

Macbeth



MONDADORI EDUCATION

The Play

- A tragedy of great visual and verbal power
- Violence is the means of exploring the human mind's dark recesses
- There are no subplots → it is centred on a deadly play for power



The Tragedy of a Good Man

- It is set in Scotland
- Main themes: violence, treason and murder
- It is the conversion of a good man into one who is completely evil
- This conversion goes through two phases
 1. the three witches' prophecy
 2. Lady Macbeth: she instigates him to kill the King



The Story

- Macbeth and Banquo meet three witches who prophesy that Macbeth will be King
- Instigated by his wife, Macbeth kills King Duncan while he is sleeping
- Macbeth becomes King and Duncan's sons manage to escape
- Macbeth kills Banquo



The End

- Macbeth's triumph turns into tragedy
- He is haunted by ghosts and his wife kills herself
- Macbeth is killed by Macduff, the old King's friend
- Malcolm, Duncan's son, becomes King of Scotland



Macbeth Shall Sleep No More

- Blood is the obsession of Macbeth in this scene
- The visual image is doubled by the verbal images
- Macbeth is shaken by the murder and his fears come out plainly:
 - a. He cannot say the word Amen

***But wherefore could not I pronounce “Amen”?
I had most need of blessing, and “Amen”
Stuck in my throat.***

(II, ii, 23-25)



Macbeth's Fears

- b. He hears a voice cry

***Still it cried "Sleep no more" to all the house;
"Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more."***

(II, ii, 36-38)

- c. He sees hands that try to pluck out his eyes

- d. He fears the blood on his hands will never be washed away

***Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.***

(II, ii, 59-62)



Lady Macbeth's Determination

a. Disdainful words

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

(II, ii, 63-64)

b. Cool common sense

A little water clears us of this deed

(II, ii, 67)

c. She tells her husband what to do

A Sudden Knock

- Macbeth and his wife pronounce **short, quick sentences**
→ they are guilty and fear they might be caught
- The scene ends with a great stroke of psychological realism:

*I hear a **knocking***

At the south entry. Retire we to our chamber

(II, ii, 65-66)

- With this simple act (**knocking**) life takes on its course again after the murder.

