

The Macbeths' Marriage

Shakespeare gives his audiences clues about the nature of the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Explore how the language of each character can reveal their attitude towards one another.

Take a look at this passage from Act I Scene 5:

MACBETH

My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.

LADY MACBETH

And when goes hence?

MACBETH

To-morrow, as he purposes.

LADY MACBETH

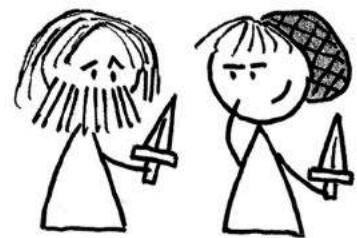
O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't. He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

MACBETH

We will speak further.

LADY MACBETH

Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me.



Macbeth

Activity One:

Imagine that you are Lady Macbeth at a marriage counselling session. Focus on this conversation. What are you saying to your husband and why? What does this conversation reveal about your attitude towards your husband? How do you feel about your husband saying very little?



Activity Two:

Now imagine that you are Macbeth in this conversation. Write a diary entry for this day, focusing on this conversation. How do you feel about what your wife is suggesting and the way in which she says it? What thoughts are you having? Do your feelings towards her change at all?
