

MACBETH BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

CHARACTER AND THEME ANALYSIS

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PEOPLE IN THE PLAY (MACBETH CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS)

1. THE THREE WITCHES (FEMALE, ANY AGE)

Servants of Hecate- the goddess of witchcraft

- Three “black and midnight hags” who plot mischief against Macbeth using charms, spells, and prophecies.
- Their predictions prompt him to murder Duncan, to order the death of Banquo and his son and to blindly believe in his own immortality.

2. MACBETH (MALE, 30S- 40S)

- He is Scottish general and the thane of Glamis who is led to wicked thoughts by the prophecies of the three witches, and seduced by his wife into committing murder to fulfil his ambition to the throne.
- Once he commits his first crime and is crowned king of Scotland, he embarks on further atrocities with increasing ease thus becoming a dreadful tyrant.

3. LADY MACBETH

- A deeply ambitious woman who lust for power and position.
- Early in the play she seems to be stronger and more ruthless of the two, as she urges her husband to kill Duncan and seize the crown.
- After the blood shed begins, however, Lady Macbeth falls victim to guilt and madness to an even greater degree than her husband.

4. MACDUFF

- A Scottish nobleman hostile to Macbeth’s kingship from the start.
- He eventually becomes a leader of the crusade to unseat Macbeth.
- The crusade’s mission is to place the rightful king Malcolm, on the throne, but Macduff also desires vengeance for Macbeth’s murder of Macduff’s wife and young son.

5. LADY MACDUFF

- Macduff's wife, she and her children are murdered by Macbeth in order to consolidate power.

6. YOUNG MACDUFF (YOUNG BOY)

- Macduff's youngest son murdered by Macbeth.

7. BANQUO

- The brave, noble general whose children, according to the witches' prophecy, will inherit the Scottish throne
- Like Macbeth, Banquo thinks ambitious thoughts, but do not translate those thoughts into action and is eventually murdered by Macbeth.

8. MALCOM

- The son of Duncan, whose restoration to the throne signals Scotland's return to order following Macbeth's reign of terror.

9. DUNCAN

- The good king of Scotland whom Macbeth, in his ambition for the crown, murders.
- Duncan is the model of virtuous, benevolent, and foresighted ruler.
- His death symbolizes the destruction of an order in Scotland that can be restored when Duncan's line in the person of Malcom, once more occupies the throne.
- He will also play the role of a Siward.

10. ANGUS

- Scottish Thane, advisor to Duncan

11. LENNOX

- Scottish Thane, advisor to Duncan

12. ROSS

- Scottish Thane, advisor to Duncan

13. CALTHNESS

- Scottish thane and soldier

14. MENTELTH

- Scottish thane and soldier

15. DUNALBAIN

- Duncan's son and Malcolm younger brother

16. FLEANCE

- Banquo`s son who survives Macbeth`s attempt to murder him.

17. SEYTON

- Macbeth`s servant and chief advisor.
- He is an active conspirator in Macbeth`s crimes and reign of terror

18. SIWARD

- English lord who aids the thanes in overthrowing Macbeth

19. YOUNG SIWARD

- Siward`s son
- He is killed by Macbeth in hand to hand combat

20. CAPTAIN

- Scottish soldier who fights in battle first with Macbeth, then against him.

21. MURDERERS

- A group of ruffians recruited by Macbeth to murder Banquo, Fleance (whom they fail to kill), and Macduffs wife and children
- They become Macbeth`s personal guard and advisors.

22. GENTLE WOMAN

- Lady Macbeth`s maid

23. DOCTOR

- A doctor called upon to treat Lady Macbeth`s madness.

24. PORTER

- The drunken doorman of Macbeth`s castle

25. HECATE

- The goddess of witchcraft, who helps the three witches work their mischief on Macbeth.

AUTHOR

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

BACKGROUND

- Based on true story
- Macbeth, as a person, actually lived

- Written in 1606 in England for King James who was obsessed with witches.
- Is William Shakespeare`s shortest and bloodiest play
- Takes place in Scotland
- Is a cursed play- productions of the play have been plagued with accidents and deaths.

SETTING DESCRIPTION

- The setting of Macbeth is in Scotland and England in the 11th century
- The start of the play foreshadows the play as a tragedy just by the portrayal of foggiess and a terrible thunderstorm taking place.
- Most action takes place in Macbeth`s castle and later, the palace in Dunsinane.
- Macbeth is actually the only Shakespearean play set in Scotland, some people connecting it to the reality in which King James IV of Scotland was crowned king James 1 of England.
- This occurred in 1603, after Queen Elizabeth died, thus allowing King James to become the king of England a few years before the play was even written.
- Although the play was written in 1606, it takes place in Scotland of medieval times, around the time the actual characters lived.

SPECIFIC SETTINGS IN MACBETH

- Scotland
- Inverness- Macbeth`s castle
- Forress- Duncan`s castle
- Fife – Macduff`s castle
- Birnam wood- the forest near Dunsinane hill
- Dunsinane Hill- Macbeth`s castles stands there.

OTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE INVERNESS.

- This is where Macbeth`s castle is
- This is where Macbeth and Lady Macbeth kill Duncan.

THANE OF CAWDOR BEFORE MACBETH

He is not named in Macbeth. But in Act1, scene2, the thane of Cawdor is labeled a Scottish traitor by the thane of Ross when he returns to camp. This title was given to Macbeth after the previous thane of Cawdor was captured and executed for treason

- Cawdor was one of the Scottish soldiers, Macdonald was another.
- So the traitor that the king executes is the previous thane of Cawdor.
- After he is executed, his title is given to Macbeth as a reward for how well he did in battle.
- Macdonald is not a character who appears in the play.
- He is the leader of the rebel force before fighting against the king of Scotland. He is mentioned in act1 scene 2 when Macbeth is praised for defeating Macdonald in battle

CHARACTERISATION

1. MACBETH

Ambitious

- When he hears King Duncan announcing that Malcom shall be the next king after him (an heir to the throne). Macbeth looks at that as a stumbling block to his kingship as pronounced by the witches.
- He kills King Duncan because he wants to become a king.

Royal

- He is loyal to King Duncan which has resulted into his ascension to different positions.
- He is made Thane of Glamis and Thane of Cawdor because of his brave fighting.
- King Duncan has a very big trust in him. He promises to plant Macbeth (make him big). As a way of cementing his mutual trust, Duncan goes to visit Macbeth castle

Envious

- He plans to kill Duncan

Brave bold/courageous

- when Macbeth hears that Birnam Wood is moving towards Dunsinane castle, he disputed the half-truth the weird sister gave him

- He persuaded his soldiers to put their armour and encouraged them that it's good to die while fighting.
- He and Banquo risk their own lives, he fights with all his efforts and defeats the Norwegian army and the former Thane of Cawdor.
- When Macbeth hears that an army of ten thousand Englishmen approaches the castle he calls his servant Seyton who confirms it. Macbeth wears his armour ready to fight.
- Despite the tense atmosphere, Macbeth encourages himself that he cannot be afraid of any one born of a woman. He encounters Young Siward in a battle field and kills him. Macbeth says he smiles at weapons, scorn brandished by a man born of a woman.

Tender hearted

- Lady Macbeth tells us that Macbeth is tender hearted. He lacks ruthlessness to take short cuts to assume high office.

Impatient

- He lacks patience. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth find it difficult to wait for their appointed time to become King and queen. They plan to murder Duncan as he comes to visit them in their own castle.

Confidante/ friendly/ partner

- Macbeth has good relationship with his wife. Macbeth reveals everything to his wife.
- In the first place, he tells her about the witches' prophecy and that King Duncan has promoted him to the Thane of Cawdor which was first announced by the witches.
- As a husband, friend and partner, Lady Macbeth plans to assist him achieve his dream.
- He is friendly in the sense that Macbeth is a good friend to Banquo, they are together as they come back from the war. They discuss issues affecting the environment, state and their personal lives.

Superstitious

- On his way home from war, he meets the weird sister (witches) who prophesied to him that he is Thane of Cawdor and he will be the King in future.
- Macbeth kills King Duncan and Banquo to fulfill what he heard from the witches.

Cruel

- He kills King Duncan and implicates Duncan's guards. He also kills them to portray a picture that he is innocent.

Unappreciative/ unthankful

- King Duncan has just honoured Macbeth for his courage and brave fight, he has just been given a title very honouring yet he plans of killing Duncan in his own castle.
- Banquo tells Macbeth that King Duncan is ready to give Lady Macbeth diamond for one nice reception at Macbeth's castle. Despite all these, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are brooding their evil plan of murdering King Duncan.
- Does not appropriate King Duncan paying royal visit to his castle.

Murderous

- He murders King Duncan in his own castle after making him drunk.
- Indecisive/ undecided
- He and his wife plans to kill Duncan but he analyses what Duncan has been doing to him, he goes to his wife and tells her that he will not carry out his plans of murdering King Duncan.

Fearful

- After the killing of Duncan, Macbeth regrets his action, he lived in fear in all his life, and he embarked on killing those he thought were threats to him like Banquo.

Charged

- Macbeth is easier to fight Macduff and defeat him, he tried to avoid him at first bearing in mind the witches' prophecy to beware of Macduff. He tells Macduff that his soul is already charged with Macduff's blood (he refers to Macduff's wife and children whom he killed).

Desperate/ despairing

- As the battle stats, Macbeth is amazed to see himself bleeding from Macduff's sword. He tells him that even though he has made him bleed, he cannot kill him because he has a life which cannot yield to anyone born of a woman.

- When Macduff tells him that he was not born of a woman but ripped from his mother's womb (delivered prematurely by Caesarean section), Macbeth vows to continue fighting though the weird sisters prophecies seem to be not dependent, he will have a final attempt.

Secretive

- Macbeth feels his own sons should succeed him, not Banquo's. Macbeth state his fears and concerns, yet , he does not inform Lady Macbeth of what he has planned, that is to kill Banquo and his children.
- When Lady Macbeth says demands to know his plans about Banquo, Macbeth says `be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, Till though applaud the deed`.

Barbaric and aggressive

- Macbeth's actions in battle are barbaric and aggressive. He not only killed his enemy, but he cut him from his navel to his mouth, and cut off the victims head placed it on the "battlements"

Pompous/ boastful

- Macbeth strides into the hall of Dunsinane with the doctor and his attendants, boasting proudly that he has nothing to fear from the English army or from Malcom, since- none of woman born can harm him (4. 1. 96).

Power- hungry

- If we critically look at the behavior of Macbeth and his wife towards their honorable guest, King Duncan, we see nothing but power hungry. While we appreciate that his actions are driven by the weird sister's prophecy, he would have maintained his patience till the time comes for his kingship as foretold by the witches.

Obsessed/ determined

- Macbeth's mind is full of murder, he wants to hear a bell ringing to summon him to go and murder king Duncan.
- As he is waiting for the bell, he sees a dagger flying, he tries to catch it but to no avail.
- He closes his eyes yet he is able to see it. The dagger disappears and comes back with blood.

- He is determined to murder Duncan just in his own (Macbeth`s) castle.

Greedy

- Macbeth kills Duncan because he is not contented (satisfied) with what he has, Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor, he wants to become a King through evil means.

Dishonest

- Macbeth tells Banquo to confess that King Duncan`s sons, Malcom and Donaldban are the ones who killed the King (their own father)

Joyous/ happy

- Macbeth is in the happy mood, writes his wife telling her that he has been promoted to the Thane of Cawdor, a title that was first pronounced by the witches.
- He further tells him wife that the witches predicted that Macbeth shall become a king in the future.

Regretful/ guilty conscious

- Macbeth tells his wife that he has succeeded in murdering Duncan; however, he regrets his action.
- He says that there is no enough water in the ocean to wash his hand from the blood of Duncan in his hands (the guilty conscience will remain to haunt him all the days of his life).
- Macbeth had this to say “if I had died an hour before this happened, I would have lived a blessed life span. From now on, there is nothing left worth living. Everything is shame, honour and dignity are dead. The wine of life has gone, only dregs left”.
- Macbeth tell his wife that by murdering King Duncan they have just wounded/ scorched the snake but not killed it (Macbeth fears the escape of Malcolm and Donaldbain to England), he told Banquo that the King`s sons have reported what happened in Scotland to the king of England).
- He says the snake will heal and be a snake again while they remain in danger of its bite.
- Macbeth says they won`t eat their meals because of fear but will keep suffering their nightmare in their sleep. It`s better to be with the dead to gain peace than a live but suffer from psychological torture.

- Macbeth welcomes all the guest at the Banquet, he asks them to sit according to their own degrees (positions they are holding in the society).
- As Macbeth is busy addressing the guests, the first murderer enters with blood on his face, he tells Macbeth that Banquo is killed but Fleance has escaped, upon hearing this Macbeth regrets his action, he says that he had been completely safe, solid as a Mable, firm as a rock, free and unconfined as the air surround us, before but now is caged, shut up in a stalland bound to distracting doubts and fears. The escape of Fleance disturbs Macbeth much more.
- Macbeth is very much worried about his situation. He says that at his age he expected to see things that accompany old age like honour, love obedience and troops of friends but instead he sees curses, flattery and lip service.

Conspiratorial

- Macbeth recalls what the witches prophesied to him and Banquo, he is afraid about Banquo. If his sons will be kings, they will greatly change the horizon.
- Macbeth hires two murderers to kill Banquo and tells them that for all the sufferings they experienced in their life, were because of Banquo.
- He told them that all the sufferings and bad luck on their lives were due to Banquo`s making, yet they thought it was Macbeth. (The truth of the matter was that indeed it was Macbeth who was responsible for their suffering), Macbeth orders the murderers to kill Banquo and his son Fleance as they come to the party at seven o`clock the same night.

Flattering/ deceitful

- Banquo is treated as a good friend of Macbeth, he is invited to the party (the first state Banquet) by Macbeth.
- Before Banquo goes to his home to prepare for the party, Macbeth hires murderers to kill Banquo and Fleance as they will be coming for the party at seven o`clock the same night.
- Indeed, Macbeth is a snake in a green grass, Banquo is a good friend of Macbeth, yet Macbeth is planning to kill him, so that the prophecy by the weird sisters (witches) should not be fulfilled which said that Banquo will be the father of many kings. (his sons will become kings).

Hypocritical

- Macbeth is calm looking, he looks innocent as if he is ignorant of king Duncan`s murder, he puts the blame on innocent porters who did not take part in Macbeth`s plan. He is wearing a face of deception.

Dilemmatic

- He is in dilemma whether to kill King Duncan as per wife advice or not to kill him.

Revengeful

- Macbeth sends a murder to Macduff`s castle, he murder Lady Macduff and his son because Macduff has fled to England so as a revenge to his action (leaving Scotland without the consent of king Macbeth)

2. LADY MACBETH

Ruthless/ wicked/ evil/ superstitious

- She calls upon the ‘spirits that tend on mortal thoughts’ to deprive her of her feminine instinct to care so that she can act like man and kill Duncan.

Ambitious

- She wants her husband to act like man by being courageous enough to kill Duncan so that when Macbeth becomes kings she becomes a queen.
- She is an ambitious woman who lust for power and position.

Weak

- She fails to stand the horror when King Duncan is assassinated and she faints contrary to her earlier claim.

Pushing

- Lady Macbeth drives the hesitant Macbeth to act quickly in planning to murder king Duncan

Strong/ brave/ courageous

- When her husband returns trembling and terror- shaken from murdering King Duncan, she never loses her mind but she remains calm.

Loving/ affectionate

- She is portrayed as a woman who has affectionate relationship with her husband, Macbeth. They live in harmony and do not keep any secrets from each other.
- Macbeth tells her all his encounters with the witches, their prophecies and how happy he is. She knows her husband`s weaknesses.

Organizer/ planner/ creative/ hospitable

- She is seen as a good planner and organizer.
- She plans to welcome King Duncan to their castle though on short notice king Duncan was impressed in the way Lady Macbeth organized herself.
- She warmly welcome the king. The king remained on the nice reception accorded to them.
- She is creative in the sense that she organizes strangely to assassinate King Duncan.
- She tell her husband that she will make the porters drink wine excessively; Macbeth will go into Duncan`s room. After the murder, Lady Macbeth will smear blood on the faces of the porters, their hands, and the pillow in order to conceal (hide) the murder.

Regretful

- She regrets the death of King Duncan, she says that she would have killed the king alone if he did not resemble her father.
- She also encourages Macbeth not to quick much about the action he took in killing the king.
- Lady Macbeth regrets the action they took in murdering king Duncan, she says that there is nothing gained but lost, when a wish is fulfilled but doesn`t bring and contentment, the further says is better a victim than to live in worry the crime committed.

Guilty conscious

- As the attendant speaks to the doctor, Lady Macbeth appears in her sleep walk- she rubs her hands vigorously as if to clean them of something. (Indeed she is trying to clean the blood of the innocent souls that she and her husband have killed).
- She reveals some of the things which happened earlier such as the death of king Duncan, Banquo and Macduff's family. The doctor confesses it appears to be more mental than physical.
- Lady Macbeth is no longer a master minder of evil acts but she is haunted by her own and her own mind is disturbed.

Manipulative/ seductive

- She seduces, he husband Macbeth to carry the death of King Duncan.

Pretentions

- After the death of King Duncan, she pretends not to know anything about the death of King Duncan. She fakes to be innocent she falls down and faints yet she knows that it was herself and Macbeth who had killed the king.

Joyous/ joyful/ excited

- She is excited with the news that Macbeth, her husband has been promised to be Thane of Cawdor and a King thereafter.

Disguising/ disguised

- When Lady Macbeth hears a knock on the door. She tells her husband to get little water and wash all the suspicions.
- She also advises Macbeth to put on the night gown to bluff people to thinks that he is coming from sleep.

Deceptive

- Lady Macbeth gives strong wine to the porters (king`s guards) in a form of love but she wants them get drunk so that Macbeth carries out his mission of assassinating the king without being noticed by anyone.
- The porters are deceived and the evil ambition is achieved.

- Lady Macbeth shows an innocent face to King Duncan and all the visitors as if she has no intention of doing any evil to the king. This is a total deception of its kind. She provokes darkness to hide her evil plans so that whatever she does in her evil plan, shall not be known.

Skilful

- As a hostess; she behaves normally which makes the guests to suspect nothing as she and her husband plan to assassinate the king.
- She wears an innocent face with smiles when she is brooding evil.
- Lady Macbeth succeeds in making the porters drunk, she gave them wine to weaken their reasoning capacity.
- The porters look at it as a kind gesture to have a drink with Queen Macbeth, not knowing that she was plotting for their down fall.

Stressful/ haunted/ infested

- Lady Macbeth spends sleepless night as she is haunted by the killing of King Duncan. She dreams of killing king Duncan, the porters, Banquo and Macduff family. She pretends to wash her hands and clean them from Duncan's blood. She reveals secrets and exposed herself and Macbeth as murderers.

Psychosomatic/ psychologically tortured

- Lady Macbeth suffers psychological torture as she is affected by nightmares.
- Both the English and Scottish doctors fail to heal her. She suffers terribly and everything which she does lead to her death while sleeping.

3. BANQUO

Ignorant/ sympathetic

- He is ignorant of what the audience knows concerning the murder of King Duncan and of his own impending doom.

Superstitious/ curious

- He believes in witches

- He is eager to hear from weird sister what they have in store for him (act 1 scene3)

Ambitions

- Having seen that the witches' prophecies about Macbeth are fulfilled, he is hopeful and anxious about attaining his.

Naive/ insensitive

- He accepts the invitation to the banquet prepared by Macbeth even though he is aware of emerging cold relationship between him and Macbeth following the witches' prophecy that he, Banquo will be the father of kings.

Suspicious/ fearful

- Banquo fears the unusual happenings. He is afraid that something sinister may happen to the King.
- He suspects that Macbeth is hovering evil ideas.
- Banquo thinks Macbeth pushed the prophecy of the weird sister to become King. As some people believed that the guard were responsible for the murder of the King. Banquo, Macduff and Malcolm and Donalbain suspected foul play by Macbeth.
- Banquo sees the fulfilment of the prophecies by the weird sister (witches) but he suspects that Macbeth did something to become a King (I'm afraid of you played a vile game to get it).

Hopeful

- As Macbeth has all the prophecies fulfilled, Banquo hopes to see what witches said about him being accomplished too.
- He was told that he will be a father of many king's; he himself will not be one.

Loyal

- Banquo is loyal to Macbeth. He promises to carry out an order from him provided it does not have evil intention behind it. Unlike Macduff who does not listen to him.

Distrustful

- Banquo has little or no trust in witches. When the weird sister prophesied to him that he will father king's, he was not amused as Macbeth was, his little belief comes in when Macbeth was first greeted as theme of Cawdor after the witches' prophecy unlike Macbeth, Banquo is calm and patient in his dealings

Careless

- He already suspected Macbeth's involved in Duncan's murder yet when Macbeth ask him to come for the state Banquet he accepted to come with his son Fleance He would have either changed the route or asked the other fellow soldiers keep him company to maximize his own security and that of his son Fleance. He would have also considered changing time of arrival, Macbeth told him to come at seven o'clock in the evening he would have come earlier than that or a bit late.

Brave and courageous

- He is brave soldier and courageous like Macbeth. He sacrifice in his fight to rescue Scotland from the hands of the lead of the King of Norway. At first it was Norway on the lead but when Banquo and Macbeth put up a gallant fight the Norwegian army and the former Thane of Cawdor are defeated

Misjudge mental

- Banquo's death could be attributed to his misjudge mental. He already started suspecting Macbeth for the evil (murder of King Duncan) yet he did not prepare himself fully for any attack neither did he warn his son Fleance to be alert.
- He did not behave like an experienced soldier when he met the two murderers, he could have defeated them, but we see him talking to them as friends, he is taken unaware and killed.

Fierce/ violent

- Banquo's character is fierce to some character like Macbeth. Knows that Banquo is an excellent fighter, brave and courageous, so that when all others are back tracking, it is only him and Macbeth who go forward giving morale in their camp.

4. KING DUNCAN

Peace- loving/ gracious/ virtuous

- His language is formal and his speeches are full of graciousness , whether on the battle field in act1 scene 2, whether his talks concerns matter of honour or when greeting his kind hostess Lady Macbeth (act 1 scene 6)
- Duncan is a good King, despite having opposition at the time, he used his powers gently, and he never kept corrupt act in his mind.
- During his reign, peace, law and order and joy flourished in Scotland. That is why his subordinates liked him most.

Protective

- Duncan made sure that all his citizens are protected. He sends his troops to guard and protect the people from attacks from Norway. The welfare of his people was a priority in his kingdom.

Over trusting

- King Duncan's, major problem is over trusting
- He puts his big trust in his subordinates. He crowned the former Thane of Cawdor who betrayed him by revealing secrets to Norwegian King who come to fight against King Duncan.
- As if this is not enough, he promises to elevate Macbeth from Thane of Glamis to Thane of Cawdor. He could have learnt the lesson from the past mistakes and wait a bit before crowning Macbeth.
- He also makes a hasty decision by visiting Macbeth's castle and spends a night there.
- He does not know much about Macbeth, he did not take time to ask those who are closer to Macbeth in order to learn more about him.

Caring

- King Duncan is very considerate and caring, after seeing a sergeant who comes from war bleeding, he orders that he should be taken for treatment. This is very unusual for king's to consider helping a common person like this sergeant who is very far away in rank to come closer to the King.

Kind and generous

- The king promises to reward Lady Macbeth for the kind gesture. He promises to give diamond to Lady Macbeth for hosting him and his entourage very well.
- Despite the short notice, Lady Macbeth prepared the banquet nicely. Indeed king Duncan is generous.

Regretful

- He regrets his action when he says that you cannot know what's in the mind of another person. He regrets how close he was with the former Thane of Cawdor, yet he betrayed him.

Foresighted

- Before he goes to Macbeth castle he announces the heir to throne. He chooses Malcolm as his successor. Malcolm is made prince of Cumberland.

Soft hearted

- Due to Duncan's soft hearted Macbeth is highly respected by all sorts of people and has won an honour from king Duncan and his people of Scotland. This is because the king has given Macbeth the highest position, the Thane of Cawdor openly.
- It is clearly seen that king Duncan was a good king. Many people regretted his death up to the extent of wanting to revenge his death to Macbeth.

Insensitive

- As a king who had all the support in terms of security, he would have maximized his security very much. Instead of putting porters to guard his room, he would have used real soldiers and put some on patrol.
- He would also have warned the porters to be alert of anything because the battle with the king of Norway had just ended and did not know what the enemy might be thinking of, hence need for security internal and external.

Humble

- He admits his failure in spotting the previous Thane of Cawdor Treachery; There is no art to find the mind's construction in the face. (Act 1 scene 4, line 11)

Vengeful

- He orders the thane of Cawdor's execution immediately upon hearing of him being a traitor.

Appreciative

- Duncan and his followers (entourage) appreciate the peaceful harmony of Macbeth's castle, where Lady Macbeth welcome the guests with an overflow polite gesture
- King Duncan did not hide his emotion of joy. He expresses it before Macbeth and Banquo when they arrive from the battle field when the two soldiers arrive, he praises them in the Presence of many who are present at this function, he tells Macbeth that he has started planting him and will see him prosper and for Banquo his youth will be recognized whatever he did in the battle field will be put to heart (will be remembered)(Act1 scene 4: 28-32).

5. MACDUFF

Trustful/ reliable

- Macduff is a man of dignity in king Duncan's kingdom. He is a Thane of fife. He is trusted by King Duncan and has been given the task of awakening King Duncan from Inverness Castle back to his castle. This shows how close he is to the king.

Dutiful

- He wakes early in the morning to wake up the king. He is a committed citizen to duty.
- Macduff is the is first to notice the king's in demise (death)

Patriotic

- He leaves his country Scotland for England and meets Malcolm in an English court. He proves to him that he is a trustworthy and reliable citizen.
- Malcolm and Macduff agreed to fight for their country Scotland. He is ready to die for his country (he is being patriotic)

Suspicious

- Even though Macbeth puts the blame on porters for Failing their duties and killing Duncan Macduff questions Macbeth's
- Motive of killing King porters immediately when it is known that King Duncan is murdered without giving them a chance to say their part or defend themselves before being executed; Macbeth did not follow natural justice. He doesn't give respect to Macbeth As insecure and flees Scotland for England

Appreciative

- Macduff is appreciates, He appreciated Macbeth for hosting King Duncan in his Castle.
- He said it was not easy task to host King Duncan in his Castle.

Irresponsible/selfish/inconsiderate/coward /traitorous

- Lady Macduff is surprised to hear that her husband has fled to England.She doesn't believe that her husband can leave his title (Thane of Fife) his wife and children and flees to England without informing her
- It is like leaving young ones in the nest against the owl.He seems to be selfish and careless he puts his own affairs far ahead of others even his own beloved wife and children. Lady Macbeth feels her husband is coward and traitor

Brave/ courageous

- When he encounters Macbeth and start fighting, Macbeth wonders how Macduff dagger has scratched him and he is bleeding.
- He continues to fight bravery till the end. He finally kills Macbeth and cuts his head Macbeth is a well experience and old time soldier yet young Macduff manages to defeat and kill him.

Revengeful

- Macduff revenges his wife and children's death. He is determined to fight Macbeth till his last drop. He says his family was most precious and lovely to him , hence the need to revenge their death. If he doesn't fight his wife's and children's ghost will haunt him.

Humble

- When Macduff meets Malcolm in England, Malcolm becomes suspicious of him. They talk and Macduff assures Malcolm that Malcolm is befitting to be King of Scotland and promises to work with him in the fight to avenge the brutal murder of his family and to free Scotland of a tyrannical rule of Macbeth. Macduff does not say much against Macbeth's provocation, he says that his voice is in his sword (he believes in action more than words).

6. LADY MACDUFF

Caring

- Lady Macduff is posed as a caring mother she looks after her family well.

High spirited/angry/Disappointed/ emotional

- When she hears that her husband has fled to England, she becomes angry; she questions Macduff's motive and wisdom to leave his family (wife and children) flee to England without informing them. She is high spirited and describes the situation they are in like a bird leaving its young ones to an owl.

Adamant/stubborn

- She doesn't take advice from the messenger to escape from Macbeth's planned murder.
- She says she has not done anything wrong so she cannot run away. As she is busy talking, she sees a murderer coming. He kills the son and later Lady Macduff.

7. PORTERS

Neglectful/irresponsible/ insensitive/ unforesighted

- Porters' allow to be deceived by the queen Macbeth they are given wine. They drink up to three o'clock in the morning.
- Porters are influenced by beer which provokes nose-painting, sleep and urine. It also provokes desire for sex but takes away performance thus shows neglect to duty.
- The porters are to blame for the brutal murder of King Duncan. They valued their personal pleasure more than the life of the King.
- As guards who were to be alert, took deep sleep which gave Macbeth a chance to easily put them aside, enter Duncan's room and assassinated the King without their consent they are careless and deserve to die.

8. ROSS

Dutiful/ trustworthy / honest/ informative

- In the play “Macbeth” Ross acts as a messenger.
- He informs King Duncan about the progress of the war, the victory of Macbeth and Banquo over the Norwegian troop and the former thane of Cawdor.
- He is the one who first informs Macbeth about the king`s decision to honour him as the Thane of Cawdor
- He also informs Macduff about the death of his wife and children by Macbeth
- He is very honest in his dealing with state and national issues

Lennox Dutiful/ democratic/ flexible/concerned

- He is also a messenger, he follows up events in Scotland.
- Lennox is a concerned citizen. He accompanies an old man and discuss the recent disorder in Scotland
- He is aware of the flight of Malcom, Donalbain and Macduff to England and Ireland.
- He switches from King Duncan to Macbeth after the demise of King Duncan.
- He is a citizen who is democratic and supports the leader of the day.

9. OLD MAN

Lamenting/ concerned/ sensible analytical

- He stands for the transition period from the old to new era after experiencing strange events; he remarked that those things never happened in that way in the past seventy years.
- This entails the dynamic leadership of King Duncan and the other kings who lived him.
- They lived in harmony with nature and each other, hence the continued harmony in Scotland.
- Elizabethan era believed that any action which is out of harmony with nature results into unnatural things taking place.
- It is reported that a falcon was killed a mouse-hunting owl. Duncane`s horse became aggressive and started eating each other. There is lawlessness and disorder in Scotland

10. YOUNG SIWARD

Courageous/ sacrificial

- He is courageous, he confronted Macbeth, a seasoned soldier and tried to fight him.

- Although he was killed, he is applauded for his efforts and courage, his death is a sacrifice to the Scottish people.

11. SIWARD

Fearful

- He is an experienced soldier from England.
- He is in Scotland to assist in fighting and defeating Macbeth.
- Siward could be described as a fearful soldier, he allowed his inexperienced son to go forth and meet Macbeth in the battle field. He does not lead by example.
- When young Siward is killed, he laments so bitterly, a thing which could have been avoided if he had gone forth to meet Macbeth alone.

12. KING OF ENGLAND

Generous and soft hearted

- He accommodated Malcolm, Macduff and others who fled from Scotland to England.
- He took their views on board and generously supplied ten thousand soldiers to assist Malcolm in fighting against Macbeth.

13. THE WITCHES

Magical / mystical/ mysterious/ deceitful /destructive

- They are mysterious creatures that affect events in the entire play. Their behavior is very strange; they can kill swine, control sailors on the sea.
- Dictated the weather and change into any animal they want like a tiger and a rat. They follow events at the battle field dance in circle.
- Their gathering is to meet Macbeth as he comes from the battle field. When Banquo and Macbeth encounters them, Banquo fails to make out of them, he thinks they are women, but changes his mind as he sees beards on their chins
- They plan to destroy Macbeth by giving him half truth prophecies.

THEMES

APPRECIATION

- ❖ Duncan and his followers (entourage) appreciate the peaceful harmony of Macbeth's castle, where Lady Macbeth welcomes the guest with an overflow polite gesture.
- ❖ King Duncan did not hide his emotion of joy, he expresses it before Macbeth and Banquo when they arrive from the battle field.
- ❖ When the two soldiers arrive, he praises them in the presence of many who are present at this function, he tells Macbeth that he has started planting him and will see him prosper and for Banquo, his worth will be recognized, whatever he did in the battle field will be put to heart (will be remembered)

SUPERSTITUTION

- ❖ Macbeth meets the witches who prophesy to him that he will be a thane of Cawdor and become a king in future
- ❖ The belief in supernatural had a strong bearing on many lives in Shakespeare's age.
- ❖ Macbeth kills king Duncan and Banquo, to fulfil what he heard from the witches hall, only Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo bleeding and sitting on Macbeth's seat. He starts behaving strangely.
- ❖ People during his era believed much in witchcraft which had a bearing in their lives. If Macbeth was told the whole truth about the future, he would have prepared well in all aspects, but he believed in what the witches told him yet he saw them happening to the contrary.

AMBITION/ BLIND AMBITION

- ❖ Macbeth ambition runs wild. He kills the current king, Duncan and then he kills the king's guards in an attempt to pin the murder on them.
- ❖ When Macbeth hears that Malcolm will be the next king after King Duncan, he is not happy; he sees the elevation of Malcolm, as the prince of Cumberland and a king to be as a stumbling block towards his kingship. This is because the witches prophesied to him that he is a thane of Cawdor and a king to be in future, so far one prophecy has been fulfilled, Macbeth is a Thane of Cawdor replacing the one who betrayed Scotland to the king of Norway.

- ❖ Macbeth`s ambition is to become the king of Scotland.
- ❖ Lady Macbeth wants her husband to act like a man by being courageous enough to kill Duncan so that when Macbeth becomes king she become a queen.
- ❖ Banquo, having seen that the witches prophecies about Macbeth are fulfilled he is hopeful and anxious about attaining his

SUSPICION

- ❖ Banquo fears the unusual happenings. He is afraid that something sinister may happen to the king. He suspects that Macbeth is hovering evil ideas.
- ❖ As some people believed that the guards were responsible for the murder of the king others were not convinced. Banquo, Macduff, Malcom and Donalbain suspected foul play by Macbeth.
- ❖ Banquo thinks Macbeth pushed the prophecy of the weird sister to become king.

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

- ❖ Macbeth finally confront Macduff and admits that he has been avoiding the Thane of fife.
- ❖ Foolishly, he urges him to get back since Macbeth has already shed enough of blood, as if Macduff really needed to be reminded of his enormous loss.
- ❖ Almost ridiculously, Macbeth tells the man that he leads a `charmed life which must not yield to one of woman born`.
- ❖ Macduff tells him that he was from his mother`s womb/ untimely ripped meaning he was also born through caesarean. Suddenly, Macbeth realizes that he has failed to recognize the witches double meaning and blames them for his failure.
- ❖ Macbeth then refuses to fight, Macduff asks him to surrender and face execution.
- ❖ Macbeth refuses and they fight, Macbeth falling on Macduff`s sword.
- ❖ Siward is informed of his son`s death but refuses to mourn him since he die a hero`s death
- ❖ Macduff enters with Macbeth`s head and all proclaim Malcom king of Scotland.
- ❖ Malcolm makes the Thane earls, the first in Scotland, and promises to recall exiled friends and mete out justice to Macbeth`s supporters. The play ends with an invitation to attend Malcolm coronation at scone

FEAR

- ❖ Duncan`s sons, fearing for their own lives, flee Scotland. Macbeth is crowned king. Banquo raised suspicion that Macbeth killing Duncan.

INSECURITY

- ❖ Fleance`s escape plunges Macbeth back into insecurity.
- ❖ Macbeth`s ascendance to power left him insecure as he is aware of the witches prophecy that Banquo will be the father of kings, this makes him insecure and plans of killing Banquo and his children.

VIOLENCE

- ❖ Macbeth kills the king`s guards in an attempt to pin the murder on them. He then plots to murder a nobleman, Banquo and his son, Fleance, because three witches have predicted that Banquo`s off- springs will become king.
- ❖ Ross says violence has become the order of the day. There is nothing to make people smile. Sighs, groans and shrinks pollute our air of Scotland. Hood men`s life expire before they flower in their caps.

POWER STRUGGLE

- ❖ Macbeth feels his own sons should succeed him, not Banquo`s.
- ❖ Macbeth feels he must resolve this conflict and he hires murderers to kill Banquo and his son. He feels this will guarantee that his heirs will succeed him.
- ❖ Macbeth does not express remorse or concern over the planning of Banquo and Fleance`s murder, as he did with Duncan`s murder.
- ❖ By now he is so blinded with ambition and power and will stop at nothing to secure his powerful position.

COURAGE

- ❖ On the battle field, Macbeth strike those around him vigorously, insolent because no man born of woman can harm him. He slays Lord siward`s son and disappear in the fray.
- ❖ Lady Macbeth has succeeded in making the guards (porters) drunk. Lady Macbeth is certain of carrying out the plan because the guards are intoxicated with wine, they will not

notice Macbeth when he goes into king Duncan`s room to assassinate him; indeed, Lady Macbeth`s plan has given both (Macbeth and Lady Macbeth) courage

- ❖ When Macbeth hears that an army of ten thousand English men approaches the castle he calls his servant Seyton who confirms it. Macbeth wear his armour ready to fight.
- ❖ Lady Macbeth is courage`s in the sense that when her husband return trembling and terror-shaken from murdering King Duncan, she never lose her mind but remain calm.

BETRAYAL

- ❖ Macbeth betrays Duncan, his master by assassinating him to take up the throne prophesied by the three witches.
- ❖ The former Thane of Cawdor betrayed the king of Scotland, Duncan by revealing secrets to Norway.
- ❖ Lady Macduff feels her husband has no concern and love to his wife, children, his title and Mansion. She questions the motive behind leaving his family alone and fleeing to England without informing her.

FATE

- ❖ Fate the meeting between Macbeth and the three weird sister was the role of fate.
- ❖ This theme resurfaces immediately when King Duncan admits that it is hard to know the mind of a man. Surprisingly, he informs the people gathered that they are going to Macbeth`s castle where the king will spend the night there, king Duncan is driven by his fate.

SYMBOLS IN MACBETH

Light represent good

Darkness represent evil

Blood represent Macbeth's and his wife guilty about Duncan's murder

Water symbolize purification of the conscience

Sunset

- King associated with the sun.
- Symbolizes Death of the King or overthrow. “When shall we three meet again and that will be ere the set of the sun (act1:1, 1, 4)” foreshadows the Kings death.

Darkness

- Stars, hide your fires!! Let not light see my black and deep desire "(1, IV 50-51) demonstrates Macbeth's step toward evil. Most of the corrupt or unusual events in Macbeth occur under a cloak of darkness.
- The murder, Lady Macbeth's sleeping walking and the appearance of the witches all take place at night.
- Lady Macbeth's craved for darkness but now carries a candle to dispel it.
- The line “she has light by her continually, “’tis her command,” (v: 1:19) symbolize Lady Macbeth's fear of darkness or evil

Blood

- “Will all great Neptune Ocean wash this blood clean from my hand”
- The image of blood plays an important role in the event of Duncan's murder.
- It represents Macbeth's guilt and shame about the horrific crime.
- After killing the king, Macbeth comments on his blood stained hands by saying, “as they had seen me with these hangman's hands.” (11 (ii): 28). Macbeth feels uncomfortable to return to the crime scene to smear the blood on the guards, fearing the blood will somehow implicate him further.
- Macbeth feels uncomfortable with blood on his hands.
- He immediately tries to remove it after killing the guards.
- Macbeth's bloody hands symbolizes his guilty for the murder of Duncan, his assertion that if he were to wash his hand in the sea the sea would turn the colour of his hand demonstrates his overwhelming guilt, a guilt Macbeth does not feel for the murders of Banquo and Macduff's Family. Lady Macbeth's sleepwalks in acts 5 and imagines she has bloody hands that she is unable to get clean.
- Her subconscious hand scrubbing is an outward manifestation of her inner guilt.

Water

- Purification by water is prominent in the play. It symbolizes the removal of guilt. Following the murder of Duncan, Lady Macbeth reassures her husband by telling him, “a little water clears us of the deed”, 1 (ii0. 67). Later in the play Lady Macbeth repeatedly rubs her hands together, representing washing hands, she hopes to clear her conscience by removing the ‘spot’ from her hands, she says, “out damned spot! Out, I say! (V.i-31).

Sleep

- Sleep symbolizes peace and innocence in the play.
- In act 2, scene 2, after murdering king Duncan in his sleep Macbeth hears a voice say ‘ Macbeth does murder sleep,’ Macbeth has destroyed Duncan`s sleep, but he also murdered his own ability to rest peacefully. The weight of his actions have caused an irreparable internal struggle that seals the fates of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. After Macbeth murders king Duncan and has Banquo killed, he is disturbed by nightmares, and his wife sleepwalks.
- The loss of peace can be seen in Lady Macbeth`s statement to her husband after witnessing his disturbed behaviour. In act 3, scene 4, she says, “you lack the season of all nature sleep”, which means that his lack of sleep is driving him mad. Sleep keeps everybody balanced, but a lack of sleep disturbs one`s inner peace.

The floating dagger

- Macbeth sees a floating dagger before murdering Duncan symbolizes the throne itself: Macbeth sees it, yet cannot grasp it: when the dagger is grasped so is the throne.
- The grasping of both does not bring the desired happiness.

Images of dead children appear frequently.

- The finger of a birth strangled baby makes its way into the witches’ cauldron.
- The apparition of a bloody baby comes out of the cauldron and prophesies to Macbeth. The fact that Macbeth is willing to murder children to retain his power indicates just how irredeemable he has become.
- The appearance of the dead children symbolizes the end of royal lineage and what happens when royal lines are extinguished.

Eight kings

- Macbeth in a vision from the witches cauldron followed by a mirror reflecting more kings.
- One of the kings is holding two orbs and is a symbolic representation of King James who held two orbs on his coronation day and who was also a descendant of the real life Banquo.

The equivocator at the gate

- Equivocation in general is an allusion to Jesuit Henry Garnet who counseled Catholics to give equivocations in all their answers to protestant inquisitors.
- Equivocation in Macbeth symbolizes self-deception Macbeth equivocates while justifying the murder of Duncan and the witches equivocates during their prophecies to Macbeth.

Unnatural meteorological phenomena

- Raging storms on the night of Duncan murder and the thunder and lightning that accompanies the appearance of the three witches.
- The weather patterns symbolizes political and social upheavals as well as internal, moral upheavals of the play's protagonist. Hover through the fog and filthy air'.

Witch symbolism in Macbeth

The witches symbolize the following.

- (i) Symbolizes darkness and depravity of the human soul, the part of the soul that bends itself toward evil and darkness.
- (ii) The witches influence the external forces that tempt humans.
- (iii) More specifically the witches symbolizes the darkness that resides in Macbeth's heart.
- (iv) The witches are an outward manifestation of Macbeth's wickedness and horrible acts he commits

Presence of Birds

- Symbolizes the theme of superstition / omens
- Banquo Act 1 scene 6: line four marlet- summer migrant birds that often nests in churches.
- When Banquo and king Duncan note that Macbeth's castle enjoys the good omen of nesting marlets, audience already realizes the danger Duncan will be facing if he spends the night at invernness (i. v) . Therefore the fair omen is to become foul.