

# ***MACBETH***

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## PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO PLAY

### What is a play?

- A play is story that is performed by actors and actresses in front of an audience mainly through words and actions of the characters.
- It can also be defined as a story that is written for actors to perform or act in a theatre.
- A written play is called a **script**
- A person who writes plays is known as **playwright**.

### Types of Plays

- ✓ **Comedy:** It is a play that starts with humor and ends with humour.
- ✓ **Tragedy:** It is a play that ends on a sad note due to the death of at least one of the main characters.
- ✓ **Tragi-comedy:** it is the combination of both humour and sadness. It may start with humor and ends with death of at least one actor

### The Language of a Play

- ✓ **Plot:** this is the trend or series of related events taking place in the play. In other ways it is the summary of the whole play. It is in the plot where a conflict is formulated, concluded and resolved.
- ✓ **Character:** a character is a person taking part in a in a story or play. These characters can also be animals or non-living things. Characters can be categorized as major versus minor, protagonist vs antagonist.
- ✓ **Setting:** this is the location of a play in time and place.
- ✓ **Themes:** this is the main message or lesson (idea) contained in the whole piece of writing.
- ✓ **Act:** is the major division of a play similar to a chapter in a book. There are 5 acts in Macbeth
- ✓ **Scene:** is a minor segment within an act. A scene usually indicates a specific location or time and changes if another location or time is supposed to be presented.
- ✓ **Soliloquy:** a character talking to himself/herself
- ✓ **Dramatic irony**
- ✓ **Aside:** a part of an actor's lines supposedly not heard by others on the stage and intended only for the audience
- ✓ **Dramatic Irony:** when we know more than the characters.

## PART 2: THE PLAY OF MACBETH - INTRODUCTION

Playwright: William Shakespeare

### Background

The story is based on a true story because Macbeth, as a person, actually lived. The play was written circa 1606 in England for King James who was obsessed with witches. Macbeth is William Shakespeare's shortest and bloodiest play. It takes place in Scotland

### The Actors (Characters in The Play)

- ✓ **Duncan:** King of Scotland, a good and honorable man who is murdered by Macbeth.
- ✓ **Macbeth:** a Scottish Thane (nobleman) of Glamis and a general in Duncan's army.
- ✓ **Lady Macbeth:** wife to Macbeth.
- ✓ **Banquo:** a thane and a general in Duncan's army. A friend of Macbeth's, he is later murdered by him (Macbeth).
- ✓ **Fleance:** Banquo's son. He escapes when his father is murdered.
- ✓ **Malcolm:** Duncan's eldest son and heir.
- ✓ **Donalbain:** Duncan's other son.
- ✓ **Macduff:** a thane, loyal to Duncan.
- ✓ **Lady Macduff:** Macduff's wife. To punish Macduff, Macbeth has her and her family murdered.
- ✓ **Ross:** Macduff's cousin.
- ✓ **Lennox:** a thane, loyal to Duncan
- ✓ **Seyton:** Macbeth's aide.
- ✓ **Siward:** an English earl. He helps Malcolm in the fight against Macbeth.
- ✓ **Young Siward:** Siward's son. He bravely faces Macbeth in a duel (fight) and is killed.
- ✓ **The Three Witches:** supernatural beings who tell Macbeth and Banquo about certain events that will occur in the future.
- ✓ **Hecate:** the chief witch. She is the queen of the witches; the goddess.
- ✓ **Ghost:** the ghost of slain Banquo

### SPECIFIC SETTINGS DEFINED

- Scotland: King Duncan rules Scotland
- England: Some characters run to England fearing the wrath of Macbeth
- Inverness: Macbeth's castle (residence)
- Forress: Duncan's castle
- Fife: Macduff's castle
- Birnamwood: the forest near Dunsinane hill

- Dunsinane: where Macbeth's castle stands.

## THE STORY SO FAR...

There is a war between England and their enemy, Irish invaders, who are led by the rebel Macdonwald. And on their way back home from the war, two generals Macbeth and Banquo meet three witches who foretell that Macbeth will be the King of Scotland while Banquo will be the father of many Kings. It does not take long before Macbeth is told by Ross that he has been crowned the Thane of Cawdor.

After Macbeth has been appointed the thane of Cawdor he believes that the prophecy from the witches has been fulfilled so he becomes more ambitious of becoming the king. His wife's persuasion makes things much complicated for Macbeth is encouraged to move along with his evil plan of murdering Duncan the King of Scotland while the King is a guest at Macbeth's own castle – the Inverness. Macbeth becomes the King of Scotland since the king's sons have fled to England and Ireland and they are suspected to have a hand in the murder of their father.

Even though Macbeth has earned the kingship he still feels insecure and unsure of his position; therefore, he plots to murder his best friend Banquo, for he is aware of the prophecy that Banquo will father kings. Macbeth is successful on killing Banquo but still this does not give him peace and satisfaction for Banquo's ghost starts haunting him. This prompts him to embark on a journey to meet the witches again. The witches prophesize to him that he should be aware of the noble man Macduff. However, they tell him that none of born of a woman can harm him and that no one will defeat him till Birnam forest comes to Dunsinane.

Following the witches prophecy, Macbeth plans to kill Macduff. However Macduff learns of the plot and flees to England where he starts gathering an Army that will help him fight Macbeth. In his absence, Macduff's family is murdered by the order of Macbeth.

Due to the evil things that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have done, Lady Macbeth is haunted by the feeling of guilty over the murders that she encouraged her husband to commit. She starts seeing blood in her hands all the time. This makes her start sleep-walking and hallucinating and confessing all the murders she has committed with her husband. These emotional haunts and torments lead to her death.

Macduff and his Army from England attacks Macbeth's castle. Macbeth realises that the three witches have deceived him for indeed Birnam forest seems to be moving towards Dunsinane. But this does make him lose courage for he believes that no person born of a woman shall harm him not knowing that Macduff is not of woman born. Macduff kills Macbeth and Malcolm the son of late King Duncan becomes the next king of Scotland.

## **PART 3: SCENE BY SCENE SUMMARIES**

### **ACT ONE**

#### **Act 1 Scene 1**

*The witches first meeting*

Three witches or weird sisters meet. Their coming is accompanied by thunder and lightning. They make plans to meet after the battle in which Macbeth is involved is over. The battle is between Norway and Scotland. They will meet at sunset, in the rain and thunder on a heath with Macbeth.

#### **Act 1 Scene 2**

*The war report by a wounded soldier*

A wounded soldier (sergeant) tries to explain the progression of the war to King Duncan. The sergeant reports that “doubtful it stood”- the battle could have gone either way. Macdonwald, a Norwegian soldier, was merciless. However, brave Macbeth cut him in half and beheaded him. Duncan praises Macbeth’s effort in the war. The Sergeant reports of how the battle went back and forth, but the Sergeant can’t finish his report because of his wounds.

Lennox and Ross finish the report for him. They tell of the Thane of Cawdor and how he assisted the Norwegians fight against Scotland, but in the end Scotland won the war. Duncan orders the execution of the Thane of Cawdor. Duncan gives his title, money and land to Macbeth as a reward (but Macbeth doesn’t know it yet because he is still in the battle field). Macbeth is already the Thane of Glamis.

(Note that the Thane of Cawdor is supposed to fight alongside Macbeth because he belongs to Scotland. However, he betrays his friends by fighting alongside the Norwegians. He is a rebel and this is treasonous. That is why King Duncan is angry with him and orders his execution)

#### **Act 1 Scene 3**

*The witches second meeting*

The three witches are on a heath. It is thundering and there is lightning. The witches are casting a spell on a sailor because his wife did not share her chestnuts with one of the witches. They curse him not to sleep for 81 weeks. They also curse him to sail in a ship tossed by storms and that they will not allow the ship to sink. They will not let him die, because torture is more evil. They are pretty bitter, cruel and angry.

Macbeth and Banquo approach in a thunderstorm, after the battle. The two army generals meet the witches on the heath. Banquo insults the witches. Not a good idea for him because the witches have just cursed someone's husband after his wife did not share her chestnuts. He describes them as wild, bearded, alien-looking (looking strange), wrinkly (have a face with wrinkles/furrows), creepy (frightening), thin-lipped and corpse-like (looking like a dead body).

The witches make three prophecies.

#### **For Macbeth:**

1. He will become the Thane of Cawdor (*we* know that this will come true, because King Duncan has already ordered the execution of the current Thane of Cawdor)
2. He will be king

#### **For Banquo**

1. His sons will be kings (they speak in paradoxes: Banquo will be lesser than Macbeth yet greater...not so happy yet happier...) The witches give this prophecy after Banquo has asked the for his prophecy too.

The witches disappear and Ross and Angus enter. They tell Macbeth and Banquo the news of the execution of the Thane of Cawdor, and give Macbeth his title. Macbeth is interested in the possibility of becoming king. Banquo warns him that the witches may have bad intentions.

Macbeth thinks about killing his way to the crown, but he does not want to. The thought of murdering scares him. It is different from killing in war. He decides to let fate take over: he will wait and see what happens. He decides not to kill anyone.

#### **Act 1 Scene 4**

*At Forres, King Duncan's castle...*

The King wants to know if the Thane of Cawdor has been executed. Malcolm reports that the Thane of Cawdor confessed to being a traitor, then died. Duncan says: "He was a gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust." This means Duncan trusted the Thane of Cawdor and is unhappy that things have happened that way. Duncan trusts Macbeth as well.

Macbeth says he loves the king and that he lives to serve him. Duncan names Malcolm as heir/successor to the throne – the Crown Prince. This makes the lineage to the throne official. Macbeth is not happy with this. He knows this is an obstacle towards his ambition of becoming king. In an *aside* (talking to himself) Macbeth says that he has two choices:

1. Give up and forget about being king or
2. Kill to be king.

Macbeth has murder thoughts on his mind.

Now Duncan, Macbeth, Malcolm, Donalbain and all the thanes plan to go to Macbeth's castle at Inverness to celebrate their recent victory.

### **Act 1 Scene 5**

*At Inverness, Macbeth's castle...*

Lady Macbeth is reading a letter Macbeth has written her about the witches prediction that he will be king and the prediction that he would gain the title of "Thane of Cawdor" coming true. Lady Macbeth says that Macbeth will be king, but that she thinks he is too nice to kill to get the title. Macbeth is ambitious, but she does not think he has the evil qualities to go with it. She wants Macbeth to come home so she can tell him what to do.

Lady Macbeth is in charge. When Duncan comes to the castle tonight she is going to make sure he dies. She calls on the help of "spirits" to make her evil, strong and powerful (this reminds us of the witches). She wants the strength of a man. She wants to be able to kill without remorse/regret. When Macbeth returns, she tells him of her plans and that she will take care of everything. Macbeth does not want to hear of it and does not want to do it. Lady Macbeth ignores him and tells him to leave everything to her.

Duncan and the thanes reach the castle and meet with Lady Macbeth. Duncan is respectful and nice to her. Lady Macbeth is a good faker. She puts on a false face and is polite and nice to Duncan, but we know she is planning his murder as they speak.

### **Scene 6**

*At Inverness, Macbeth's castle...*

Duncan arrives with his entourage and Lady Macbeth welcomes him upon his arrival. Duncan is eager to meet With Macbeth as he and Lady Macbeth exchange greetings. Duncan is respectful and nice to her. Lady Macbeth is a good faker. She puts on a false face and is polite and nice to Duncan, but we know she is planning his murder as they speak

### **Act 1 Scene 7**

*Still at Inverness, Macbeth's Castle*

Macbeth is torn between his loyalty to his king and family and his ambition. He wants to be king, and Lady Macbeth wants to be queen, but he is stressed out at the thought of murdering the king

for his own ambition. He is struggling to determine what to do. He is worried about what might happen if he murders Duncan. He worries about his own death and fate. He knows murdering Duncan is wrong.

### **Macbeth's thought process:**

<b>If I kill Duncan...</b>	<b>Why I must not kill Duncan...</b>
I will be king	Duncan is my relative (his cousin)
	I am Duncan's subject and I should be loyal to him
	I am Duncan's host tonight and I should protect him, not murder him
	Duncan is a good king
	The people of Scotland will be sad

Lady Macbeth comes in. Macbeth says he will not kill the king. Lady Macbeth taunts/insults him. She makes fun of him. She says he is afraid and calls him a coward. She emasculates him (makes him less of a man). She insults his masculinity. She manipulates him. She says if he is king she will be impressed with him more. She reminds him that he promised to do this; she says if she promised to kill her child for him, she would kill. She is psychotic.

Macbeth is convinced and agrees to everything.

### **Lady Macbeth's plan:**

*Step 1:* Get the guards drunk

*Step 2:* Use guard's daggers/long knives to kill Duncan (frame the guards)

*Step 3:* Act sad when the body is discovered

What about Malcolm and Donalbain? They might think Malcolm did it because he just became the crown prince.

## **ACT 2**

### **Act 2 Scene 1**

Banquo and Macbeth talk about the witches predictions. Macbeth says he has not thought about them. He is lying. Macbeth running to Banquo right before he is planning to kill Duncan is a reminder that predictions were made for Banquo as well. Banquo is going to be suspicious that Macbeth killed Duncan because he knows about Macbeth's prophecy to become king.

Macbeth is thinking dark thoughts. He is upset, confused and hallucinating. There is a lot of dark imagery: murder, blade, fatal vision, gouts of blood, dagger of the mind, nature seems dead, wicked



dreams. Macbeth is worried about the consequences of his actions. He sees a dagger in front of him that is leading the way to Duncan. He is hallucinating. He is going to kill the king but he does not want to. He is still very much conflicted. He hears a bell. This is his signal that the guards have passed out (deep sleep because they are drunk) and everything is clear for him to go ahead with the murder. Duncan is killed. (*The murder happens offstage...*)

Remember the murder plan:

- Get the guards drunk
- Take their daggers
- Kill Duncan with them
- Smear the guards with blood
- Leave the daggers

## **Act 2 Scene 2**

Lady Macbeth is alone while Macbeth is killing Duncan. If Duncan had not looked like her father she says she would have killed him herself. Lady Macbeth is clearly the one in charge. Macbeth enters and is worried. His hands are covered in blood. He is full of regret for the murder. He is convinced the guards (or Malcolm and Donalbain) woke up and were talking while he was murdering. His guilt is weighing on him. Macbeth forgot to leave the daggers on the guards. Lady Macbeth chastises/rebukes him and takes the blood-stained daggers back and smears the blood on the guards to incriminate them. She calls the sleeping and the dead “pictures”.

Macbeth is left alone. Knocking is heard at the castle door. Macbeth says he wishes the knocking could wake Duncan. He says a whole ocean cannot wash the blood from his hands. His emotional state is not good. Lady Macbeth talks about how easy it was to kill Duncan and says “a little water clears us of this deed”. They wash up and put on their nightgowns. Macbeth has taken the ‘female’ role, and Lady Macbeth the ‘male’ role.

## **Act 2 Scene 3**

A porter stumbles through the hallway to answer the knocking, joking about the noise and mocking whoever is on the other side of the door. He compares himself to a porter at the gates of hell and asks, “Who’s there, i’ th’ name of Beelzebub?” Macduff and Lennox enter, and Macduff complains about the porter’s slow response to his knock. The porter says that he was up late partying and speaks humorously about the effects of alcohol, which he says provokes red noses, sleepiness, and urination. He adds that drink also “provokes and unprovokes” lechery (make one have a feeling for sex but at the same time takes away the ability to have sex). Macbeth enters, and Macduff asks him if the king is awake, saying that Duncan asked to see him early that morning. In short, clipped sentences, Macbeth says that Duncan is still asleep. He offers to take Macduff to the king. As

Macduff enters the king's chamber, Lennox describes the storms that raged the previous night, asserting that he cannot remember anything like it in all his years.

With a cry of "O horror, horror, horror!" Macduff comes running from the room, shouting that the king has been murdered. Macbeth and Lennox rush in to look, while Lady Macbeth appears and expresses her horror that such a deed could be done under her roof. General chaos ensues as the other nobles and their servants come streaming in. As Macbeth and Lennox emerge from the bedroom, Malcolm and Donalbain arrive on the scene. They are told that their father has been killed, most likely by his chamberlains, who were found with bloody daggers.

Macbeth declares that in his rage he has killed the chamberlains. Macduff seems suspicious of these new deaths, which Macbeth explains by saying that his fury/anger at Duncan's death was so powerful that he could not restrain himself. Lady Macbeth suddenly faints, and both Macduff and Banquo call for someone to attend to her. Malcolm and Donalbain whisper to each other that they are not safe, since whoever killed their father will probably try to kill them next. Lady Macbeth is taken away, while Banquo and Macbeth rally the lords to meet and discuss the murder. Duncan's sons resolve to flee the court. Malcolm declares that he will go south to England, and Donalbain will hasten to Ireland.

Let us summarise how the characters react to the news that Duncan is dead:

1. Macduff: is shockingly surprised; wakes up the house; suspects Macbeth
2. Lady Macbeth: shocked; faints (we know she is faking everything)
3. Banquo: does not believe it; suspects Macbeth; wants to find out what really happened
4. Macbeth: kills the bodyguards; talks too much
5. Malcolm and Donalbain : they are being suspected; they are worried; they think they are next to be killed; they feel running away could be safe for them; they flee to England and Ireland respectively.

## **Act 2 Scene 4**

Ross, a thane, walks outside the castle with an old man. They discuss the strange and ominous/strange happenings of the past few days: it is daytime, but dark outside; last Tuesday, an owl killed a falcon; and Duncan's beautiful, well-trained horses behaved wildly and ate one another.

Macduff emerges from the castle and tells Ross that Macbeth has been made king by the other lords, and that he now rides to Scone to be crowned. Macduff adds that the chamberlains seem the most likely murderers, and that they may have been paid off by someone to kill Duncan. Suspicion has now fallen on the two princes, Malcolm and Donalbain, because they have fled the scene. Macduff returns to his home at Fife, and Ross departs for Scone to see the new king's (Macbeth's) coronation.

## **ACT 3**

## Act 3 Scene 1

Macbeth is now king. Lady Macbeth is queen. Banquo is alone. He speaks in a soliloquy. Banquo is suspicious that Macbeth killed Duncan. He remembers his own prediction that he will be the father of kings. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are planning a banquet in Banquo's honor. Banquo tells Macbeth that he and his son Fleance are going to go riding before the banquet that night. Banquo and Macbeth talk about Malcolm and Donalbain who are now in England and Ireland. Macbeth talks about how Malcolm and Donalbain will not confess to the murder of their father, King Duncan.

Macbeth speaks in a soliloquy. He wants to be sure he is going to stay king. He knows Banquo is smart and will figure out that he killed Duncan. Macbeth is afraid of Banquo because he knows about the witches' predictions and because of his own prediction (Banquo's sons will be kings). Macbeth is king but it isn't good enough. He wants to be safely and permanently king. Macbeth knows there is no security in his position with Banquo and Fleance alive. Macbeth says that if Banquo's sons get to be kings then he has killed Duncan for them. Macbeth decides to kill Banquo and Fleance. He is not the same old Macbeth. He is more decisive and sounds more like Lady Macbeth.

Macbeth meets with two murderers. The murderers are homeless, hungry and desperate. Macbeth blames their problems on Banquo. Macbeth is pretty calm. He seems to have lost some part of his moral compass. He views Banquo and Fleance's deaths as just a job that needs to be done. This is completely different from his state of mind before he killed Duncan. Macbeth cannot kill them himself because he is king now. He is afraid of damaging his reputation and losing friends if he directly orders them to be killed or if he is caught killing them himself. He sounds like Lady Macbeth when he convinces the murderers to kill. He manipulates them and compares them to dogs. He tells the murderers to kill Banquo and Fleance tonight while they are out riding away from the castle.

Lady Macbeth and Macbeth are not as close as they used to be. They do not interact as passionately as they used to. Macbeth is talking more, but is not giving Lady Macbeth any important information. Lady Macbeth is in the dark about Macbeth's plan to kill Banquo and Fleance. During the day Macbeth is afraid someone is going to kill him and at night he has nightmares. Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth to be nice to Banquo at the banquet later tonight. He tells her to put on a false face and hide her true feelings (echoes what Lady Macbeth tells Macbeth to do in Act 1 before he kills Duncan).

Lady Macbeth doesn't want Macbeth to kill Banquo; she says they will die soon enough. Macbeth ignores her. He asks for the help of night; he sounds like Lady Macbeth when she asked for help to convince Macbeth to murder King Duncan. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth seem to have switched roles. Macbeth has been corrupted by two things: the power of the crown and guilt.

Let us summarise the new behaviour of these two:

- Macbeth and Lady Macbeth appear to have switched personalities
- Macbeth talks more, Lady Macbeth talks less
- Macbeth is now doing the planning of the murders
- Lady Macbeth isn't in control

### Act 3 Scene 3

The three murderers attack Banquo and Fleance while they are out riding in the woods. Banquo is killed, but he tells Fleance to run, and indeed, Fleance escapes. Banquo tells Fleance to get revenge. Macbeth will be angry that Fleance has not been killed.

### Act 3 Scene 4

The banquet is in full swing. One of the murderers enters to speak with Macbeth. He reports that he killed Banquo but Fleance escaped. Macbeth is worried that Fleance will get revenge for his father's death. When Macbeth returns to his chair he begins acting strangely- he sees the ghost of Banquo sitting on his chair (no one else can see the ghost except Macbeth himself). Lady Macbeth tries to do damage control and says Macbeth has had fits since he has been young. She is trying to make the guests not get suspicious of Macbeth's strange behaviour.

Macbeth gives himself away by repeating the word "murder" and describing Banquo's wounds. When they find his body it will be very suspicious. Macbeth is going to go to sleep and then go back to the witches to learn more predictions.

## ACT 4

### Act 4 Scene 1

The witches cast a spell. They put lots of gross things into their cauldron: parts of people and animals. They say "something wicked this way comes" and Macbeth enters. He wants more information from the witches and he will get it directly from their masters in the form of apparitions (ghosts-like visions).

Apparition	Warning	Macbeth's Interpretation/Plan
1. Armed head (severed head with a helmet on it)	Beware of Macduff	He will kill him.
2. Bloody baby (a newly-born baby)	No one born of woman can kill Macbeth	Macbeth doesn't think he has to worry about anything, but he will still kill Macduff just to be sure.

3. Crowned child carrying a tree (a child with a crown on his head and is carrying a tree)	Macbeth will not be defeated until Birnamwood comes to Dunsinane hill	Macbeth can't be killed until a whole forest moves. Macbeth thinks he is safe and that the warning is impossible.
4. Eight kings holding mirrors followed by a smiling Banquo	Banquo will still be the father of 8 kings	Problematic for Macbeth. He is not happy about this.

Lennox enters and says Macduff has fled to England where Malcolm was spreading word that Macbeth was the murderer of King Duncan. Macbeth is not happy with this and decides to murder Macduff's family- his wife, children and all of his relatives. Macbeth decides to no longer think, and plan before he acts; he will now make all of his decisions impulsively/unwisely and act on them immediately.

#### **Act 4, Scene 2**

At Macduff's castle, Lady Macduff approaches Ross, demanding to know why her husband has fled. She feels betrayed. Ross insists that she trust her husband's judgment and then regretfully departs. Once he is gone, Lady Macduff tells her son that his father is dead, but the little boy perceptively argues that he is not. Suddenly, a messenger hurries in, warning Lady Macduff that she is in danger and urging her to flee. Lady Macduff protests, arguing that she has done no wrong. A group of murderers then enters. When one of them denounces Macduff, Macduff's son calls the murderer a liar, and the murderer stabs him. Lady Macduff turns and runs, and the pack of killers chases after her.

#### **Act 4 Scene 3**

Outside King Edward's palace, Malcolm speaks with Macduff, telling him that he does not trust him since he has left his family in Scotland and may be secretly working for Macbeth. To determine whether Macduff is trustworthy, Malcolm talks about his own vices/bad conduct. He admits that he wonders whether he is fit to be king, since he claims to be lustful, greedy, and violent. At first, Macduff politely disagrees with his future king, but eventually Macduff cannot keep himself from crying out, "O Scotland, Scotland!" Macduff's loyalty to Scotland leads him to agree that Malcolm is not fit to govern Scotland and perhaps not even to live. In giving voice to his disparagement/criticism, Macduff has passed Malcolm's test of loyalty. Malcolm then retracts the lies he has put forth about his supposed shortcomings and embraces Macduff as an ally. A doctor appears briefly and mentions that a "crew of wretched souls" waits for King Edward so they may be cured. When the doctor leaves, Malcolm explains to Macduff that King Edward has a miraculous power to cure disease.

Ross enters. He has just arrived from Scotland, and tells Macduff that his wife and children are well. He urges Malcolm to return to his country, listing the woes that have befallen Scotland since Macbeth took the crown. Malcolm says that he will return with ten thousand soldiers lent to him by the English king. Then, breaking down, Ross confesses to Macduff that Macbeth has murdered his wife and children. Macduff is crushed with grief. Malcolm urges him to turn his grief to anger, and Macduff assures him that he will inflict revenge upon Macbeth.

## ACT 5

### Act 5 Scene 1

Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking and talking in her sleep. Her gentlewoman has observed her obsessively washing her hands for 15 minutes at a time. Lady Macbeth is talking about how much blood is on her hands and talking of the murders of Macduff's family, Duncan and Banquo. Lady Macbeth must also constantly have light by her. This is a big change from when she asks for the help of darkness. She is paranoid/fearful, tired and starting to lose her mind. The guilt is getting to her. She is a very different Lady Macbeth from earlier. The doctor and gentlewoman are worried she may hurt herself.

Scotland is unofficially at war. Everyone has turned against Macbeth. They are trying to overthrow him because of the murders he has committed.

Let us see who is where at this time:

SCOTLAND	ENGLAND
Macduff	Macbeth
Fleance	
Malcolm	
Donalbain	
Menteith	
Caithness	
Lennox	
Angus	
English Army (10,000 soldiers)	

### Act 5 Scene 2

The thanes gather to discuss their abandonment of Macbeth. They say he is a bad king. Pretty much everyone knows about his murderers.

### Act 5 Scene 3

Macbeth is still feeling confident because of the witches' predictions. His servant tells him that there are ten thousand soldiers gathering to fight against him. Macbeth is not afraid, but gets ready for battle. He says he has lived long enough. He knows that his way of life will not lead to old age, that it is a way of life that comes with an early death without honor. He is determined to fight until his flesh is hacked from his bones. The doctor tells Macbeth that Lady Macbeth is not well and her illness is mental, not physical. Macbeth's only reaction is to tell the doctor to "cure her".

#### **Act 5 Scene 4**

Malcolm and Macduff meet in front of Birnam Wood and make a plan for the English army to conceal their numbers by cutting branches from the trees and carrying them as they march to Macbeth's castle at Dunsinane. This will make the witches third prediction/warning come true. We know Macbeth will die.

#### **Act 5 Scene 5**

Lady Macbeth's Death...

Macbeth says: "I have almost forgot the taste of fears." Macbeth seems to not have feelings anymore; but it bothers him that he is not bothered by the horrible screams of the women. He admits to being a murderer and that nothing should surprise him anymore. His major characteristic is that he is a "bad guy" now but he is not evil; he still has a conscience. Seyton tells him that Lady Macbeth is dead (she committed suicide). Macbeth says "she should have died hereafter..." Macbeth does not react strongly to her death. He is very calm. He compares life to a "walking shadow", a "brief candle", a "poor player" (actor), and a "tale" (story). Candle is short; Shadow is dark and empty; an actor is not real; tale: fake. Macbeth feels that life is meaningless. Macbeth hears that Birnam Wood is coming to Dunsinane and he knows he will be defeated.

#### **Act 5 Scene 6**

Malcolm, Macduff and the English Army are about to launch their attack on Macbeth's castle. The first group will be Young Siward, the second will be Macduff and Malcolm. They do not know Macbeth is fighting alone.

#### **Act 5 Scene 7**

Macbeth fights Young Siward and kills him. Macbeth remarks "Thou wast born of woman". Macbeth still feels slightly invincible. Macduff enters the castle vowing revenge for his slain family.

#### **Act 5 Scene 8**

Macbeth contemplates suicide, but decides to kill more before he dies. Macbeth does not want to fight Macduff because he has killed too many of his family members already. Macbeth states that he cannot be killed by a man born of a woman, but Macduff reveals that he was born by a C-section- a loophole in the witches prediction/warning. Macbeth is beheaded and the last of the witches predictions comes true (beware of Macduff). Now that Macbeth is killed Malcolm is crowned king.

**ENDS/**

## PART 4: CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### MACBETH

#### 1. **Ambitious**

- ✓ He kills King Duncan in his quest to become king
- ✓ He is unhappy to hear that Malcom is the heir to the throne
- ✓ Kills so many people to secure his kingship to become a king.

#### 2. **Loyal**

- ✓ He is loyal to King Duncan which has resulted in his ascension to different positions.
- ✓ He is made Thane of Glamis and Thane of Cawdor because of his brave fighting.
- ✓ King Duncan trusts and honours him because he is a loyal servant. For example, Duncan goes to visit Macbeth castle.

#### 3. **Envious:** he plans to kill Duncan

#### 4. **Brave/bold/courageous**

- ✓ When Macbeth hears that Birnamwood is moving towards Dunsinane castle, he does not take it seriously
- ✓ He persuaded his soldiers to put their armour and encouraged them that it is good to die while fighting.
- ✓ He risks his life fighting with all his effort and defeats the Norwegian army.
- ✓ When Macbeth hears that an army of ten thousand Englishmen is approaching 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 the battle field and kills him.

#### 5. **Tender hearted**

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

#### 6. **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.

#### 7. **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.
- ✓ 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.
8. **Superstitious**
    - ✓ He believes what the weird sisters (witches) prophesied to him that he is Thane of Cawdor and that he will be the king.
    - ✓ Macbeth kills King Duncan and Banquo to fulfill what he heard from the witches.
  9. **Cruel**
    - ✓ He kills King Duncan and implicates Duncan's guards. He also kills them to portray a picture that he is innocent.
  10. **Unappreciative/ unthankful**
    - ✓ King Duncan has just honoured Macbeth for his courage and brave fight but goes ahead to kill the king.
    - ✓ Does not appreciate King Duncan's visit to his castle.
  11. **Murderous**
    - ✓ He murders King Duncan in his own castle after making him drunk.
  12. **Indecisive/ undecided**
    - ✓ He is hesitant to carry out his plan of killing Duncan and makes that clear to his wife.
  13. **Fearful**
    - ✓ After the killing Duncan, Macbeth regrets his action; he lives in fear and starts killing those he thinks are threats to him. E.g. Banquo.
  14. **Charged**
    - ✓ He is charged to kill anyone including his friends and king
  15. **Desperate/ despairing**
    - ✓ Macbeth is desperate to be king and goes about killing people to fulfil his ambition.
    - ✓ He desperately try to fight Macduff and gets killed in the process.
  16. **Secretive**
    - ✓ He does not reveal to his wife that he has planned to kill Banquo and his child Fleance
  17. **Barbaric and aggressive**
    - ✓ In the battle field, he kills his enemy and cut him from his navel to his mouth, and cut off the victims head placing it on the battlements
  18. **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.
  19. **Power- hungry**
    - ✓ He does not wait for his right time to become king but commits atrocities in his quest to become king.
  20. **Obsessed/ determined**
    - ✓ He is determined to do everything to clear obstacles towards his becoming king.
  21. **Greedy**

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

**22. Dishonest**

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

**23. 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 the blood of Duncan in his hands.
- ✓ 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)

**24. Flattering/ deceitful**

- ✓ Banquo is treated as a good friend of Macbeth's; 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.

**25. 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.

**26. Revengeful**

- ✓ Macbeth sends a murder to Macduff's castle; he murders 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)

## **LADY MACBETH**

**1. Ruthless/wicked/ evil/superstitious**

- ✓ She prays to spirits make her heart-hardened so that she finds it easy to kill Duncan.

**2. Ambitious**

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

**3. Weak**

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

**4. Pushing**

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

**5. Strong/ brave/ courageous**

- ✓ When her husband returns trembling and terror- shaken from murdering King Duncan, she remains calm.
- 6. **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.
- 7. **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 welcomes the king. The king remained on the nice reception accorded to them.
  - ✓ She is creative in the sense that she strategises to assassinate King Duncan. (Remember the plan?)
- 8. **Regretful**
  - ✓ She regrets the action they took in murdering king Duncan; she says that there is nothing gained but lost, when a wish is fulfilled but does not bring satisfaction.
- 9. **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, and her mind is disturbed.
- 10. **Manipulative/seductive**
  - ✓ She seduces Macbeth to carry the death of King Duncan.
- 11. **Pretentious**
  - ✓ After the death of King Duncan, she pretends not to know anything about the death of the King. She fakes to be innocent she falls down and faints yet she knows that it is herself and Macbeth who have killed the king.
- 12. **Excited**
  - ✓ She is excited with the news that Macbeth, her husband has been promised to be Thane of Cawdor and a King thereafter.
- 13. **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.
- 14. **Deceptive**
  - ✓ Lady Macbeth gives strong wine to the porters (king`s guards) in a form of love but she wants them to get drunk so that Macbeth carries out his mission of assassinating the king without being noticed by anyone.

- ✓ 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

#### 15. **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.

#### 16. **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.

#### 17. **Mentally/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.

### **BANQUO**

#### 1. **Ignorant/sympathetic**

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

#### 2. **Superstitious/curious**

- ✓ He believes in witches; he is eager to hear from the weird sister what they have in store for him.

#### 3. **Ambitions**

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

#### 4. **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.

#### 5. **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. He thinks Macbeth pushed the prophecy of the weird sister to become King.

#### 6. **Hopeful**

- ✓ As Macbeth has all the prophecies fulfilled, Banquo hopes to see what witches said about him being accomplished too.

#### 7. **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.
8. **Distrustful**
    - ✓ Banquo has little or no trust in witches. When the weird sister prophesy to him that he will father king's, he is not amused as Macbeth is; his little belief comes in when Macbeth is first greeted as theme of Cawdor after the witches' prophecy
    - ✓ Unlike Macbeth, Banquo is calm and patient in his dealings
  9. **Careless**
    - ✓ He already suspects Macbeth's involved in Duncan's murder yet when Macbeth asks him to come for the state Banquet he accepts to come with his son Fleance
  10. **Brave and courageous**
    - ✓ He is a brave soldier and courageous like Macbeth. He sacrifices in his fight to rescue Scotland from the Norwegians. 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
  11. **Fierce/violent**
    - ✓ Banquo is fierce like Macbeth. He is an excellent fighter, brave and courageous; when all others are retreating, it is only him and Macbeth who go forward giving morale in their camp.

## **KING DUNCAN**

1. **Peace- loving/gracious/virtuous**
  - ✓ His language is formal and his speeches are full of graciousness/kindness. Duncan is a good King, despite having opposition at the time, he used his powers gently and was not corrupt.
  - ✓ During his reign, peace, law and order and joy flourished in Scotland. That is why his subordinates liked him most.
2. **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.
3. **Over-trusting**
  - ✓ King Duncan's, major problem is over trusting. He puts his 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.
  - ✓ 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.
4. **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.
5. **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.
  6. **Regretful**
    - ✓ He regrets his action when he says that you cannot know what is in the mind of another person; he regrets how close he was with the former thane of Cawdor who has betrayed him.
  7. **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.
  8. **Soft hearted**
    - ✓ Due to Duncan's soft heartedness, 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 avenge his death to Macbeth.
  9. **Insensitive**
    - ✓ As a king who had all the support in terms of security, he should 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 should also have warned the porters to be alert of anything because the battle with the king of Norway had just ended and does not know what the enemy might be thinking of, hence the need for tight security.
  10. **Vengeful**
    - ✓ He orders the thane of Cawdor's execution immediately upon hearing of him being a traitor.
  11. **Appreciative**
    - ✓ Duncan and his followers (entourage) appreciate the peaceful harmony of Macbeth's castle, where Lady Macbeth welcomes the guests with an overflow polite gesture.
    - ✓ King Duncan does 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.

## MACDUFF

1. **Trustworthy/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.
2. **Dutiful**

- ✓ He wakes early in the morning to wake up the king. He is a committed citizen to duty. Macduff is the first to notice the king's death
3. **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)
  4. **Suspicious**
    - ✓ Even though Macbeth puts the blame on porters for failing their duties and killing Duncan Macduff questions Macbeth's motive of killing the king's 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.
  5. **Appreciative**
    - ✓ He appreciates Macbeth for hosting King Duncan in his Castle. He says it is not an easy task to host King Duncan in his Castle.
  6. **Irresponsible/selfish/inconsiderate/coward/traitorous**
    - ✓ Lady Macbeth is surprised to hear that her husband has fled to England. She does not believe that her husband can leave his title (Thane of Fife) his wife and children and flee to England without informing her.
  7. **Brave/ courageous**
    - ✓ When he encounters Macbeth and starts fighting, Macbeth wonders how Macduff's dagger has scratched him and he is bleeding. He finally kills Macbeth and cuts his head. Macbeth is a well experienced and old time soldier yet young Macduff manages to defeat and kill him.
  8. **Revengeful**
    - ✓ Macduff avenges 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 avenge their death. If he does not fight, his wife's and children's ghost will haunt him.
  9. **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.

## **LADY MACDUFF**

1. **Caring**
  - ✓ Lady Macduff is posed as a caring mother who looks after her farming well.
2. **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) and flee to England without informing them.

### 3. **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 and she is murdered.

## **PORTERS**

### 1. **Neglectful/irresponsible/insensitive/shortsighted**

- ✓ Porters allow to be deceived by Lady Macbeth; they are given wine. They drink up to three o'clock in the morning and fail to guard the King.

## **ROSS**

### 1. **Dutiful/ trustworthy/honest/informative**

- ✓ In the play, Ross acts as a messenger. He informs King Duncan about the progress of the war, the victory of Macbeth and Banquo over the Norwegian troops 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**

### 1. **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 discusses the recent disorder in Scotland
- ✓ 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.

## **OLD MAN**

### 1. **Lamenting/concerned**

- ✓ He stands for the transition period from the old to new era after experiencing strange events; he remarks 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 of the past.

## **YOUNG SIWARD**



### 1. **Courageous/sacrificial**

- ✓ He is courageous; he confronts Macbeth, a seasoned soldier and tries to fight him although Macbeth easily kills him. He is applauded for his efforts and courage; his death is a sacrifice to the Scottish people.

## **SIWARD**

### 1. **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.

## **KING OF ENGLAND**

### 1. **Generous and soft-hearted**

- ✓ He accommodates Malcolm, Macduff and others who flee from Scotland to England.
- ✓ He takes their views on board and generously supplied 10 000 soldiers to assist Malcolm in fighting against Macbeth.

## **THE WITCHES**

### 1. **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, dictate 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.

## **PART 5: THEMES**

### 1. **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
- ✓ Duncan 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)

## 2. Superstition

- ✓ 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 fulfill what he heard from the witches.
- ✓ Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo bleeding and sitting on Macbeth's seat. He starts behaving strangely.
- ✓ If Macbeth was told the whole truth about the future, he would prepare well in all aspects, but he believed in what the witches told him.

## 3. Ambition/blind ambition

- ✓ Macbeth's 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 to be a stumbling block towards his kingship.

## 4. Suspicion

- ✓ Banquo fears the unusual happenings. He suspects that Macbeth is harbouring evil ideas.
- ✓ As some people believed that the guards were responsible for the murder of the king, others were not convinced. Banquo, Macduff, Malcolm and Donalbain suspected foul play by Macbeth.
- ✓ Banquo thinks Macbeth pushed the prophecy of the weird sister to become king.

## 5. Struggle for freedom

- ✓ Macduff, King Duncan's sons and others regroup in England ready to fight Macbeth to restore order and peace in Scotland.
- ✓ Young Siward is killed as he fights Macbeth.

## 6. Fear

- ✓ Duncan's sons, fearing for their own lives, flee Scotland. Macbeth is crowned king.

## 7. 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.

- ✓ With Macbeth as King, there is general insecurity in Scotland as Macbeth is on a killing spree to secure his position.

#### 8. 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 in Scotland. There is nothing to make people smile.

#### 9. 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.

#### 10. Courage

- ✓ Macbeth and Banquo show some rare courage in the battle field defeating the enemy.
- ✓ It smacks of courage for Young Siward to fight Macbeth single-handedly.
- ✓ When Macbeth hears that an army of ten thousand English men is approaching the castle he wears his armour ready to fight.
- ✓ Lady Macbeth shows courage in the sense that when her husband returns trembling and terror-shaken from murdering King Duncan, she never loses her mind but remain calm.

#### 11. Betrayal

- ✓ Macbeth betrays Duncan, his master by assassinating him to take up the throne as prophesied by the three witches.
- ✓ The former Thane of Cawdor betrays the king of Scotland, Duncan by revealing secrets to Norway and fighting alongside the enemy.
- ✓ 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. She feels betrayed.

#### 12. Fate

- ✓ The meeting between Macbeth and the three weird sisters 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 fate.

- ✓ In general, there seems to be a hidden driving force behind the events in the play. That is fate. The characters have no control on what is happening. What is happening is predestined to happen.

## PART 6: SYMBOLS

- ✓ **Light** represents good
- ✓ **Darkness** represents evil. Several evil events happen at night
- ✓ **Blood** represents Macbeth's and his wife guilty about Duncan's murder
- ✓ **Water** symbolises purification of the conscience
- ✓ **Sunset** means the death or overthrowing of King Duncan
- ✓ **Sleep** represents peace and innocence
- ✓ **The floating dagger** represents the throne. Macbeth sees it yet cannot get hold of it.
- ✓ **Apparitions:** see the summaries for meaning and explanation
- ✓ **Raging storms** on the night of Duncan murder and the thunder and lightning that accompanies the appearance of the three witches: The weather patterns symbolize political and social upheavals as well as internal, moral upheavals of the play's protagonist.
- ✓ **The witches** symbolise the darkness that resides in Macbeth's heart. The witches are an outward manifestation of Macbeth's wickedness and his horrible acts. he commits
- ✓ **Owl** represents bad omen

## PART 7: MAJOR THEMES REPEATED

### 1. Appearance versus Reality (Deception)

- The witches echo fair is foul and foul is fair meaning that what seems to be is not what actually is. This theme is portrayed as follows:
  - ✓ Duncan initially considers the former Thane of Cawdor and Macbeth as being faithful yet they both later rise against him.
  - ✓ Duncan and Banquo praise the appearance of Inverness, Macbeth's castle to have pleasant vicinity yet it will actually be a murder scene tonight. Macbeth is inside it with his wife planning for his murder.
  - ✓ Lady Macbeth tells her husband to look like an innocent flower but be a serpent under it when Duncan goes there for the feast.
  - ✓ Malcolm tells the English soldiers to hide themselves with Birnam wood so that Macbeth should not know the size of the approaching army.
  - ✓ Malcolm also tells Macduff that angels are righteous (bright) though the brightest (Satan) fell.

### 2. Gender and aggression/cruelty and gender

- ✓ The source of the whole chaos in the play is the witches who are also called the weird sisters. This implies that the feminine gender is more aggressive than the masculine.
- ✓ Lady Macbeth as a woman also influences her husband to kill Duncan. This also portrays the same implication about the feminine gender to be cruel and aggressive.
- ✓ On the other hand, though, men are also deemed to be more cruel and aggressive than women because Lady Macbeth prays to the spirits to unsex her by the time she wants to kill Duncan (to remove from her the feminine traits possibly to be replaced by masculine ones). This gives us an implication that men are more aggressive than women.
- ✓ Macbeth also asks the murderers if they are really men who can carry out a killing action. This shows that men are above women in terms of cruelty.
- ✓ The witches seem to be transgender because they also look like men since they have beards meaning that it is difficult to tell if they are women or men. This shows that aggressiveness and cruelty falls on both genders.

### 3. Betrayal

There are several incidents where the characters betray one another.

- ✓ Thane of Cawdor betrays Duncan by plotting an inversion against his king.
- ✓ Macbeth betrays Duncan by rising against him and killing him.
- ✓ Macbeth also betrays Banquo his friend his close friend. Macbeth kills Banquo by using the murderers to prevent him from being the root of kings. However, he is not successful because Fleance, his son flees.
- ✓ The witches also betray Macbeth by the use of equivocation (half-truth promises). He is told that he is going to be a Thane of Cawdor and king hereafter which are fulfilled and later he is told that no man born of a woman shall defeat him until Birnam wood moves to Dunsinane, yet he is later defeated by Macduff.
- ✓ Macduff betrays his family by leaving them in Scotland where they are not safe and indeed the wife and children are killed by the cruel Macbeth.

### 4. Fate versus free will

- Fate refers to such events over which people do not have control.
- Free will, on the other hand, refers to such ability people have over certain things thus, they can cause the things to happen the way they want.
- People use their own effort to achieve what they want, for instance:
  - ✓ Macbeth becomes a Thane of Cawdor by fate since he just fights for his country not to achieve something at the end. On the other side, he becomes a King of Scotland by free will. He puts his effort in killing King Duncan for him to become a king because that is what he wants.

- ✓ His death is due to free will because he chooses to commit a crime of killing a king and Macduff's family which angers Macduff a lot. Consequently, Macduff kills him. Besides, he is given a chance by Macduff that he should surrender so that he should be used for shows. People would come and pay to see him as tyrant.

#### **5. Good versus evil/good over evil/ order versus disorder/light versus darkness.**

- ✓ Duncan and Malcolm represent a harmonious, ordered or God fearing society. Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and the witches on the other hand, represent evil or darkness.
- ✓ The play initially presents Macbeth as a dutiful servant and later a rebellious character that gets the kingship by crook but later he is defeated. This shows that man is good but is prone to temptations of evil.

#### **6. Uncontrolled ambition**

- ✓ Macbeth murders King Duncan because both he and Lady Macbeth have uncontrolled ambition for leadership. We know that he wants to a king

#### **7. Hypocrisy**

Macbeth and his wife are supposed to protect and take care of Duncan their visitor but instead Macbeth bears the knife himself raising it against his own visitor instead of shutting the door against the enemy of him. This is total hypocrisy because they do contrary to what is expected of them.

#### **8. Futility of crime/retribution/consequences of what we do/guilty conscious/crime does not pay**

- ✓ Macbeth kills Duncan, Banquo, Macduff's wife and children thinking that he will triumph over this. Contrary to his expectation, he is also killed by Macduff in revenge of his family's death. He does not progress well after killing Duncan no wonder he is troubled by Banquo's ghost at the banquet.
- ✓ Lady Macbeth is also not spared as she also faces the consequences of her part in the crimes. Firstly, she suffers the sleep walking disease and later commits suicide.

#### **9. Greed**

- ✓ Macbeth commits the crimes because of greed for leadership. He kills Duncan for him to be a king.
- ✓ Later he also kills Banquo to prevent him from being the father of kings. He does all this out of greed; he just wants him and him alone to be the leader not anyone else.

#### **10. Incalculability of evil**

- ✓ Macbeth commits one crime, that of killing King Duncan thinking that this will be the only crime. Contrary to this, he feels not to be safe as such he kills Banquo. Macbeth says that "to be thus is nothing but to be safely thus". Here he means that to be just a king is useless but to be a king who is safe. He thinks that Banquo is a

threat to him because he can suspect him to have murdered King Duncan.

### **11. Superstitions and omens**

- ✓ The play includes witches which represent the darkness. Macbeth believes in them and he even consults them to foretell his destiny.
- ✓ People also believe that the day Duncan is murdered strange events occur: Duncan's horses eating one another; darkness during the day; that an owl which is a weak bird kills a falcon which is a strong bird.

### **End Note**

It is a requirement at MSCE English that students learn how to analyse a play. During examinations, the learners are required to write an essay based on their analysis and understanding of the play. The prescribed play at MSCE is Macbeth. This Learners Study Guide, therefore, has been developed to help students to have a deep understanding of the story (Macbeth) so that they provide well-thought answers during examinations.

This is an easy to read book with simple English. The author has tried his best to provide plots that have enough meat to help the student understand the story better.

Students are encouraged to read the original play and make their own analyses to supplement on what has been provided in this guide. Despite that this guide was developed for learners, teachers too will find it a useful tool in preparation of their literature lessons.

Enjoy.