

## Write about Lady Macbeth and how she is presented in Macbeth [25]

- 1) **Who is Lady Macbeth?** Lady Macbeth is the wife of the protagonist (main character) and is the catalyst behind the murder of King Duncan.
- 2) **The letter from Macbeth** – what is her reaction to the letter from Macbeth about the witches' prophecies? What does this show us about her character?
  - 'Thou shalt be what thou art promised' - imperative
  - 'I do fear thy, nature; it is too full of the milk of human kindness'
  - 'Unsex me, fill me...with direst cruelty'

- 3) **The persuasion** – how does Lady Macbeth persuade her husband to kill King Duncan?

'Look the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it'

'The babe...dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you have done this.'

'Screw your courage to the sticking place and we will not fail'

**Lady Macbeth is the one who conjures up the plot** – showing her determined, assertive and ambitious nature.

- 4) **After the murder and her reaction to Macbeth** – what does her reaction to Macbeth's dismay after the murder show?

'These deeds must not be thought...it will make us mad' (irony as this is what happens!)

'Give me the daggers'

'A little water clears us of this deed'
- 5) **The unravelling relationship** – what does Lady Macbeth's reaction to Macbeth's tendency to be alone show?

'How now, my lord? Why do you keep alone?' – why do we see more questions rather than commands from Lady Macbeth?

'What's to be done?' – is she aware that Macbeth has ordered the murder of Banquo and Fleance? What does this suggest about her influence now?
- 6) **The Banquet** – Lady Macbeth desperately attempts to salvage the Banquet after her husband's very public display of madness (Banquo's ghost) – what do these attempts show?

'Why do you make such faces?' – what does her reaction to her husband here show?

'Are you a man?'

**Lady Macbeth and Macbeth are never seen together again in the play after this moment** – why? Does Macbeth require her influence anymore?

- 7) **Her demise and death** – can you spot any similarities in her behaviour and Macbeth's after he killed King Duncan?

'Will these hands never be clean?'

'To bed, to bed' – she is openly contemplating 'the end' – link to Macbeth's 'Macbeth shall sleep no more!' after he killed King Duncan

**Macbeth is almost dismissive about her death** – showing what?

### 8) Conclusion

– Lady Macbeth does break from convention: she isn't a traditional damsel in distress; she is assertive, violent and ambitious

- Irony – in helping Macbeth to become 'what thou art promised' she actually loses her husband, as well as her life
- When contemplating the murder of King Duncan, Macbeth states that 'murder plagues the inventor' – she does indeed become 'plagued' by the events – showing that murder is the 'greatest sin'
- All of Macbeth's regrets after the murder of King Duncan come true for the both of them:

	Macbeth	Lady Macbeth
i)	'What hands are here?'	'Will these hands never be clean?'
ii)	'Macbeth shall sleep no more!'	'To bed, to bed'

