



MACBETH TEST STUDY GUIDE

English 11

What prophecies were given during the course of the play

Character	Prophecy
Banquo	1. Descendants shall be kings
Macbeth	1. Thane of Cawdor 2. King of Scotland 3. Beware Macduff 4. No man of woman born can kill you 5. Won't be defeated until Birnam wood comes to Dunsinane Hill

Who does Macbeth Kill over the course of the play? How? Why?

Character Killed	How and why
Macdonwald	-unseam'd from navel to chaps (cut open from belly button to jaw) -he was a traitor to Scotland
Duncan	-stabbed in sleep -killed so Macbeth could be king
Guards	-stabbed by Macbeth -to prevent them from talking/being questioned
Banquo	-Macbeth hired murderers to kill him, stabbed -He was going to head a line of kings and Macbeth couldn't have that
Lady Macduff and Children	-Macbeth hired murderers to storm their castle and kill them -Macduff went to England to plot against Macbeth
Young Siward	-killed during one on one combat with Macbeth -battle/war

Describe Lady Macbeth's death and downfall. How did she die? What was she like before she died?

- All of her guilt and remorse for the things she and her husband had done, piled up.
- She began to sleep walk, sleep talk, and do things one shouldn't do while sleeping.
- She talked of unnatural deeds she shouldn't have had any knowledge of because she was wracked by guilt.
- Her doctor couldn't treat her.
- She eventually kills herself offstage, so we don't see it happen.

What is Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's plan to kill Duncan? Who encouraged it? Who does it? Why can't the other do it? How is it done? Who gets framed and what is their motive? What happens after? Who finds the body?

- Their plan is get the guards drunk/passed out, kill Duncan, and frame the guards for his murder.
- Lady Macbeth manipulated/convincing Macbeth to kill Duncan.
- Macbeth kills Duncan by stabbing him with the guards' daggers, and Lady Macbeth couldn't because he looked like her father while sleeping.
- They frame the guards for the murder.
- Malcolm and Donalbain flee because they fear for their lives, and suspicion falls on them. They are believed to have paid the guards so that Malcolm could be king sooner.
- Macduff discovers the body.
- Macbeth kills the guards and claims he was overcome by grief and had to.

What happens to Fleance

- Fleance escapes the murderers that took his father's life. (Fleance fled)
- He goes on to have a line of kings descended from him.

Describe the relationship between Macbeth and Macduff. What does Macduff do to Macbeth? What does Macbeth do to Macduff?

- Starts off good
- Then Macbeth kills Duncan's guards and Macduff grows suspicious.
- Macduff refuses to go to Macbeth's coronation and refuses his summons.
- Macduff goes to England to find Malcolm and plot against Macbeth to put Malcolm on his rightful throne.
- Macbeth hears about this and orders Macduff's wife, children and anyone connected to him killed as retaliation.

What was happening at the start of the play? Who was fighting? Who were the traitors? What did Macbeth do? What happened to the traitors?

- Norway and Scotland were having a war.
- Macdonwald and the Thane of Cawdor were the traitors, allied with Norway.
- Scotland won the battle.
- Macbeth fought honourably and killed Macdonwald.
- Thane of Cawdor executed after being caught. He confessed to his sins and repented before death.
- Norway was forced to pay Scotland some money.

Describe Lady Macbeth and Macbeth's relationship. How does she characterize her husband when we first meet her?

- They seem to have a strong marriage.
- Lady Macbeth seems somewhat dominant. She's very strong/manipulative.
- She is very ambitious.
- She thinks that Macbeth is too full of the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way. (too nice to kill Duncan and become the king).

What is the purpose of the Porter? What wisdom does he impart?

- His purpose is comedic relief.
- He says that drinking provokes nose painting, urine, and sleep.
- He also says it provokes/unprovokes lechery.

How does Banquo's death come about? Who kills him? What was their reasoning?

- Macbeth hired murderers to kill Banquo.
- He was upset with Banquo because of the prophecy the witches gave him (Thou wilt get kings, though thou be none), and he was afraid that he had dirtied his soul for a fruitless crown and for Banquo's benefit.
- He got some murderers to do it, because he wasn't able to do it himself. It had to be a secret.
- Macbeth blamed the murderers' troubles on Banquo and questioned their manhoods.

What is paradox?

- A self-contradictory statement that when investigated may prove to be true.

What is dramatic irony?

- When the audience/reader knows something a character doesn't.

What is a metaphor?

- A comparison not using like or as

What is an aside?

- When a character states their thoughts to the audience directly; no other characters can hear.

What is a simile?

- Comparison using like or as

Detail the events of Macbeth's downfall.

- Macbeth starts off the place as a good general, fighter, and honourable man. He is kind and the ideal subject.
- Then he gets the prophecies and things start to go downhill. Lady Macbeth wants him to strive for more.
- Then he murders Duncan, and Banquo, and the blood starts stacking up.
- He receives more prophecies, which cause him to grow overconfident.
- He then kills Macduff's family as retaliation.
- He continues to grow more overconfident because of the prophecies.
- Then it all comes to a head, the prophecies are fulfilled and he fights Macduff and loses.

What was the inspiration for Macbeth?

- There was a good bit of sucking up to James I of England. The play was about his ancestors/family, and focussed heavily on a subject he showed a lot of interest in: witchcraft. He wrote two books about it.
- Shakespeare got his information from Holinshed's account of the history of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

What kind of play is *Macbeth*?

- *Macbeth* is classified as a tragedy.

Describe Macduff's visit to England. How is he received? What news is he brought? What does he decide?

- Macduff has gone to England to ally with Malcolm and bring him and an army back to Scotland to defeat Macbeth.
- Malcolm doesn't know if he can trust Macduff, and he tests him by claiming that he (Mal) would be an even worse monarch than Macbeth (says that he is lusty, greedy, etc.)
- Macduff is devastated by this news, and Malcolm tells him it was a lie.
- English army and Siward (Mal's uncle) will come to Scotland to fight for them and help defeat Macbeth.
- Ross arrives and (gently) breaks the news to Macduff that his castle has been attacked and his whole family has been killed.
- Macduff decides to kill Macbeth but must first mourn his family.

How are the prophecies fulfilled?

Prophecy	How it came true
Become king	Macbeth murdered Duncan so he could become king.
Beware Macduff	Macduff murdered Macbeth and plotted against him before that.
None of Women Born	Macduff was from his mother's womb untimely ripped, which means he is able to defeat Macbeth in their fight.
Birnam Wood to Dunsinane	The attacking (English) forces disguised their numbers with boughs/branches from Birnam Wood

Characters: What do you know about the following characters?

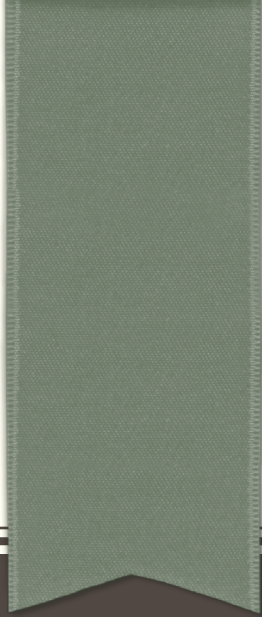
- **Macbeth:** title character, murdered the king to become king, murdered lots of people, tragic hero
- **Lady Macbeth:** Macbeth's wife, very ambitious and strong willed, convinces him to commit murder, later wracked with guilt, kills self.
- **Duncan:** king of Scotland at the start of the play, Macbeth's kinsman (cousin), killed by Macbeth for his throne
- **Malcolm:** Duncan's son, fled to England out of fear of safety, king at the end of the play.
- **Donalbain:** Duncan's son, fled to Ireland out of fear of safety.
- **Banquo:** Macbeth's friend, Fleance's dad, received prophecy about his descendants, murdered on Macbeth's orders because of it.

Characters continued

- **Fleance:** Banquo's son, survives play and later (after the play) 'gets' kings
- **Macduff:** thane of Scotland, suspicious of Macbeth, plotted against him, technically not born of woman, kills Macbeth
- **Lady Macduff:** foil for Lady Macbeth, killed by murderers, strong opinions about traitors.
- **Macduff's son:** killed by murderers, witty.
- **Ross:** thane, Macduff's cousin, told Macduff his family was killed
- **Lennox:** thane, observed strange happenings on night of Duncan's murder.
- **Seyton:** traditional armour dresser of Scottish kings
- **Porter:** comedic relief, servant, drunk

Characters cont.

- **Captain/Sergeant:** told of Macbeth's exploits in the war against Norway
- **Siward:** Malcolm's uncle, led English forces, soldier, honourable
- **Young Siward:** Siward's son, Malcolm's cousin, died in battle after fighting Macbeth, born of a woman
- **Doctor:** tried to treat Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking.
- **Gentlewoman:** Lady in waiting to Lady Macbeth, concerned about what she saw/heard Lady Macbeth do/see.
- **Murderers:** tools Macbeth used to kill whoever was on his bad side.
- **Witches:** brought prophecies to Macbeth, servants of the devil
- **Hecate:** queen of witches



QUOTES

Identify the speaker, and context for the following quotes.

Thou hast it now: King, Cawdor, Glamis, all as the weird women promised; and I fear thou plays't most foully for it. (III.i)

- **Speaker:** Banquo
- **Context:** Macbeth is now the king, and Banquo is reflecting on the prophecies. He worries that Macbeth committed murder to get where he is, because of his knowledge of the prophecies.

Unnatural deeds do breed unnatural troubles. (V.i)

- **Speaker:** Doctor
- **Context:** Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking. She is haunted by what she and Macbeth have done, and wracked with guilt and it's interfering with her sleep. The doctor has been called in to cure her.

It will have blood they say; blood will have blood. (III.iv)

- **Speaker:** Macbeth
- **Context:** Macbeth has just had Banquo murdered, and is hallucinating the ghost of Banquo at his banquet dinner. He is haunted by the guilt of what he has done, literally, and has ruined the meal. The murders keep piling up, and he will have to keep killing in order to survive.

Despair thy charm; and let the angel whom thou hast served tell thee,
Macduff was from his mother's womb untimely ripped. (V.viii)

- **Speaker:** Macduff
- **Context:** Macduff and Macbeth are fighting at the end of the play. Everything is finally coming to a head. It relates to the prophecies Macbeth got, as he couldn't be killed by one born of a woman. Macduff was delivered by what we called a c-section, which means he will be able to defeat Macbeth and get his revenge for his family.

What's done is done. (III.ii)

- **Speaker:** Lady Macbeth
- **Context:** This quote falls between the murder of Duncan, and before the murder of Banquo, though Macbeth has arranged the murder of Banquo. He's acting strangely, and LM is trying to get Macbeth to man up and get over his guilt, because they can't go back and change the past.

I shall do so, but first I must also feel it as a man. (IV.iii)

- **Speaker:** Macduff
- **Context:** Macduff has gone to England to find Malcolm and try to get him to come back to Scotland with an army to defeat Macbeth. After being tested by Malcolm, Ross arrives, with the news that Macbeth has killed his whole family. Malcolm advises him to use the pain as fuel to get even, but Macduff feels he needs to mourn it first.

She should have died hereafter;/There would have been a time for such a word./Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,/Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,/To the last syllable of recorded time;/And all our yesterdays have lighted fools/The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!/Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player/That struts and frets his hour upon the stage/and then is heard no more. It is a tale/Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury/Signifying nothing. (V.v)

- **Speaker:** Macbeth
- **Context:** Prior to the battle, Macbeth is informed that Lady Macbeth has died (presumably by her own hand). Macbeth is mourning her loss, but also reflecting on how life feels a bit pointless. LM's death is pathetic, not heroic.

Yet do I fear thy nature; it is too full of the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way. (I.v)

- **Speaker:** Lady Macbeth
- **Context:** Macbeth informed LM of the prophecies via a letter, and tells her how he was given the title of Cawdor as the witches had said. LM is excited and intrigued by this news. She is very ambitious and she wants to be queen. She is willing to do whatever it takes to become the queen, but she worries that Macbeth is too nice to do what needs to be done.

He's here in double trust:/First, as I am his kinsman and his
subject,/Strong both against the deed; then as his host,/Who should
against his murderer shut the door,/Not bear the knife myself. (I.vii)

- **Speaker:** Macbeth
- **Context:** Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have made a plan to murder Duncan so that Macbeth can become king as the witches prophesied. However, Macbeth is very torn about this decision and while he wants to be king, he has many reasons for not wanting to kill Duncan.

The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now? What! Will these hands ne'er be clean? No more o' that my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting. (V.i)

- **Speaker:** Lady Macbeth
- **Context:** Lady Macbeth is being haunted by her guilt over what she and Macbeth have done during the course of the play. It is causing her to sleep walk, and spend time washing her hands while asleep. A gentlewoman of hers has brought this to the attention of a doctor to treat LM, and they are both unsettled by what they hear as she recounts their crimes.