**Macbeth Act II Scenes i and ii Notes**

**Essential Questions**: Who seems more determined to kill Duncan – Macbeth or Lady Macbeth?

How is the murder plot working so far?

**Persona Journal**:

* **All Clans**: You were at the banquet last night. Describe in your journal the atmosphere, food, and conversation. Did you notice anything unusual about the Macbeths’ behavior?
* **Canmores:** Many Canmores have observered or gossiped about Macbeth’s tendency toward having hallucinations. What have you seen or heard?
* **All Clans**: You were awakened by a noise last night. What do you think it was?

**Setting:**

* It is late at night in Macbeth’s castle. Banquo and his son, Fleance, are trying to find their way in the dark.
* Banquo is uneasy and startles at the sudden appearance of Macbeth.
* Banquo tells Macbeth that the King has gone to bed in a very good mood.
  + Why has the King given gifts to Macbeth’s servants?
  + Why is the King in such a good mood?
* Macbeth and Banquo resolve to speak again soon about the witches’ prophesies.
* Macbeth asks Banquo to trust him in this matter, and Banquo agrees as long as his honor and loyalty are not compromised.
* They wish each other goodnight.
* Now alone, Macbeth is startled by the image of a dagger floating in the air.
  + An agitated Macbeth realizes the ghostly dagger is much like the one he plans to use to kill Duncan.
  + When he sees blood on the dagger, he is horrified.
  + As Macbeth, how would you react to the dagger?
* Despite his hallucinations, Macbeth strengthens his resolve to kill Duncan.

Scene ii: Court of Macbeth’s Palace

* In the Castle courtyard, Lady Macbeth nervously waits for Macbeth’s return.
* She has drugged the King’s guards and put their daggers where Macbeth will find them.
* She fears the household will wake before Macbeth has finished.
* Macbeth, shaken and bloody, enters with the dagger and announces that the King is dead.
* While Macbeth was in the King’s chamber, he heard someone cry out from another room.
* Lady Macbeth informs him that the King’s sons are asleep in the second bedroom.
* They apparently woke briefly during the murder, said some prayers, and went back to sleep.
* Macbeth is haunted by his inability to say “Amen” to their prayers.
* Macbeth is distraught over what he has done.
* Lady Macbeth scolds him for returning with the daggers, which were supposed to have been left with the drunken guards.
* Macbeth refuses to return them, so Lady Macbeth impatiently says that she will do it and that she will also smear blood on the guards’ faces to insure that they appear guilty.
* A half-mad Macbeth stares with terror at his bloody hands.
* Lady Macbeth shows her won bloody hands to Macbeth.
* At her urging, they go to their rooms to wash and prepare for playing their roles as sleepy, innocent hosts.

**Interesting Notes:**

* **Posset** was a bedtime drink – a mixture of milk, sugar, eggs, grated biscuits, and beer or wine. These ingredients were boiled together until they curdled.
* **Owls and Crickets**: The cries of owls and the chirping of crickets have long been thought to be omens of death.