

By the end of studying **Act 5, Scene 1** I need to know;

Plot: A Doctor and handmaiden watch Lady Macbeth as she sleepwalks, confessing the murder of Duncan, Lady Macduff and Banquo. She washes her hands repeatedly to remove the 'blood'.

Ideas: Lady Macbeth has slipped into madness. She now has finally lost all the power that she had at the start of the play. Her sleepwalking is representative of Macbeth 'murdering sleep' as stated earlier on in the play. Lady Macbeth is confessing her sins in this scene.

Vocabulary	Perceive Closet Hark Murky practice (medical expertise) Perturbation Slumbury agitation guise accustomed Fie (nonsense) Mar divine mated (amazed)
Context	<p>Religion - This scene makes reference to the Common Prayer book of the Elizabethan ages as Lady Macbeth states 'What's done cannot be undone'; a reversal of what she argued earlier to Macbeth in Act 3, sc 2 ('What's done is done'). This argument is linked to the general confession of the prayer book which states 'We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us'. The Doctor in the scene agrees with this as he states that Lady Macbeth needs 'a divine' which is a priest, more than a doctor (physician). We are also reminded here, of Macbeth speaking in Act 1, sc 7 where he said 'If it were done when 'tis done...we'd jump the life to come'. Hell is significant also here, as Lady Macbeth states 'Yet here's a spot.' People believed that you were damned if you had a mark on you. 'Out, damned spot! Out, I say!' Therefore, Lady Macbeth believes that she is now damned to hell.</p> <p>Treatment of Women - This scene shows the full demise of Lady Macbeth. We see that she has finally conformed to the gender stereotype of women, as she has crumbled under the pressure, not meeting the expectations of the masculine role she set out at the start of the play. Women were also seen to be prone to hysteria, which is again what we see of Lady Macbeth here in this scene.</p> <p>Wealth - Lady Macbeth refers to the 'perfumes of Arabia' not being able to sweeten her hand. Arabian perfumes were famous for their scent but also very expensive. The fact that Lady Macbeth says she cannot sweeten her hand with them, demonstrates to the audience that all the wealth they have cannot remove their guilt they have for their actions/crimes. This links to the theme of power (see below)</p>
Themes	<p>Power - Lady Macbeth has now completely lost her power and this scene highlights this to the audience as Lady Macbeth re-enacts the power she had earlier in the scene 'Fie, my lord, fie! A soldier, and afeard?' We see that she confesses her sins whilst sleepwalking, emphasising that she has lost the control she demonstrated in Act 1. This contrast is emphasised further when she 'relives' command to Macbeth to murder Duncan, ''tis time to do 't.', demonstrating how much control she had at the start of the play compared to this point. We are also reminded that Macbeth has not informed Lady Macbeth of his decisions for some time in his quest to preserve his power as she states 'The thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now?' emphasising that Macbeth has metaphorically cast her to one side because his power is more important.</p> <p>The theme of power is also demonstrated by the fact that the doctor cannot do anything to control the situation, as he believes that the only authority for Lady Macbeth is the 'divine'.</p> <p>Guilt - Lady Macbeth shows the audience her full guilt in this scene. 'Look how she rubs her hands' Lady Macbeth imagines that her hands are permanently covered in blood, making it impossible for her to hide the horrors of the crimes committed by herself and Macbeth.</p> <p>Ambition - 'What need we fear who knows it, when no-one can call our power to account?' We see in Lady Macbeth through this scene that her ambition for herself and Macbeth has resulted in her being consumed by guilt and resulting in her conscience now rebelling against her. The theme of the supernatural is also highlighted here as Shakespeare provides the audience with the result of following unholy desires to achieve your personal ambitions.</p>

Reading:

Read to the punctuation - emphasises the broken state of mind Lady Macbeth now has.

Links across the text:

Act 1, sc 5 - Lady Macbeth reads the letter from Macbeth. She re-enacts this here.

Act 2, sc 2 - The murder of Duncan. Again, Lady Macbeth re-enacts this evening using broken speech. She refers to the events of this night - mentioning the blood in Duncan and washing her hands - confessing her guilt.

Act 2, Sc 2 - Macbeth believes he has '**murdered sleep**'.

Act 3, Sc 2 - The meeting of Lady Macbeth with Macbeth after he has sent murderers to kill Banquo - She gives some of the conversation they had here.

Thane of Fife - Lady Macbeth reminds us that she was never told of Macbeth's decision, showing their separation in power.

<p>Deeper understanding</p>	<p>Shakespeare's use of soliloquy here for Lady Macbeth is unlike the other soliloquy's that we see in the play. Here, it is broken up and lacks flow. There is a total lack of power shown in the structure: no rhyme, no use of capital letters at the start of each line she speaks and fragmentation of the events. This demonstrates the psychological state of mind that she is in, showing her to have 'lost' her mind completely.</p> <p>Lady Macbeth's fate of permanent unrest is not as attractive as the strong powerful woman seen at the start of the play, therefore serving as a lesson to the audience. Earlier in the play, Lady Macbeth warns Macbeth about dwelling on his guilt as it would drive him to madness. 'No more o'that, my lord, no more o'that.' Yet Lady Macbeth denies her guilt, justifies their actions and expresses no hesitation or regret. The result is Lady Macbeth's demise into madness, re-enacting the murder of Duncan and her actions of washing her hands, her conscience reminding her that she will forever be guilty 'What, will these hands ne'er be clean?'. This also links to Macbeth stating after he has murdered Duncan that he heard a voice say 'Macbeth does murder sleep.' We see here that he has, for Lady Macbeth.</p> <p>It should also be noted that this is the first time that we have seen Lady Macbeth since the banquet scene in Act 3; she is without Macbeth at her most vulnerable moment which shows that his ambition and preoccupation with preserving his power has now overridden his love for his wife. Ironically, the love he had for his wife was partly what drove him to commit the murder of Duncan in the first place, possibly making the audience question the strength of the bond between the two.</p> <p>The fact that the scene is played almost in the dark, with the exception of one candle, shows that salvation has been abandoned as it symbolises Lady Macbeth's spiritual darkness which she cannot control. She demands the physical candle to try and aid her physical rest, yet she knows that 'Hell is murky.' and that her soul will never find rest.</p>
<p>Quotes</p>	<p>'You see her eyes are open.' 'Ay, but their sense is shut.'</p> <p>'Yet here's a spot.'</p> <p>'Out, damned spot! Out, I say!'</p> <p>'Hell is murky!'</p> <p>'Yet who would have thought the man to have so much blood in him.'</p> <p>'You have known what you should not.'</p> <p>'All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.'</p> <p>'What's done cannot be undone.'</p>
<p>Terminology</p>	<p>Monologue/soliloquy - Lady Macbeth relaying her unrest and guilt through her one-sided speech in front of the doctor and gentlewoman.</p> <p>Metaphors - Use to demonstrate that the blood cannot be cleaned - perfumes of Arabia/damned spot</p> <p>Repetition - The references to blood and repeating elements of speech from earlier in the scene.</p>