

A short list of characters and their relations to each other:

- **The Three Witches:** Also called the Weird Sisters.
- **King Duncan:** The king of Scotland.
- **Malcom:** The eldest son of Duncan.
- **Donalbain:** The younger son of Duncan.
- **Macbeth:** The guy in the title. Called the “thane of Glamis” in the characters list, but that’s not really all too helpful.
- **Lady Macbeth:** Macbeth’s wife.
- **Seyton:** Macbeth’s attendant
- **Banquo:** Works together with Macbeth commanding Duncan’s army.
- **Fleance:** Banquo’s son.
- **Macduff:** A noble.
- **Siward:** The commander of the English forces.
- **Young Siward:** Siward’s son.

## Act 1

### Scene 1

The three witches divinate their next meeting to be after a battle between has ended, before the sun sets. This meeting place shall be a heath, a place with low grass and shrubbery.

As we went over in class, the setting is that of medieval, feudal Scotland in its war against Norway. As this was written in the Elizabethan times, witches are regarded as purely evil (disciples of the devil), and it is truly a bad sign when they say your name.

A familiar (in this case, Graymalkin and Paddock) is the spirit pet of the witch (contract familiars and all that stuff like from fantasy).

The thunder and lightning detailed in the stage directions also adds to the atmosphere and truly conveys that something bad is going to happen.

A thane, as one can probably guess from context, is a lord (a feudal one specifically given the times).

### Scene 2

The setting is a battle camp near Forres.

Both a bloody captain and Thane of Ross gives recount of Macbeth’s heroic victories, defeating Macdonwald, the Norwegian lord, and the traitorous Thane of Cawdor. Duncan is delighted and wants to give Cawdor’s title to Macbeth.

The rhetoric in this speech is rather interesting, although the purpose is clear. This speech sets up the viewers’ expectations for Macbeth (and Banquo) to be truly heroic and brave. Kingly, even.

We also learn of two traitors, Macdonwald and the Thane of Cawdor, both whom Macbeth defeats.

*“What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.”*

### Scene 3

Appearing with thunder again, the three witches enter the scene. The witches tell some weird story about a sailor and their wife; I assume this is related to the sacrifice/ritualistic stuff (especially because of the severed “pilot’s thumb”).

Macbeth and Banquo meet the three witches. These witches foretell that Macbeth will gain the title of Thane of Cawdor and become king. They also foretell that Banquo’s sons will become king in the future.

Banquo: *“And oftentimes, to win us our harm, / The instruments of darkness tell us truths...”*

Macbeth sees these premonitions as neither a bad nor good thing. In particular, he says that he shall leave it up to chance or fate with his becoming of king rather than action, although it’s clear that he is really thinking a whole lot about the premonition.

As they go to meet the king, Macbeth asks for Banquo and him to talk about the witches tellings more later.

### Scene 4

Duncan confirms that the original Thane of Cawdor has been executed and then greets Macbeth and Banquo. He thanks both of them, with both of them pledging their allegiance to Duncan once again, and then pronounces that his eldest son, Malcom (the Prince of Cumberland), will some day take the throne.

Note: This actually violates the Scottish laws of succession as Duncan did not discuss this with the other thanes before the making the decision and actually would be a reason to become angry with Duncan.

Macbeth sees Malcom as a sort of rival, and reveals to the reader that, deep down, he does feel a forbidden desire for the throne.

### Scene 5

Lady Macbeth receives letters from Macbeth telling of his exploits as well as the witches’ premonition. Lady Macbeth, knowing that Macbeth may be too kind or unwilling to take matters into his own hands and shape his fate, wishes to take matters into her own hands and push him forward. Upon hearing that Duncan is coming to the castle later that night, she immediately begins to scheme a plot to assassinate Duncan so that Macbeth can become ruler. Macbeth returns, and she begins speaking of her intentions.

Duncan is supposed to leave the next day after staying the night at Macbeth’s castle, which let’s Lady Macbeth plan her vicious attack.

### Scene 6

The following characters are at Macbeth’s castle.

- |             |           |                  |
|-------------|-----------|------------------|
| • Duncan    | • Banquo  | • Ross           |
| • Malcom    | • Lennox  | • Angus          |
| • Donalbain | • Macduff | • The attendants |

This scene sets the stage for the banquet happening at Macbeth’s castle. Currently, Duncan, Lady Macbeth are present, and (after exchanging pleasantries and such) Duncan wishes for Lady Macbeth to lead him to Macbeth.

## Scene 7

Macbeth logically evaluates the act of assassinating Duncan, and comes to the conclusion that he really should not kill him. Macbeth believes in the hand of justice, so what he shall do here is clearly going to come back to bite him. Furthermore, they are related (? "I am his kinsman") and also Duncan is, well, the king. To Macbeth, Duncan is a great, quite holy man and has done nothing wrong at all. It would be completely reckless and terrible to kill the one who has given him rewards, and it would completely damage his reputation

Lady Macbeth enters and asks why Macbeth wasn't where he was supposed to be, to which Macbeth tells her that he will not assassinate Duncan. In response to this, Lady Macbeth becomes quite angry and only pushes further for Macbeth to carry out the act.

Lady Macbeth tells Macbeth to not be a coward, to be a man. Lady Macbeth asserts that they will not fail if Macbeth has no misgivings, and in the process convey to the audience the exact plan they shall use to assassinate him: Lady Macbeth will keep the two chamberlains company until they become very drunk and then they shall attack Duncan in his sleep using the daggers of the two chamberlains.

Macbeth folds under the whole "be a man" thing, and after this bit of scheming, the two head back to return to their places to continue the plan.

*"False face must hide what the false heart doth know."*

## Act 2

### Scene 1

Banquo hands his son (Fleance) his sword, and then he talks with Macbeth, noting that he is still up at this late time of night. Banquo talks about how happy Duncan was, even giving Lady Macbeth a diamond.

Banquo brings up the words of the three witches, to which Macbeth lies that he hasn't thought much about it, promising to discuss the three witches another time. Banquo then leaves, leaving Macbeth to hallucinate a bloody dagger in front of him. He takes this as a sign of guiding him to his goal (assassinating Duncan) but it could very well be symbolic of what's to come after.

### Scene 2

Macbeth murders Duncan in his sleep (Donalbain I believe was in the same room so O.O). While Lady Macbeth is satisfied with the job and tells him not to think too hard about it, Macbeth is still quite a bit distraught (describing in decent detail what they said and how they acted as he stabbed them) and paranoid over what he has done. He hears voices talking about his murder and is in general quite uneasy about the whole affair.

Lady Macbeth takes the daggers from Macbeth (who for some reason kept them—I suppose this goes to show how shaken Macbeth is about the affair) and goes to place them back at the scene of the murder. Macbeth goes to wash his hands of the blood and does so with great paranoia.

The two hear a knocking at the door, and in turn they leave for their bedroom as to not be caught.

*"Wake Duncan with thy knocking. I would thou couldst."*

### Scene 3

The scene starts the next morning with the porter (the guarder of the door/gate), knocking on the door (there's some dramatic irony here as he talks about opening up the gates to hell but only we know that Duncan was actually slain).

Lennox and Macduff greet the porter at the door and talk about how he was sleeping late at night due to alcohol. As Macbeth enters, though, the conversation changes topic to how Duncan hasn't yet woken up (they talk about how the night was rough so I guess there was some Shakespearean setting stuff going on there also, but when Macbeth says it, it has a different meaning). Macbeth, Lennox, and Macduff then go to wake him up, upon which Macduff sees Duncan dead and exclaims so. Macbeth plays along during the entire period. From Macduff's dialogue we also get to know that Macbeth plunged the dagger into Duncan's head. Oof.

Once all three see the horrendous sight, they ring the bell to wake up Banquo, Donalbain, and Malcom. Once Malcom and Donalbain arrive at the scene, they ask who murdered him.

Immediately the blame is pinned on the servants, whom Macbeth said he had killed. When he is inquired as to why (the real reason being to prevent them from pleading their innocence), he says that he did so in a fit of rage and emotion. The adults agree to convene and discuss the matter, but Malcom and Donalbain decide to part their separate ways to avoid more conflict/stay safe. Malcom goes to England, and Donalbain goes to Ireland; although, this does slightly incriminate them.

*"The near in blood, The nearer bloody."*

#### **Scene 4**

The setting is now outside Macbeth's castle.

Ross, Macduff, and an old man talk about how unnatural sightings were seen with falcons, owls, and Macbeth's horses (the horses eat each other). This talk also lets the reader know how Malcom and Donalbain are being accused of being a part of the assassination of the king and that Macbeth will be crowned the new king in Scone. Ross says he will go to Scone, while Macduff will go to Fife.

Duncan's body is taken to Colmekill, and Macbeth gets crowned in Scone.

### **Act 3**

#### **Scene 1**

Banquo suspects that Macbeth is behind the death of Duncan due to what the witches told him (but this also makes him hopeful that his descendants shall truly become king). Macbeth learns that Banquo and his son will be riding out later that day. Through soliloquy, we learn Macbeth's true thoughts about how Banquo is a danger to him and how he feels he has destroyed his entire life so that Banquo's descendants can carry on with the crown (Macbeth has no heir). With this knowledge in hand, Macbeth convinces two mercenaries to attempt to murder Fleance and Banquo that day.

#### **Scene 2**

Lady Macbeth enters a room in the palace to find Macbeth beside himself with guilt and worry, saying how being dead is better off and more peaceful. Lady Macbeth tells him to calm down so that he doesn't look so distraught in front of the party guests later.

Macbeth goes on to tell Lady Macbeth to be wary of Banquo, but he decides not to tell her the full plan of his (and Fleance's) murder to spare her of the weight of the knowledge.

*"O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!"*

#### **Scene 3**

Another murderer joins the party. They manage to slay Banquo, but Fleance escapes. Without a light, they cannot make chase, so they go back to Macbeth to tell him the situation.

## **Scene 4**

One of the murderers comes to inform Macbeth that Banquo has been slain but not Fleance. This upsets Macbeth, who begins to see illusions of Banquo's ghost sitting at the dinner table during a feast with the nobles. Lady Macbeth is upset by this behavior and makes attempts to bring him back to reality, but she eventually has to bid the others away and cancel the feast. Macbeth asserts that he will meet with the three witches again to know what will happen.

## **Scene 5**

This is a bit of a weird scene (thought not to actually be written by Shakespeare). Hecate, the goddess of witches apparently, scolds the witches for cursing Macbeth without her, and she says that she will appear when Macbeth arrives and show him illusions that will inspire his confidence in order to create even more chaos.

## **Scene 6**

Lennox and another noble can see through Macbeth's scheme (the deaths of Duncan and Banquo and who was blamed afterwards were very similar), also commenting on how Macduff, in England, and Macbeth seem to be preparing for war with each other. Macduff allies with Malcom and King Edward of England to defeat Macbeth. Macduff also refuses a messenger from Macbeth, which acts as a subtle hint towards war.

In this case, Macduff acts as a foil to Macbeth to show how he has been consumed with ambition and fights for his self-preservation, while Macduff fights to save the country (Lennox: "That, by the help of these [...], we may again / Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights, / Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives").

# **Act 4**

## **Scene 1**

The witches cast a spell right before Macbeth comes to meet them. The witches refer to Macbeth as "something wicked."

Macbeth meets with the three witches to learn more about his future. The witches in turn call upon three apparitions to tell him three major prophecies. In order, the apparitions are:

1. An Armed Head, which tells Macbeth to beware Macduff.
2. A Bloody Child, who tells Macbeth to be "bloody, bold, and resolute" and that he will not be hurt by any child born of a woman. (Macbeth falsely makes him think that this means he will not be slain. Even still, he vows to kill Macduff)
3. A Child Crowned, with a tree in his hand, who tells Macbeth to be proud/not worried of conspirers, for he will not be defeated until "Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill / Shall come against him." Macbeth interprets this as being impossible, and is firmly rooted (heh) in the belief that he shall not be defeated. Note: Dunsinane Hill is the hill upon which Macbeth's castle is built.

In short, the witches plan to lull Macbeth into a false sense of confidence works by conveying only half/vague truths. Despite this though, Macbeth still asks about Banquo's prophecy, and he is shown an image of eight descendants of Banquo all being crowned king.

Macbeth then learns from Lennox that Macduff has fled to England. Macbeth rues that he will kill Macduff's family.

## Scene 2

Lady Macduff talks to Ross about how Macduff fled to England. Lady Macduff questions why he would do this and considers him as good as dead having betrayed the family. Ross then advises Lady Macduff and her family to flee, but she is hesitant. Lady Macduff then has an interesting conversation with her son about traitors/liars which seems to have some deeper meaning.

A messenger, anonymous, enters to once again advise that the Macduff family flee. Unfortunately, this is too late, and the murderers enter the house, asking for the whereabouts of Macduff, exclaiming his treachery. In the process, Macduff's son is murdered, and Lady Macduff escapes (I think? But later we learn she is killed so).

These murderers are likely the same ones that killed Banquo (or at least, how the play is written and the character list portray this as so).

*"What, you egg?"*

## Scene 3

The setting is in England, in front of King Edward's palace.

Macduff gains the trust of Malcolm (they lament together about the state of Scotland and Macduff pledges that he is not treacherous), and they band together, vowing to defeat Macbeth.

An interesting description of King Edward is given, portraying him as some holy saint (assuming I'm reading this correctly). I suppose this is another instance of some element of contrasting with Macbeth going on.

Ross enters the conversation, having come from Scotland, and also laments at the sad state of affairs. During this conversation we also learn that England gave Macduff commander Siward and ten thousand troops.

Ross then breaks the tragic news to Macduff that all of his family has been killed. Macduff has no choice but to channel this grief into rage towards Macbeth.

## Act 5

### Scene 1

The setting is in Macbeth's castle (which is in Dunsinane).

In this scene, we learn that Lady Macbeth is ailed in some way and has been sporadically sleep-walking and maniacally writing on paper. This is reported by the gentlewoman, her caretaker, to her doctor. The gentlewoman also reports hearing her say mad things that she says she cannot tell the doctor, for there would be no witness to confirm such a thing (likely something related to murder).

Lady Macbeth begins sleep-walking (?) in front of the doctor and the gentlewoman, with her eyes open (but "sense are shut"). Lady Macbeth goes to wash her hands just like after Duncan was killed. Lady Macbeth is perhaps hallucinating Macduff's blood on her hands. Lady Macbeth believes that they already have power with little rivals and as such is so distraught at the constant killings of everyone.

The doctor and gentlewoman hear this and are alarmed, knowing that they've heard something they shouldn't've. The doctor claims that this disease is not something that he can cure ("[m]ore needs she the divine than the physician"). Lady Macbeth then mentions the death of Banquo and Duncan, and then heads straight to bed.

The doctor asks the gentlewoman to look over her.

*“What, will these hands ne’er be clean? No / more o’ that, my lord, no more o’ that. You mar all / with this starting.”*

## **Scene 2**

In this scene, quite near Dunsinane, we listen to a conversation between some Scottish soldiers who are rebelling against Macbeth: Menteith, Caithness, Angus, and Lennox. The audience learns that the English army (whom the talking soldiers are hoping to join), led by Malcom, Siward, and Macduff, is quick approaching, and they are vying for vengeance. It is anticipated that they will meet near Birnam Wood (the other place from the prophecy). We also learn that Donalbain will not be there with the army, but Siward’s son will be.

Macbeth, we learn, has been fortifying the castle out of rage/madness. The soldiers talk about, with such a terrible reputation, he shall quickly lose the weight and power of the title, and soldiers will only follow orders out of obedience and not passion.

## **Scene 3**

This scene depicts Macbeth in his castle, almost crazed over what the witches told him. He is told the English army of ten thousand soldiers is advancing, but he has no fear because of what the witches have told him. Macbeth asks Seyton (some attendant) for his armor even though he doesn’t have to fight simply because he doesn’t think that he can die (yet at least). Macbeth tells the doctor to cure Lady Macbeth despite him saying that he can’t.

## **Scene 4**

The setting switches to the English forces and, in particular, Malcom, Siward, Macduff, and Menteith (others are there also; these are just the people who talked).

The English forces arrive at the Birnam Wood (the forest). Malcom orders every soldier to take a branch (a “bough”) to conceal the true number of soldiers. This is one of the parts of the witches’ prophecy being fulfilled.

## **Scene 5**

The setting switches back to Macbeth’s castle, which is being fortified and prepared for war.

Macbeth intends to wait out the siege of the English troops and quite confidently boasts that he has forgotten the “taste of fears.” A short while later, Lady Macbeth cries out and dies (honestly this part was a little weird?), causing Macbeth to ponder over the meaninglessness of life. A messenger then tells him of the English advancing, holding the branches, and Macbeth realizes this as the part of the witches’ prophecy coming true.

To some regard, I believe he’s accepted his death.

## **Scene 6**

The setting switches back to the English forces, who now throw down their branches.

Malcom delegates the first battle to be led by Siward and his son, while he and Macduff shall do other things (he wasn’t really clear on this idk).

## **Scene 7**

The setting switches to a field during the battle.

Macbeth encounters Young Siward (Siward's son), and slays him in battle (bro literally just killed him and said "Thou wast born of woman."). Macduff, elsewhere on the battlefield, greatly wishes to fight Macbeth and take revenge for his family.

Meanwhile, Siward tells Malcom the status of the war and how it is strongly being won by the English forces. They enter the castle.

### **Scene 8**

Macbeth does not wish to commit suicide, even knowing that he may die, because he can still fight (I think at least? He says "Whiles I see lives, the gashes / Do better upon them.").

Macbeth meets Macduff in battle now, and Macduff is enraged by how horrible of a person Macbeth is. Macbeth boasts that he cannot be defeated by anyone born of a woman, but Macduff tells him that he "was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped." This strikes fear into Macbeth, who at first vows not to fight him. Macduff then tells him to yield and then die, to which Macbeth has no choice but to begin fighting.

Macduff kills Macbeth and his body is carried away. Malcom laments the deaths of those in battle. Ross tells Siward that his son died (nobly) in battle. Siward doesn't seem to be that sad at all (lmao he was actually quite happy that his son died "like a man" like dang ok bro he's gone. Bro even told Malcom not to grieve for him).

Macduff returns to Malcom with Macbeth's head and then cheers for the new King of Scotland (Malcom). Malcom names everyone to be earls, and then talks about recalling those who were exiled or left Scotland because of Macbeth. Malcom intends to be crowned at Scone.