

THEME:

HAUNTED BY CONSCIENCE: "FULL OF SCORPIONS IS MY MIND."

Prophecy and ambition lead Macbeth and his wife into a spiral of events that destroys their relationship and their peace of mind. The natural order of the world is disrupted by their actions; the characters find that courage, bravado and power are no shield against their feelings of guilt.

"To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou could'st!"

- Macbeth

Having murdered the king, Macbeth is instantly struck with remorse, wishing Duncan alive again.

DISCUSS, or WRITE:

What does Macbeth mean, "To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself"?

Have you ever done something, good or bad, that caused you to think differently of yourself? Or had a friend whose actions caused you to see them in a new light?

Have you ever done something that you wished you could undo? Lady Macbeth later says "What's done is done", urging Macbeth to forget about the past. Is there any use in crying over spilt milk, as the saying goes?

"The time has been

That when the brains were out the man would die

And there an end. But now they rise again..."

- Macbeth

After having Banquo killed, Macbeth is haunted by Banquo's ghost at a state banquet; as he confronts the ghost, he risks revealing that he is the murderer.

DISCUSS:

Do you believe in ghosts? Do you think Macbeth really sees one here?

What do you imagine the reaction of the other guests at the banquet will be?

In the scene, Lady Macbeth suggests that her husband's fearful behavior is unmanly. Would you agree? What does it mean to "be a man"? Do you think that's changed over time?

Have you ever done something that you just couldn't forget, that weighed on your conscience? What is a conscience? Where do you think that feeling of "conscience" comes from?

**“What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?
Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him!”
- Lady Macbeth**

Lady Macbeth, sleepwalking, swings between defiance and horror as she contemplates the murders she has encouraged.

DISCUSS:

What does she mean, “none can call our power to account”?

Can you think of anyone who should be above the law? Consider law enforcement, heads of state, etc.

Have you ever known anyone who abused their power simply because they could?

How, do you imagine, will the actress playing Lady Macbeth make clear Lady Macbeth's thoughts?

How will she show the defiance through her tone or attitude or gestures? How will she show regret?

