

# Macbeth



## Historical Context

### The Play:

- First performed in 1606.

### Shakespeare:

- King James gave money to Shakespeare's actors.
- The stories of the plays had to interest the King.

### King James:

- He was interested in the supernatural and witchcraft.
- Survived a murder attempt by Guy Fawkes in 1605, which made people interested in treason (going against your country).

### Witches/The Supernatural:

- People feared witches, because they thought they were linked to the devil, and could tell the future.

### Gender:

- Women were expected to be loving and obey their husbands. They should want to be mothers.
- Men were expected to be brave, strong, and rule their wives.

### The Divine Right of Kings:

- The belief that God gave the King is power.

## Characters:

**Macbeth:** One of King Duncan's soldiers. He loves power; the witches tempt him into murder. Originally Thane of Glamis, he becomes the Thane of Cawdor, then King of Scotland.

**Lady Macbeth:** Macbeth's wife. She is ambitious and drives him to murder but is driven mad by her own guilt.

**Three Witches:** They tempt Macbeth to do evil acts.

**Banquo:** A soldier and friend of Macbeth. The prophecy does not corrupt him. He is murdered by Macbeth as he is considered a threat. His ghost haunts Macbeth.

**King Duncan:** The good and noble King of Scotland, murdered by Macbeth.



**Macduff:** Thane of Fife. He opposes Macbeth and supports Malcolm. He kills Macbeth in revenge for the murder of his family.

**Malcolm:** Duncan's son. He flees with his brother after the murder of Duncan but returns with English support to challenge Macbeth.

**Fleance:** Banquo's son. Macbeth tries and fails to murder him. He flees Scotland but it's implied he will return one day to fulfil the prediction and become King.

## Key Vocabulary:

- **ambition:** something so desired; goal; aim
- **hamartia:** the flaw in character which leads to the downfall of the main character in a tragedy
- **manipulate:** to control, or influence (something or someone) cleverly
- **supernatural:** of or relating to things that cannot be explained according to natural laws
- **witchcraft:** the influence of magic

Act	Plot Summary	Quotes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Three witches meet in 'Thunder and lightning' waiting for Macbeth.</li> <li>b) King Duncan and a Captain discuss 'brave Macbeth' who has won a battle.</li> <li>c) Macbeth and Banquo meet the witches, who predict that Macbeth shall become King. They predict that Banquo's sons shall be Kings.</li> <li>d) Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth about the events and she persuades him to kill the King, Duncan.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Witches</u>: "Fair is foul and foul is fair"</p> <p><u>Captain</u> "brave Macbeth"</p> <p><u>Lady Macbeth</u> "Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under 't."</p> 
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Macbeth sees a dagger, which appears to lead him towards Duncan's bedroom.</li> <li>b) Lady Macbeth has drugged the guards.</li> <li>c) Macbeth kills the King, blames it on the guards then kills them.</li> <li>d) King Duncan's sons escape to England and Ireland.</li> <li>e) Macbeth is crowned King</li> </ul>	<p><u>Macbeth</u>: "Is this a dagger which I see before me?"</p> <p><u>Macbeth</u>: 'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?'</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Macbeth orders the death of Banquo and Banquo's son Fleance, as he is scared that Banquo will realise the truth.</li> <li>b) Banquo is killed but Fleance escapes.</li> <li>c) At the dinner, Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost. He is very disturbed.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Macbeth</u>: 'I am in blood stepped in so far.'</p>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Macbeth returns to the witches. They tell him that he should beware of Macduff, that he will not be killed until the woods moves to Macbeth's castle and that he cannot be killed by a man born of a woman.</li> <li>b) Macduff goes to England to join Malcolm. Macbeth decides to have Macduff's wife and children killed in revenge for this.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Witches</u>: "By the pricking of my thumbs/Something wicked this way comes."</p> <p><u>Macbeth</u>: "I conjure you by that which you profess....answer me"</p> 
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Lady Macbeth's sleepwalks and reveals her secrets about the murders.</li> <li>b) Malcolm, son of the old King of Scotland, and Macduff plan to attack the castle.</li> <li>c) Lady Macbeth jumps to her death.</li> <li>d) Malcolm and Macduff's army attack the castle, cutting down branches and hiding behind them to camouflage themselves.</li> <li>e) Macduff finds Macbeth. Macbeth thinks he can not be killed as Macduff must have been born from a woman. However, Macduff says he was born by caesarean (cut from his mother's womb), and kills Macbeth.</li> <li>f) Malcolm becomes King.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Lady Macbeth</u>: "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!"</p> <p><u>Malcolm (after Macbeth has been killed)</u>: 'This dead butcher and his fiend-like queen.'</p> 