

Act 2 Scene 2 - reacting to murder

Lady Macbeth's words

*Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.*



(If, as he lay sleeping, Duncan hadn't looked so much like my father, I would have murdered him myself.)

What does this tell us about Lady Macbeth?

- a) She is not as ruthless as she appears to be
 - b) She loved her father very much
 - c) a and b
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- Is there any other evidence in this scene to suggest that Lady Macbeth is less hard-hearted than she seems?

Macbeth's words

I have done the deed.

(I have murdered Duncan)

How do you think Macbeth sounds as he speaks these words?

- a) happy
- b) matter-of-fact
- c) agitated
- d) resigned
- e) desperate

Macbeth's words

*I could not say 'Amen'
When they did say 'God bless us.*

(I could not say 'Amen'
when the grooms guarding Duncan said 'God bless us.')

Why do you think Macbeth was unable to say 'Amen'?

- a) He realized he had committed a terrible crime
- b) He felt guilty
- c) He had a sore throat
- d) a, b and c
- e) a and b

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Lady Macbeth's words

Consider it not so deeply.

(Do not let it worry you so much)

In what kind of way do you think Lady Macbeth speaks these words?

- a) dismissive
- b) impatient
- c) encouraging
- d) kind



Macbeth's words

*I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen'
Stuck in my throat.*

(I was sorely in need of blessing,
but I could not say 'Amen'.)

- Does it worry Macbeth that he was unable to say 'Amen'? What does this tell us about his character?

Lady Macbeth's words

*These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so it will make us mad.*

(If we have these kinds of thoughts
we will go mad.)

What would Lady Macbeth's facial expression show while speaking these lines?

- a) concern
- b) anger
- c) impatience
- d) worry

Macbeth's words

*Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more:
Macbeth does murder sleep'.*

(I thought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more:
Macbeth has murdered sleep'.)

The fact that Macbeth thinks he heard a voice speaking to him after the murder shows that he is:

- a) mad
- b) agitated
- c) has a vivid imagination
- d) a, b and c
- e) b and c.

Act 2 Scene 2 - reacting to murder

Lady Macbeth's words

*You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go, get some water
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
. . . go carry them and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.*



(Such morbid thoughts will be your undoing.
Get some water and wash the blood from your hands.
Take these daggers back inside and place them beside the sleeping grooms
then smear the grooms with blood.)

If you were directing a stage performance of *Macbeth*, how would you advise the actor playing the role of Lady Macbeth to sound in the above lines?

- a) angry
- b) stern
- c) impatient
- d) sympathetic
- e) disgusted
- f) commanding.

- Which words should she emphasise?

Macbeth's words

Look on't again I dare not.

(I cannot look at Duncan again.)

- How do you think Macbeth would react if he were forced to return to the scene of the murder?

Macbeth's words

Whence is that knocking?

(Where does that knocking come from?)

- How do you think the actor playing the role of Macbeth should react to the sound of the knocking?

Macbeth's words

*Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand?*

(Will all the water in the ocean be enough
to wash the blood from my hand?)



- What do these lines tell us about how Duncan's murder has affected Macbeth?

Lady Macbeth's words

*I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.*

(I'll smear blood on the grooms' faces,
for they must be blamed for Duncan's murder.)

*My hands are of your colour, but I shame
to wear a heart so white.*

(My hands are also covered in blood, but I would be ashamed if I were as lily-livered
about it as you.)

*A little water clears us of this deed.
How easy it is, then!*

(All it takes to remove the evidence of the murder is a little water. How easy it is!)

- Look at what Lady Macbeth says in the above three quotations. What are your feelings about Lady Macbeth at this point? Do you admire her, or does her behaviour disgust you?

Macbeth's words

Wake Duncan with thy knocking: I would thou couldst

(You'll waken Duncan with that knocking: I wish you could)

- Explain how you think Macbeth should speak these lines.