

Macbeth act 4 scence

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Having considered my own expectations of Act 4, scene 1, I expected it to be a turning point for Macbeth and to highlight Macbeth's lack of control at this time. The scene creates an eerie atmosphere from the beginning with the witches round a cauldron. This atmosphere and sense of what is going to happen draw's the audience's attention at this time. During the scene Macbeth goes to the witches for reassurance.

He has committed a crime. He has murdered to become king. It is in his mind, and he feels guilty. Scotland is in turmoil and he is struggling to hold onto power. He needs more information to make himself feel better. He sees the witches as being able to show him this information because they have told him what was going to happen before.

This is not the first time we see the witches, infact they open the first act and reoccur throughout the play. The first time Macbeth meets the witches they tell him that he will be king and that Banquo would not be king, but his children will be. Macbeth hopes they will tell him more. The scene is important because it represents the place of evil in the plot.

Macbeth has become king through evil means and now goes and sees the witches who are also evil. His vision of the apparitions is not the first time he sees something from the unnatural world. Also in the play he sees a death vision of a dagger pointing to Duncan's room, and he saw the ghost of Banquo after he had been murdered. The scene contrasts with the scene directly before and after. The scene before Lennox is talking about Macbeth and his suspicion of him.

The one directly after Macbeth plots to kill Macduff's family. These two scenes represent the real world, which contrasts with act 4, scene 1 which in a way is a supernatural world, and does not seem real. In the reading of the scene, Macbeth enters at the start with aggression, saying " How now, you secret black, and midnight hags! What is't you do?" At this stage though he is in a position of ignorance. He does not know what they are doing.

He is forced to ask for information and says " answer me to what I ask you." He is dependent on the witches. They show him apparitions, which at first comfort him, and then alarm him. He becomes anxious and confused, and does not understand what is going on. He has to ask more and more information to regain control.

After seeing the first apparition, which he fails to understand he says " but one word more", he wants more information but does not get it. With not understanding the true meaning of the apparitions, then asks the witches " can tell me so much- shall Banquo's issue ever reign in this kingdom?" He is shown a show of eight kings, the last with a mirror, and Banquo following. From the apparitions he feels slight comfort, but this show of eight kings contradicts the three apparitions. Macbeth is shattered, he now knows he will not be able to keep control of Scotland.

After this episode he learns that Macduff has fled to England. Macbeth orders the death of Macduff's wife and children. This is Macbeth's lowest point because there is not any need to kill them. This shows just how far Macbeth's character has deteriorated. He entered the scene with so much

power and aggression, this soon changed, and he found himself having to plead with the witches for help and onto this murder.

As the scene has gone on he has become more vulnerable. This is one of the noticeable points of the scene. At the start of the production the witches are seen to have a hierarchy. One person takes control and they are seem to be well organised. The witches talk simultaneously, which becomes a chant. The camera revolves around each witch, which draws your attention.

The chanting of the witches create a mysterious and eerie atmosphere from the beginning. Thunder is heard in the background, which emphasises the evilness of the witches. Also there is a black background throughout the scene, which adds to the scary atmosphere and the evilness. In the text Macbeth enters with aggression and authority, this is not apparent in the production. In the production he comes in frightened and seems anxious. The camera does a close up on Macbeth's face, which highlights his anxiety.

After this in the production Macbeth is pushed to his knees, marked by the witches and is made to drink a potion, none of which are shown as stage directions. This incident shows very well the witches power and Macbeth's lack of it. Macbeth is forced to do all this and struggles with the witches. The apparitions that Macbeth sees are only puppets. This emphasises they are unreal. The witches speak the words of the apparitions, which show their control.

If Macbeth believed them and accepted them as an authority it suggests he is unstable and not fit to be king. Whilst being shown the apparitions Macbeth is on his knees, the witches surround him. He seems to be

intimidated and outnumbered by them. Their control of Macbeth and his vulnerability is emphasised. Macbeth is seen clutching each apparition, indicating he is confused by them. When he is shown the show of eight kings in the production, it is only Macbeth that sees it, and he describes what he sees.

This highlights that this is all not real. We can only imagine what he is seeing which makes it quite disturbing, but it is obvious that Macbeth is frightened by it. In the text Macbeth is seen to try and regain control by asking more questions. On screen he remains influenced by the apparitions. In the text he orders Lennox to enter saying, " come in, without there!" In the production he is surprised to see Lennox, who enters with two other characters to find Macbeth blindfolded. This shows he has no control and Lennox would have to question what he was doing.

Overall I have found Nunn's production of the scene very effective. In the reading of the text I have seen how Macbeth's character has deteriorated. In the production he is never seen to be in control but it does show him to become powerless of the situation. The main point of act 4, scene 1 is Macbeth's lack of control.

The camera movements and directions, which sometimes are not visible in the text, highlights very well to the audience of this and after considering my own expectations I have found Nunn has produced a very effective production of the scene.