

By the end of studying **Macbeth - Act 2 Scene 3** I need to know;

Plot: In 2.2, after assassinating Duncan, Lady Macbeth and Macbeth hear a knocking at the south entry of their castle. Duncan's death is discovered. Scene - The court of Macbeth's Castle. Enter a drunken porter. Knocking is heard by the audience.

Ideas - The porter imagines that he is the porter of 'Hell'. This later becomes a reality. After keeping Malcolm and Lennox waiting, whilst he amuses himself, he finally lets them into Macbeth castle. At the door are Macduff and Lennox. Macduff good-naturedly asks what took so long. The porter blames drunkenness, and makes a series of jokes about alcohol and its effects on men.

<p>Vocabulary</p>	<p>old frequent Beelzebub - The devil napkins handkerchiefs equivocator - A liar person who uses ambiguous language to conceal the truth or avoid commitment. hose trousers made a shift to cast him with effort I overpowered the drink Gorgon hideous monster than turns beholders to stone lees dregs Jesuit - A member of a Roman Catholic order of religious men. vault wine cellar, pauser restraining force of auger-hole the tiniest crevice scruples doubts undivulg'd pretence disclosed plot of treason the near in blood . . . bloody close relations are more likely to be suspected of murder warrant in that theft this kind of stealing (away) is justified Treason - the crime of betraying one's country, especially by attempting to kill or overthrow the sovereign or government.</p>
<p>Context</p>	<p>A03 - Remember to include references to context in the essay question only.</p> <p>The murder of Duncan is not physically shown on stage in the text of the play. Some question this was because it was too shocking for audiences of the day. Some critics link the Porter's speeches to contemporary events - The treasonous Gunpowder Plot of 1605. A Jesuit priest, Father Henry Garnet was hanged for lying about his knowledge of the Gunpowder conspiracy and pleaded that he did so for God's sake. The porters opening speech begins 'Here's an equivocator .. who committed treason enough for God's sake' Audiences of the day would understand the reference. 'The effect is to show that 'Hell' is not only on stage in Macbeth's castle but present in the society for which Shakespeare was writing.(York Notes -Macbeth)</p> <p>In medieval drama 'Hell' was often portrayed as a castle. Divine right of kings - Macbeth has killed Duncan. Only God may appoint a king. Chain of being - The world will be plunged into chaos.</p>
<p>Themes</p>	<p>The themes of murder and deception are developed. The innocent guards are murdered by Macbeth. Structure - The porter is introduced as light relief and provides a comic interlude. Shakespeare introduces him to make the audience laugh. Distrust Fear Flight Murder Deception Lady Macbeth faints at the news of Duncan's death, and both Macduff and Banquo call for someone to attend to her - evidence of her deception/deceit</p>

Reading:

The porter speaks in prose which denotes his status as a servant - lower class.

<p>Deeper understanding</p>	<p>Remember in the 2019 GCSE Literature paper the Macbeth extract question was the Porter Scene - Act 2 scene 3 . The lesson to be learnt is that minor characters must not be ignored in any text we study at GCSE level.</p> <p>The significance of the Porter within <i>Macbeth</i> is twofold. Primarily, the Porter functions as comic relief by lessening the tension in the audience following the murder of King Duncan. The Porter also functions thematically by indicating that the gates to Macbeth's home are synonymous to the gates of hell. The horror of Macbeth's reign begins to unfold. Malcolm and Donalbain's escape will provide justification for Macbeth to be crowned king. However Macbeth wears the crown uneasily, knowing they are alive and plotting against him. He will 'sleep no more'</p> <p>The continued knocking, at the start of the act, comes at the time when heart beats are increased and the stage is in silence, which heightens the attention of the audience.</p> <p>Macduff's announcement — "Our royal master's murdered" — is preceded by several lines in which the murder is depicted in a figurative or metaphorical fashion, almost as if Macduff dare not name the deed: "Murder hath broke ope / The Lord's anointed Temple," "destroy your sight / With a new Gorgon," and "see / The great doom's image!" It's interesting to compare these lines of Macduff's, spoken in all innocence, with those of the all-too-guilty Macbeth, who also approaches the matter metaphorically: "The wine of life is drawn . . . " and "The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood / Is stopp'd . . ." Macbeth's has a tone of rehearsal in contrast to Macduff's, also he is willing to describe, in detail, the sight he saw before him- could this be the moment Macduff begins to suspect Macbeth of foul play? Indeed, Macduff does not meet Macbeth again after this until he faces him at the end of the play. There must be some reason why, as we discover in Act 2 Scene 4, Macduff decides against going to Scone to see Macbeth crowned and instead returns to Fife. It could be that his very reaction here is what makes him suspicious.</p> <p>Expectations of women- Macduff believes that a woman's ear is too tender to hear the news of Duncan's murder so refuses to tell her 'for the repetition in a woman's ear would murder as it fell'. Lady Macbeth also adopts the typical role of a weak woman when she feigns fainting in order to distract the others and stop Macbeth from speaking.</p> <p>Expectations around masculinity- There is the expectation that men should not show emotions. This is evident here when Banquo suggests they meet when their 'naked frailties [are] hid'. This could just mean they need to get dressed; however, the idea that they are 'frail' could derive from the fact they are showing their emotions (chiefly sadness and grief), something that men would be expected to hide. This is also reinforced when Macbeth suggests they put on 'manly readiness' and meet in the hall. This idea of men having to conceal their 'weaker' emotions becomes a common motif throughout the play.</p>
<p>Quotes</p>	<p>'Hell gate' 'Who's there i'the name of /Beelzebub?' (A name given to the devil) 'Unruly night' Things are not as they seem - unnerving 'Lamentings' and 'strange screams of death' - references to hell and the supernatural. It could also reference the disruption of the Chain of Being and hint at the further unnatural events to come. Lennox describes the terrible storm that raged the previous night and sounded like "strange screams of death" The unnatural act of killing Duncan has caused havoc in nature. With a cry of "O horror, horror, horror!" Macduff comes running from the room, shouting that the king has been murdered (2.3.59).</p>
<p>Terminology</p>	<p>The semantic field is one of 'Hell' It implies that the murder of the king has turned the castle into an underworld. Shakespeare suggests that Macbeth and Hell are now entwined. The Porter provides a moment of ironic comedy. The porter speaks in prose which denotes his status as a servant - lower class.</p>

Links across the text:

The main themes in *Macbeth* are evident within this Act.

Distrust

Fear

Flight

Murder

Deception