

## List of characters

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### The Royal House of Scotland

DUNCAN King of Scotland  
 MALCOLM his elder son  
 DONALDBAIN his younger son

### Thanes (noblemen of Scotland) their households and supporters

MACBETH	Thane of Glamis	BANQUO	
	later Thane of Cawdor	FLEANCE	Banquo's son
	later King of Scotland	MACDUFF	Thane of Fife
LADY MACBETH		LADY MACDUFF	
GENTLEWOMAN	her attendant	SON OF MACDUFF	
SEYTON	Macbeth's armour bearer		
PORTER	at Macbeth's castle	ROSS	
CAPTAIN	wounded in battle	LENNOX	other thanes
AN OLD MAN		MENTEITH	
DOCTOR	of physic	ANGUS	
FIRST MURDERER		CAITHNESS	
SECOND MURDERER			
THIRD MURDERER			

### The supernatural world

THREE WITCHES	the weird sisters	HECATE	Queen of Witchcraft
THREE APPARITIONS		THREE OTHER WITCHES	

### The English

SIWARD Earl of Northumberland  
 YOUNG SIWARD his son  
 ENGLISH DOCTOR at the court of King Edward the Confessor

Lords, Soldiers, Attendants, Servants, Messengers

The play is set in Scotland and England

### Macbeth

Three Witches vow to meet Macbeth after the battle. They respond to the calls of their familiar spirits. They leave, chanting ominous words. In Scene 2 Duncan hopes for a battle-report from a wounded Captain.

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### 1 Menace and mystery (in groups of three or more)

The best thing to do with Scene 1 is to act it out. It doesn't take long to learn the lines. Present it as dramatically as you can, using sound effects of thunder, rain, battle sounds, a mewing cat and croaking toad (see 2 below). Think about how you can create a menacing and mysterious mood, especially in the final two lines, which ominously reverse values of goodness and beauty. Notice that line 12 reads the same backwards and forwards: 'Fair is foul, and foul is fair'. Use some of the following to help your preparation:

- How do the Witches enter and move?
- Are they old or young? Male or female? (In Shakespeare's time they were played by males.)
- How is each Witch different from the others?
- How are they dressed? What are they carrying? (Have they been scavenging on the battlefield?)
- What actions do they perform as they speak?

After your performance, write notes to guide others how to act out Scene 1.

### 2 Familiars: Graymalkin and Paddock (in pairs)

Witches were believed to have familiar spirits ('familiars'): demons who helped with their evil work. They usually took the form of animals or birds. In Scene 1 two Witches respond to the cries of their familiars: 'Graymalkin' (a grey cat) and 'Paddock' (a toad). But the Third Witch does not name her familiar; she says only that she'll come at once ('Anon'). Talk together about what creature the Third Witch's familiar might be. Invent a name for it and incorporate the sound it makes into your performance (see 1 above).

**hurly-burly** fighting, confusion  
**ere** before

**Graymalkin/Paddock** grey cat / toad  
 (see 2 above)

**Alarum** trumpet call to battle

**sergeant** a soldier who, at the time,  
 could be the equivalent of a captain

**hardy** brave

**fought / 'Gainst my captivity**  
 rescued me from capture

# Macbeth

## Act 1 Scene 1

### A desolate place

Thunder and lightning. Enter three WITCHES

FIRST WITCH When shall we three meet again?  
 In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH When the hurly-burly's done,  
 When the battle's lost, and won.

THIRD WITCH That will be ere the set of sun.

5

FIRST WITCH Where the place?

SECOND WITCH Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH There to meet with Macbeth.

FIRST WITCH I come, Graymalkin.

SECOND WITCH Paddock calls.

10

THIRD WITCH Anon.

ALL Fair is foul, and foul is fair,  
 Hover through the fog and filthy air.

*Exeunt*

## Act 1 Scene 2

### King Duncan's camp near Forres

Alarum within. Enter King [DUNCAN,] MALCOLM, DONALD-BAIN, LENNOX, with Attendants, meeting a bleeding CAPTAIN

DUNCAN What bloody man is that? He can report,  
 As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt  
 The newest state.

MALCOLM This is the sergeant  
 Who like a good and hardy soldier fought  
 'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend;

5

### Macbeth

The wounded Captain reports that although the rebel Macdonald had strong forces, Macbeth personally killed him. Facing an assault by fresh Norwegian troops, Macbeth and Banquo fought on undaunted.

#### **1 The Captain's story (in groups of four or more)**

The Captain's report (lines 7–42) is action-packed. Phrase by phrase, he creates a vivid picture of the battle. One person reads slowly, a small section at a time, pausing after each short phrase. The others mime the action described. For example, the first few sections might be:

- ‘Doubtful it stood’ (mime doubt)
- ‘As two spent swimmers’ (mime exhaustion)
- ‘that do cling together / And choke their art’ (mime drowning)
- ‘The merciless Macdonald’ (mime pitiless warrior), and so on.

You will find that this activity helps you to understand how such short units of language pack the Captain's tale with energy and meaning.

#### **2 Words to create atmosphere (in pairs)**

One partner reads aloud lines 1–44. The other partner echoes every word to do with war, fighting or armies. Change over and repeat the activity. How many such ‘warfare’ words can you find? (It will help you to know that ‘kerns and galloglasses’ are lightly and heavily armed soldiers respectively.) Afterwards, talk together about how Shakespeare creates atmosphere through the vocabulary he uses.

#### **3 The wounded Captain writes home**

Imagine you are the wounded Captain. You have had your wounds dressed and now you write home to tell your family what has happened. Base your letter on lines 1–42.

**broil** battle

**Fortune** fickle luck

**Valour's minion** bravery's favourite

**nave to th'chaps** navel to the jaws

**'gins his reflection** begins to fade

**trust their heels** run away

**surveying vantage** seeing an opportunity

**furbished** polished, cleaned

**sooth** truth

**memorise another Golgotha**

re-enact a slaughter like Christ's crucifixion

## Act 1 Scene 2

Say to the king, the knowledge of the broil  
 As thou didst leave it.

CAPTAIN	Doubtful it stood, As two spent swimmers that do cling together And choke their art. The merciless Macdonald – Worthy to be a rebel, for to that The multiplying villainies of nature Do swarm upon him – from the Western Isles Of kerns and galloglasses is supplied, And Fortune on his damnèd quarrel smiling, Showed like a rebel's whore. But all's too weak, For brave Macbeth – well he deserves that name – Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel, Which smoked with bloody execution, Like Valour's minion carved out his passage Till he faced the slave,	10
	Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him, Till he unseamed him from the nave to th'chaps And fixed his head upon our battlements.	20
DUNCAN	O valiant cousin, worthy gentleman.	25
CAPTAIN	As whence the sun 'gins his reflection, Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders, So from that spring whence comfort seemed to come, Discomfort swells. Mark, King of Scotland, mark, No sooner justice had, with valour armed, Compelled these skipping kerns to trust their heels,	30
	But the Norwegian lord, surveying vantage, With furbished arms and new supplies of men Began a fresh assault.	35
DUNCAN	Dismayed not this our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?	40
CAPTAIN	Yes, as sparrows, eagles, or the hare, the lion. If I say sooth, I must report they were As cannons over-charged with double cracks; So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe. Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds Or memorise another Golgotha, I cannot tell. But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.	45

### Macbeth

Ross tells that Macbeth has triumphed, capturing Cawdor and obtaining ransom and a favourable peace treaty from the King of Norway. Duncan sentences Cawdor to death and confers his title on Macbeth.

### 1 What is Macbeth like? (in pairs)

In a play, the audience gains its impression of a character from what the character says, what they do, and what other characters say about them. Macbeth has not yet appeared, but in Scene 2 he has been much talked about. From your reading of the scene, pool your thoughts and write down a list of qualities you think Macbeth possesses. As you work through the play add other qualities to your list.

### 2 Give Angus a voice (in groups of three)

Angus enters but says nothing. Give him the chance to add his own perspective on the story Ross tells. One person reads Duncan, another reads Ross (lines 47–67). Ross pauses after every punctuation mark. In each pause the third person, as Angus, adds their own retelling of Ross's report, explaining each part of it to the king (who might well ask for additional information). For example, after Ross's 'God save the king', Angus might say 'Greetings, your majesty. We salute you'; after 'From Fife', he might add 'In greatest haste', and so on.

### 3 Show the image (in small groups)

Scene 2 is rich in imagery. Choose one image that particularly appeals to you, for example 'As two spent swimmers', 'multiplying villainies of nature', 'like a rebel's whore', 'as sparrows, eagles', 'another Golgotha'. Prepare a tableau (a 'human sculpture', like a still photograph) of your chosen image. Show your frozen moment to the class, holding still for about thirty seconds. The other groups in the class guess which image you have chosen.

Afterwards, talk together about which you think is the 'easiest' image to portray, and which is the most difficult. Why?

<b>Bellona</b>	Roman goddess of war
<b>bridegroom</b> (Macbeth)	
<b>lapped in proof</b>	clad in armour
<b>self-comparisons</b>	similar actions
<b>Point against point</b>	sword to sword

<b>composition</b>	a peace treaty
<b>deign</b>	permit
<b>Saint Colm's Inch</b>	Isle of Inchcolm
	(see map, page 60)
<b>bosom interest</b>	heartfelt concerns
<b>present</b>	immediate

## Act 1 Scene 2

DUNCAN So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;  
 They smack of honour both. Go get him surgeons.

[*Exit Captain, attended*]

*Enter ROSS and ANGUS*

Who comes here?

MALCOLM The worthy Thane of Ross. 45

LENNOX What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look  
 That seems to speak things strange.

ROSS God save the king.

DUNCAN Whence cam'st thou, worthy thane?

ROSS From Fife, great king,

Where the Norwegian banners flout the sky

And fan our people cold.

Norway himself, with terrible numbers,

Assisted by that most disloyal traitor,

The Thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict,

Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapped in proof,

Confronted him with self-comparisons,

Point against point, rebellious arm 'gainst arm,

Curbing his lavish spirit. And to conclude,

The victory fell on us –

DUNCAN Great happiness! –

ROSS That now Sweno,

The Norway's king, craves composition.

Nor would we deign him burial of his men

Till he disbursed at Saint Colm's Inch

Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

DUNCAN No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive

Our bosom interest. Go pronounce his present death

And with his former title greet Macbeth.

ROSS I'll see it done.

DUNCAN What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.

50

55

60

65

*Exeunt*

### Macbeth

The Witches await Macbeth. They plot to torment a sea-captain whose wife has insulted them. A drum signals the approach of Macbeth.

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### 1 Speak the Witches' language! (in groups of three)

The Witches have a style of speaking all of their own. To gain the feel of their language, take parts and read aloud all they say between lines 1 and 67 (ignore what Macbeth and Banquo say). As you read, add actions that you feel are suitable. After your reading, talk together about the way the Witches speak, and why you think Shakespeare gives them that particular style of speech. How many words can you find to describe it? (A hint: don't be afraid to use a thesaurus to find appropriate words.)

### 2 The master of the *Tiger*

- a In 1606 (the year in which *Macbeth* was probably written) an English ship called the *Tiger* did in fact limp home after a disaster-struck voyage of 567 days ( $7 \times 9 \times 9$ , see line 21). Imagine you are the ship-captain and write an account of your perilous sea journey. Use your imagination, just as Shakespeare did. He was more concerned with the dramatic and imaginative possibilities of the stories he heard and read than with their factual accuracy (the storm-battered *Tiger* actually sailed to Japan, and Aleppo is sixty miles inland from the Mediterranean coast).
- b The Witch's story seems to have little to do with the play. Or does it? Suggest one or two possible reasons why Shakespeare wrote lines 1–27.

### 3 ‘Aroint thee, witch’

Line 5 is the only time in the play when the word ‘witch’ is used. See pages vi, 10, 131 and 178 for examples of how the three weird sisters do not have to appear as conventional witches.

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**quoth** said

**Aroint thee** clear off

**rump-fed runnion** pampered slut

**very ports they blow** winds

prevent ships from entering every

port

**quarters** directions

**card** compass

**penthouse lid** eyelid

**forbid** cursed

**sennights** seven nights

**bark** ship

**pilot** guide who steers ships to

harbour

## Act 1 Scene 3

### A heath

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES

FIRST WITCH Where hast thou been, sister?

SECOND WITCH Killing swine.

THIRD WITCH Sister, where thou?

FIRST WITCH A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap

And munched, and munched, and munched. 'Give me',  
 quoth I.

'Aroint thee, witch', the rump-fed runnion cries.

5

Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o'th'Tiger:

But in a sieve I'll thither sail,

And like a rat without a tail,

I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

SECOND WITCH I'll give thee a wind.

10

FIRST WITCH Thou'rt kind.

THIRD WITCH And I another.

FIRST WITCH I myself have all the other,

And the very ports they blow,  
 All the quarters that they know  
 I'th'shipman's card.

15

I'll drain him dry as hay:

Sleep shall neither night nor day

Hang upon his penthouse lid;

He shall live a man forbid.

20

Weary sennights nine times nine,

Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.

Though his bark cannot be lost,

Yet it shall be tempest-tossed.

Look what I have.

SECOND WITCH Show me, show me.

25

FIRST WITCH Here I have a pilot's thumb,

Wrecked as homeward he did come.

*Drum within*

THIRD WITCH A drum, a drum;

Macbeth doth come.

### Macbeth

The Witches chant a spell to prepare for their meeting with Macbeth. They amaze him with predictions that he will be Thane of Cawdor and King of Scotland. Banquo demands to know his own future.



‘Speak if you can’, Macbeth demands. Speak the Witches’ predictions in lines 46–8 as you think they would deliver them (think about tone of voice, gesture and movement).

### 1 ‘So foul and fair a day’ (in pairs)

Macbeth’s first words echo the Witches’ last lines in Act 1 Scene 1. Talk together about whether you think they suggest that conflict and insecurity exist in his mind, even though he has just won a great battle.

**weird sisters** (in Anglo-Saxon mythology) goddesses of destiny who predicted the future (see page 36)

**Posters** fast travellers  
**charm** spell

**Forres** see map, page 60

**aught** anything  
**Glamis** (pronounced ‘Glahms’ – that is, one syllable)  
**fantastical** imaginary  
**noble having** new titles of nobility  
**rapt** spellbound  
**seeds of time** future