

# Macbeth

# By William Shakespeare



# The witches

## Adjectives:

Manipulative  
Nasty  
Evil  
Disgusting  
Sordid  
Ghastly  
Cunning  
Revolting  
Repugnant



## Things to remember:

- They are supernatural – they are not from this world
- They are not feminine. They are described as having 'beards'.
- Banquo and Macbeth are scared of them, but are trying not to show it.
- They manipulate Macbeth, like Lady Macbeth does.

## Key quotes:

**'Fair is foul, foul is fair.'**

**'all hail Macbeth,** thou shalt be king hereafter...'

**'Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!**  
Beware Macduff!'



**Adjectives:**

Ambitious  
Gullible  
Brave  
Violent  
Aggressive  
A good soldier  
Paranoid

**Things to remember:**

- He is a good person at the start of the play
- He is a good soldier

# Macbeth

**Key quotes:**

- **'Brave Macbeth – well he deserves that name.'**
- **'A fair and foul a day I have not seen.'**
- **'If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me, Without my stir.'**
- It will have blood they say: **blood will have blood.'**
- **'Our fears in Banquo stick deep.'**



# Lady Macbeth

## Adjectives:

Manipulative  
Devious  
Cunning  
Calculating  
Conniving  
Scheming  
Ambitious  
Charming  
Assertive



## Things to remember:

She is ambitious  
She is loyal to Macbeth  
She is able to charm people to get what she wants.  
Her weakness is her guilt.

## Key quotes:

- 'O never Shall sun that morrow see.'
- '**What's done cannot be undone.** To bed, to bed, to bed.'
- '**Out damn spot!** Out, I say!'
- 'Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I'd had done't'
- '**A little water clears us of this deed.**'
- '**Are you a man?**'

# Banquo

## Key quotes:

- 'O treachery!'
- 'If you can look into the seeds of time,  
And say which grain will grow and  
which will not, Speak then, to me...'
- 'Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor,  
Glamis all, as the weird women  
promised, and I yet fear thou playd'st  
most foully for't.'

## Things to remember:

- He is a good, loyal friend to Macbeth, but his ghost is terrifying and traumatises Macbeth.
- Shakespeare uses him to show the audience what the witches are like
- He knows Macbeth well – he is not naïve – and he suspects Macbeth of 'foul play'
- He is ambitious like Macbeth is, but he is not manipulated into killing someone to get the crown.
- He is killed by the murderers sent by Macbeth, but his son escapes.



## Adjectives:

Brave  
Loyal  
Suspicious  
Sceptical

**Adjectives:**

Emotional  
Brave  
Loyal  
Vengeful

# Macduff

**Things to remember:**

- He beheads Macbeth at the end of the play
- He is suspicious of Macbeth when Duncan is killed.
- His family are ordered to be killed by Macbeth

**Key quotes:**

- 'Macduff was from his mother's womb Ultimately ripped'
- 'O horror, horror, horror.'
- 'O Scotland, Scotland.'

# Writer's Craft

- It's a tragedy.
- Tragedy means that someone with a high status with a 'fatal flaw' (greed or jealousy, for example) which leads to their death.
- It gives the audience guidance on how to behave – or not!
- Shakespeare's tragedies are often thought to be far better than his comedies.

# Themes

- Revenge
- Power/authority
- Greed/ambition
- Guilt
- Good and Evil

# Social context

- William Shakespeare wrote it for King James 1
- King James believed in witches and ghosts, so Shakespeare wrote it to interest him.
- King James was also king of Scotland, so Shakespeare based the play in Scotland to highlight how brave the Scottish soldiers (King James's ancestors) were.