

By the end of studying **Act 2 Scene 4** I need to know:

Plot: Ross and an old man recall the scene of the murder. Macduff states that Duncan's two sons Malcolm and Donalbain have fled suspected of paying Duncan's guards to commit the murder. Macbeth has been nominated king and gone to Scone to be crowned. Macduff, who may now suspect Macbeth's involvement in the murder of Duncan, states he is not attending Macbeth's coronation. The witches prophecy is once again confirmed.

Ideas - Shakespeare invites the audience to pause and reflect on the actions and events so far in the play. Shakespeare prepares the audience for the next round of murders that Macbeth will initiate.

Vocabulary	Glossary Trifled (4) made trivial travelling lamp (7) the sun minions of their race (15) best of their breed suborn'd (24) bribed ravin (28) eat up benison (40) blessing
Context	AO3 The natural order of things has been disrupted - Links to the chain of being. The natural world order has indeed been plunged into chaos. Ref - The Diving Right of Kings. <i>Scone</i> , an ancient royal city in Scotland, near the present town of Perth. It contained the ancient throne, inclosing the stone which Jacob used for his pillow (<i>Genesis</i> , xxviii. II), on which the Scottish kings were crowned
Themes	Deception Deceit Supernatural Treason
Deeper understanding	The old man is significant in what he represents, tradition and natural continuity, as well as wisdom are all bound up in this single figure. He represents the people, in his memory these crimes are unparalleled. Daylight has been replaced by night; a falcon (a bird of prey) has been killed by an owl, a much smaller creature; and the horses of the king's stables are said to have eaten each other. All the named events are not simply natural disasters; they are reversals of the expected natural order. The reference to the murder being ' gainst nature still ' when Ross talks of the belief that Malcolm and Donalbain were responsible further reinforces the sentiment that the crime goes against the natural order. Macduff's refusal to go to Scone marks the first hints at his suspicions- potentially as a result of..
Quotes	Mousing owl - A01 'Strange' 'unnatural' How the world seems since Duncan's murder. 'falcon towering in her pride of place/Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed' . The falcon life has come to an end just like Duncan's. This is not the natural order of things. 'Those that Macbeth hath slain' Ross - ' Gainst nature still! 'God's benison' . The old man blesses Ross as a well-meaning person who will try to make the best of things and reconcile adversaries.

Reading:
 Read through the eyes of an audience member of 1606. Image how horrified you would have been as the plot unfolds, particularly considering the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

 Ultimately good does indeed triumph over evil.

Characters:
Ross- the Thane of Ross
Old Man- Ross' father
Macduff- The Thane of Fife

Links across the text:
 Shakespeare uses this scene as a buffer between the high drama of the previous scene and Macbeth being crowned king.

 Macduff's suspicions begin to emerge.

 The implications of Macbeth's deeds begin to unfold, foreshadowing future events.

Terminology

Shakespeare's use of imagery reminds us of how the natural order has been turned upside down.