

SHAKESPEARIENCE!

Stories, Swords, & Soliloquies

MACBETH

Ensemble Soliloquy: Macbeth's Dagger Speech, Act II, scene 1

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible to feeling as to sight?
or art thou but a dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee still, and on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs thus to mine eyes.
Now o'er the one halfworld nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse the
curtain'd sleep; Thou sure and firm-set earth, hear not my steps,
which way they walk, for fear thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,
Whiles I threat, he lives: Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.
I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell that summons thee to heaven or to hell.

Is this a dagger which I see before me, the handle toward my
hand?

(is this a dagger I am seeing in front of me)

Come, let me clutch thee. I have thee not, and yet I see thee
still.

(let me hold you...I can't touch it, but I see it)

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible to feeling as to sight?

(isn't it possible to touch as well as see it)

or art thou but a dagger of the mind, a false creation,
proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?

(or are you a hallucination from my fevered brain)

I see thee still, and on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before.

(I see you again, but this time with blood on the handle and blade which wasn't there before)

There's no such thing: It is the bloody business which informs
thus to mine eyes.

(there's no dagger there...it's the murder I'm about to commit that's making me see one)

Now o'er the one halfworld nature seems dead, and wicked
dreams abuse the curtain'd sleep;

(half the world is asleep right now, being misinformed by nightmares)

Thou sure and firm-set earth, hear not my steps, which way
they walk,

(hard ground, don't listen to which way I'm walking)

for fear thy very stones prate of my whereabout,

(if anyone hears my steps, I'll be found out)

Whiles I threat, he lives: Words to the heat of deeds too cold
breath gives.

(while I'm talking, Duncan is still alive...the more I talk, the more my courage cools)

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.

(come on me, go do it...the clock is chiming, almost inviting me to do it)

Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell that summons thee to
heaven or to hell.

(I hope you don't hear it Duncan, for it is your death toll)