**Macbeth**

***Notes: Act 2, scenes 1 and 2***

**Scene 1:**

1. Shakespeare creates a very dark atmosphere at the beginning of this scene, which in turn creates a mood of unease. Since bad things usually happen under cover of darkness, Shakespeare is *foreshadowing* the coming evil.
2. *(lines 5-6):* The word “candles” here is a metaphor for stars. Stars and candles represent *light,* which in turn represents *life.* The meaning here is that while the lights of *heaven* are going out, so too is the “light” of Duncan’s life.
3. *(Line 8):* Banquo appeals to “merciful powers” to help him have a peaceful night. Basically, he is praying. ***Note the difference between Banquo and the Macbeths. They call on “dark” powers to aid them with their evil doings, whereas Banquo calls on the powers of “light”; goodness.***
4. Banquo acts as a ***character foil*** for Macbeth. A ***character foil*** is someone who is presented as the opposite of another character. In doing this, a writer is able to ***highlight*** the qualities of a main character. In this play, Banquo is shown to be honest and fair, while having a respect for God and the ***natural order*** of things. All of these qualities are opposite in Macbeth.
5. *(lines 13-18):* Duncan has been very happy with the hospitality shown by the Macbeths, and is now in bed.
6. *(lines 23-29):* Banquo reveals that he has been dreaming of the witches. However, Macbeth ***lies*** and says that he has not been thinking about them. Once again, Macbeth shows a “false face”, probably because he did not want to arouse the suspicions of his friend. They both agree to discuss the strange meeting at a later time.
* *(lines 29-35):* **This is a very important conversation!** Macbeth basically asks if Banquo would “support” him when “the time comes.” He says to Banquo that if you do, “...It shall make honour for you”, meaning “I’ll make it worth your while.” It appears that Macbeth is trying to gain support for overthrowing the King. Banquo doesn’t exactly know what Macbeth means, but tells his friend that he will support him in anything. However, *Banquo makes it clear that he will always remain loyal to the king, and would never do anything bad.* This probably disappoints Macbeth, and he now knows that Banquo will be of no help to him.
* *(lines 40-46):* Macbeth begins to ***hallucinate.*** He sees a bloody dagger before him, and wonders whether or not it is real.
* *(47-48):* Macbeth takes out his own dagger and compares it to the one he sees before him.
* *(49-50):* The floating dagger is leading him to Duncan’s chamber.
* *(54-56):* He realizes that his own evil thoughts are causing him to hallucinate.
* **Lines 40-63 are full of imagery** regarding blood, darkness and the supernatural. ***Very important!!***
* The scene ends with Macbeth standing outside the King’s bedroom, ready to do the deed.

**Scene2:**

* *(lines 1-11):* Lady Macbeth has gotten the King’s servants drunk and drugged. She is very nervous.
* *(lines 21-40):* Macbeth has done the deed, but is very upset. He claims to have heard voices laughing, crying out “murder”, “God Bless Us”, and “Amen”. It *could* have been Malcolm or Donaldbain, both of whom were sleeping in nearby bedrooms and perhaps talking in their sleep. **However,** it could have been Macbeth’s own mind playing tricks on him. Remember the floating, bloody dagger?
* *(line 29):* Macbeth looks at all the blood on his hands.
* *(lines 42-56):* Macbeth continues to talk about voices he heard while he was committing the murder. “Sleep no more” and “Macbeth does murder sleep” are two of these things he claims to have heard. ***Pay attention to Macbeth’s sleep patterns as the play goes on!*** You will see how Shakespeare **foreshadows** what is to come.
* *(lines 45-46):* Lady Macbeth tells her husband to stop dwelling on what has just been done, or he will go mad. This is **another** example of foreshadowing. Lady Macbeth herself seems to be quite nervous in this scene.
* *Lady Macbeth is really in control of this scene. She washes his hands; she gets angry when she sees that her husband has taken the murder weapons with him by mistake, instead of leaving them there; she brings the murder weapons back to the crime scene, and so on.*
* *(lines 72-73):* Lady Macbeth plans to smear the faces of the servants with blood, so that they will look even more guilty. ***This relates to theme: Things are not always as they appear. The servants will look guilty even though they are not.***
* *(line 85):* “A little water clears us of this deed.” This means that Lady Macbeth thinks that all they have to do is wash their hands, and no one would ever suspect them. Later, this statement will be very ironic.