

Macbeth

The Characters

- The three witches set the tone of the play and are called 'the weird sisters'. They tell Macbeth of their predictions but never tell him to take action.
- The play is set in Scotland and to English people Scotland was very mysterious and magical. Witchcraft was also very interesting to people.
- At the start of the play Macbeth is very loyal to King Duncan
- Lady Macbeth is ambitious and criticises her husband for being too kind; in Act 5 she is seen sleepwalking and takes her own life as the guilt catches up with her
- Duncan is a kind and generous king who puts Scotland's needs above his own. This contrasts the king that Macbeth becomes
- Malcolm is Duncan's eldest son and heir to the throne. After Duncan's murder he flees to England where he matures and prepares an army to take down Macbeth.
- Donalbain is Duncan's youngest son and flees to Ireland.
- Banquo is Macbeth's best friend and is with him when the witches first deliver their prophecies and is told that his sons will be kings. Banquo is quite tempted to act based on these prophecies but resists (this makes him a reminder to Macbeth on the path that he could've taken). He also suspects that Macbeth killed Duncan.
- Macbeth as a king is a tyrant and rules by fear. People such as Banquo and Macduff suspect he gained the throne by acting selfishly.
- Macduff is suspicious of Macbeth, so he doesn't attend the coronation and the feast. He cares for his country and believes that Malcolm is the rightful King. Since the witches warn Macbeth of Macduff he hires three assassins to kill him, his wife and children. Macduff then kills Macbeth as he was 'not of woman born'.
- Seward is an English Lord who helps Malcolm to raise an army to defeat Macbeth.
- Fleance is Banquo's son who escaped death from the assassins.
- Macduff is the Thane of Fife who discovers Duncan's body and is suspicious of Macbeth since the beginning.