

By the end of studying **Act 3 Scene 4** I need to know;

**Plot:** Macbeth hosts a feast where he sees Banquo's ghost appear twice. All the guests eventually leave as they believe he is ill.

**Ideas:** Macbeth's loss of masculinity when he sees Banquo's ghost

Hallucinations highlight Macbeth's guilt

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<p><b>Degrees-</b> places at table according to importance    <b>At first and last</b> -from beginning to end    <b>state-</b> special chair of state    <b>in best-</b>at the most suitable  <b>Require-</b> request    <b>encounter-</b> answer    <b>sides-</b>sides of the table    <b>be large in mirth-</b>enjoy yourselves    <b>the nonpareil-</b> without equal    <b>whole-</b>solid  <b>Founded-</b> secure    <b>broad and general-</b>free and unconfined    <b>casing-</b> surrounding    <b>cabined... bound in-</b> imprisoned    <b>Saucy-</b>molesting  <b>Trenched-</b> cut deep    <b>worm-</b> young serpent    <b>ourselves-</b> each other    <b>cheer-</b> welcome, or toast    <b>the feast....without it-</b>unless repeated welcomes are given, a feast is like a paid for meal; food itself is better at home but outside one expects more ceremony to make the meal worthwhile  <b>Honour roofed-</b> all the nobility present    <b>graced-</b>gracious    <b>mischance-</b> misfortune    <b>moves-</b> disturbs    <b>gory locks-</b>blood-covered hair  <b>Upon a thought-</b> in a moment    <b>note-</b>make a fuss    <b>passion-</b> fit    <b>proper stuff!-</b> nonsense    <b>flaws-</b>outbursts!    <b>Grandam-</b>grandmother  <b>If charnel houses...kites-</b> if tombs cannot hold down he dead we will need to have them eaten by birds of prey    <b>purged...weal-</b> civilised society  <b>Mortal murders-</b> fatal wounds    <b>crowns-</b> heads    <b>lack-</b>miss    <b>thirst-</b>wish to drink    <b>all to all-</b> everyone toast everyone    <b>duties-</b>homage    <b>pledge-</b>the toast  <b>Avaunt-</b>away    <b>speculation-</b>intelligence    <b>Hyrcan-</b> place near the Caspian sea    <b>inhabit-</b>have in me    <b>protest-</b>accuse    <b>baby-</b>doll    <b>admired-</b>amazing  <b>Overcome-</b> come over    <b>strange...owe-</b> wonder about my own nature    <b>order-</b> order of rank    <b>it will have-</b> murder demands    <b>Augurs-</b> prophecies  <b>Relations-</b>connections in nature    <b>maggot-pies...rooks-</b> types of bird    <b>man of blood-</b> murderer    <b>how sayst thou-</b> what do you say to the fact  <b>Denies his person-</b> refuses his presence    <b>fee'd-</b> bribed    <b>betimes-</b> very early    <b>bent-</b>determined    <b>causes-</b> considerations  <b>may be scanned-</b>can be examined    <b>season-</b> preservative, or freshening    <b>my...use-</b> my strange delusion is the result of a beginner's fear, one who needs more experience    <b>deed-</b> crime    <b>Mirth-</b> happy    <b>Dispatched-</b> dead    <b>Appal-</b> frighten    <b>Unmanned-</b> paralysed    <b>Fie-</b> nonsense  <b>Muse-</b> surprise    <b>Avaunt-</b> go    <b>Custom-</b> habit    <b>Blanched-</b> white</p>
<b>Context (To inform interpretation)</b>	<p>Act 3 scene 4 dramatises a feast. In warrior Scotland such a banquet expressed harmony between a king and his subjects but Macbeth has violated that harmony. His behaviour is a pretence, filling the scene with harmony.</p> <p><b>CHAIN OF BEING-</b> This established a clear hierarchy of the natural world and people believed that, providing this natural hierarchy was sustained then everything in the world was balanced. They also believed that if, for some reason, it isn't sustained then the world plunges into chaos. It was generally accepted that it was impossible to move objects within the hierarchy without some sort of magic or supernatural occurrence.</p> <p><b>MASCULINITY-</b> Men, during the Jacobean era, were expected to be brave, in control and strong.</p> <p><b>WOMEN-</b> Elizabethan Woman were totally dominated by the male members of their family. They were expected to instantly obey not only their father but also their brothers and any other male members of the family.</p> <p><b>Ghosts-</b> ghosts are not uncommon in Shakespeare's plays, and apart from their dramatic impact, their use seems to suggest an interest in the circumstances and psychology that might give rise to their appearance. In this scene nobody but Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo, suggesting that it is a figment of his guilt-stricken imagination.</p>
<b>Themes</b>	<p><b>APPEARANCES and REALITY-</b> The ghost of Banquo is a hallucination and a result of Macbeth's. Macbeth attempts to "play the humble host". He'll pretend to be a good host while hired murderers kill one of his guests.</p> <p><b>MASCULINITY-</b> Macbeth displays his control over Macbeth when he tells her to stay seated until he asks for her "Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time We will require her welcome."  Lady Macbeth questions Macbeth's masculinity when he is scared of Banquo's ghost "Are you a man?"</p> <p><b>SUPERNATURAL-</b> The ghost of Banquo is a supernatural occurrence just like the dagger that Macbeth saw before he killed Duncan in act 2 scene 1. "But now they rise again" Macbeth comments that the dead now rise again. This emphasises how the natural order has been disrupted since Macbeth killed Duncan-like the things that Rosse and the Old Man talk about in Act 2 Scene 4 (lines 11-18)</p>
<b>Deeper understanding</b>	<p>The banquet is the high point of Macbeth's reign and the beginning of his downfall. Macbeth's behaviour puzzles his guests and confirms their impression that he is mentally troubled. Lady Macbeth appears surefooted and stronger than her husband, but even her attempts to explain away her husband's "hallucination" are ineffective when paired with the evidence of his behaviour. The contrast between this scene and the one in which Duncan's body was discovered is striking— whereas Macbeth was once cold-blooded and surefooted, he now allows his anxieties and visions to get the best of him. It is unclear whether Banquo's ghost really sits in Macbeth's chair or whether the spirit's presence is only a hallucination inspired by guilt.</p> <p>Macbeth's behaviour towards Lady Macbeth also highlights a change in his character. Previously Macbeth has been manipulated by Lady Macbeth, has followed her orders and has shown a lack of courage and bravery. Now, however, it seems that he has gained confidence (since becoming king) and doesn't require her guidance.</p>

**Reading:**

- At their feast, the murderer tells Macbeth that Banquo is dead but Fleance got away.
- Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost at the table, but it is invisible to the rest of the guests so causes a lot of confusion and tension
- The ghost disappears, and the feast recommences. When the ghost reappears Lady Macbeth sends the alarmed guests away.
- Macbeth says that he will visit the witches tomorrow.
- 'Dispatched' 'the like' 'it' 'safe'-once again Macbeth avoids naming the deed: murder.
- Much of lines 58-83 is an intensely private conversation. No-one must hear the incriminating words about the dagger, or Duncan, or murders.
- Lady Macbeth orders the guests to leave immediately without any thought of precedence or rank (usually the most senior would leave first) Look at line 1 of the scene and the contrast.

	<p>Macbeth's words and phrases to the thanes, such as "You know your own degrees" and "Both sides are even: here I'll sit i'th'midst" suggest a renewal of order and symmetry in Scotland, yet the audience knows that this is not the case. Both sides are not even, because Banquo is missing. Degree, or rank order, has been effectively perverted by Macbeth by his killing of the king and his usurpation of the throne. As in Act I, Scene 6, Lady Macbeth's words of introduction disguise her true feelings. Once again, the Macbeths act with suspicious confidence. This confidence is about to desert Macbeth, however, as his dark secret comes back to greet him in the form of the First Murderer.</p> <p>At first, Macbeth is pleased with the murderer, telling him he is "the best," "the nonpareil" (without equal); moreover, Macbeth's own supposed invincibility is shown when he says that he feels "as broad and general as the casing air," but on hearing the unwelcome news that Fleance escaped his treachery, Macbeth's language abruptly changes: "But now I am cabin'd, cribbed, confin'd, bound in / To saucy doubts and fears" (25-26). The alliteration of the hard c sounds reveals Macbeth's sense of constraint, in contrast to the freedom which he claims to have enjoyed previously.</p> <p>The imagery of confinement and constraint plays an increasing part in his language from now on. For example, these words foreshadow the point in Act V, Scene 7 when, recognizing that he is physically trapped by the advancing English army, Macbeth cries out, "They have tied me to a stake, I cannot fly" (flee). Now, though, something altogether more terrifying holds him down and prevents him from moving: In the very place reserved for him at the table, Macbeth sees, or thinks he sees, the spirit of the assassinated Banquo.</p> <p>The rich banquet, a symbol of great orderliness and generosity, now becomes a hellish parody of itself. Instead of Macbeth sitting "in the midst," dispensing his largesse as he would wish, his throne has been usurped by the bloody apparition of his former friend. Macbeth's language reflects this change. The ghost, so hideous that it would "appall the devil," appears to have risen from a grave or a "charnel-house." Macbeth cannot understand why what is dead should "be alive again," when its bones should "be marrowless" and its blood "cold." Finally, he challenges the all-too-real apparition to "dare me to the desert with thy sword."</p> <p>In contrast to the urgent horror of Macbeth's addresses to the gruesome apparition are moments of comparative calm. Each time the ghost vanishes, Macbeth's relief is recorded in softer, more lyrical expression: "Can such things be / And overcome us like a summer's cloud, / Without our special wonder?" (112-114). Indeed, the entire structure of this scene shows a man swinging from one state of mind to another, recalling the structure of the earlier dagger speech. Three times Macbeth sees the ghost, and three times he appears to recover his senses. This alternating structure adds strongly to the impression of Macbeth's loss of control.</p> <p>Lady Macbeth, on the other hand, remains constant in her judgement. Unlike Macbeth, she cannot see the ghost, and her tone is typically pragmatic and down-to-earth: "When all's done, / You look but on a stool." She appears to want to calm his rages, but anger simmers beneath her conciliatory words. Once more she upbraids her husband for his apparent lack of manhood. A specific parallel with the murder scene occurs when Macbeth accuses his wife of being able to "keep the natural ruby of your cheeks, / When mine is blanched (whitened) with fear" (116-117). Here, the words "ruby" and "blanched" clearly recall the distinction that Lady Macbeth made between the "red" hands of murder and the "white" heart of a coward (II: 2, 64).</p> <p>With the departure of the guests, Macbeth appears to regain some of his earlier self-confidence. He announces his decision to visit the Weird Sisters once more, this time of his own accord. His language in this coda to the banquet scene is mysterious and prophetic: The short scene is dominated by the repeated word "blood" and by the idea that a tide of murder has now been initiated which Macbeth is powerless to stop.</p>
<p><b>Quotes and references</b></p>	<p>"Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time We will require her welcome." "Are you a man?" "When all's done, You look but on a stool." "But now they rise again With twenty mortal murders on their crowns" "Blood will have blood." After the disturbed action of the banquet, the final episode of the scene is usually played slowly in a still and eerie atmosphere. Macbeth and his wife are left alone together. She seems exhausted, but he enters a mysterious personal world of evil, and finds a renewed energy in his determination to visit the Witches and to wipe out anyone who might oppose him. "cabined, cribbed, confined" the alliteration suggests that Macbeth feels trapped. He is fearful because Fleance has escaped which means that the prophecy about Banquo's heirs could still come true.</p>
<p><b>Terminology</b></p>	<p>Metaphors Declarative Imperatives Interrogative Dramatic irony Rhythm and meter Irony Euphemisms Evasive language</p>

<p><b>Links across the text:</b></p> <p>"Is this a dagger which I see before me" Macbeth hallucinates, seeing a dagger before he goes to kill Duncan, as a result of his guilt.</p> <p>"Out, damned spot!" Lady Macbeth is sleep walking and seeing blood on her hands.</p> <p>Lady Macbeth becomes dominant again by asking Macbeth if he's a man. This reminds the audience of her words in Act 1 Scene 7 (lines 47-59)</p>
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