5 Scene 2

Macbeth's depression is shown in this act frequently, having had traces of it previously. (The scorpion imagery). He is also basing his actions off the false senses of security that the witches have provided him with and although he does not think he is immortal, he believes he is invincible.

This scene focuses on the army wanting him gone. Macbeth cannot control what is going to happen ("he cannot buckle his distemper'd cause") and the people who are still by his side are only there down to fear of the man.