

ON SCREEN

## STARRING

John Finch and  
Francesca Annis*Macbeth*

Directed by Roman Polanski (1971)



DVD



Roman Polanski's production of *Macbeth* marked a turning point in representations of Shakespeare's work. Produced in 1971, Polanski moved away from the classically poised and perfectly recited interpretations of past works towards a darker, more disturbingly realistic image of this tragedy.

**The story on screen so far...**

We are going to see the same scene that you studied on page 143. Macbeth has just committed his first crime and murdered Duncan, the King of Scotland, in order to fulfil the witches' prophecy that he would become king. He is returning to tell Lady Macbeth.

**Over to you**

**1** Watch the scene for the first time without sound, concentrating on body language and answer the following questions.

- How does the actor playing Macbeth, Jon Finch, communicate to the audience his despair at having committed such a terrible deed? Choose a or b.
  - with his physical movements
  - with his facial expression
- What does Lady Macbeth do in the scene to try and console her husband?
- Describe her facial expression and how it changes when she sees the daggers?

**2** Now watch the scene again with the volume.

- Describe Lady Macbeth's attitude towards her husband. Choose from the following.
  - angry
  - supportive
  - tender
  - disappointed
  - indifferent
- What device does actress Francesca Annis use to emphasise Lady Macbeth's emotional state?
- Polanski has changed the order and omitted some lines from the dialogue – you will notice this if you follow the scene from your text. Why do you think film directors often do this? What pressures do they have which a theatre director may not have?
- Some critics disapproved of Polanski's choice of actress to play the part of Lady Macbeth. Do you agree with them? If so, why? How did you imagine her to be?