

Act 1 – Scene 1

- The first thing that the audience see and hear is thunder and lightning.
- The play opens with the three witches. They are planning to meet with Macbeth when the fighting is finished.
- The witches talk about the changes happening in nature: 'Fair is foul and foul is fair'.

Act 1 – Scene 2

- There is a meeting at King Duncan's headquarters. Macbeth has fought well and killed Macdonald, who had betrayed King Duncan: 'unseam'd him from nave to th' chops / And fix'd his head upon our battlements'.
- King Duncan calls Macbeth 'O valiant cousin, worthy gentleman'.
- Ross, another Thane, arrives with news of Macbeth's fight against Norway and another traitor, the Thane of Cawdor.
- King Duncan sentences the Thane of Cawdor to death for his betrayal. He rewards Macbeth with his title: 'with his former title greet Macbeth'; 'What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won'.

Act 1 – Scene 3

- This scene begins with thunder again as the witches return to the stage.
- The first witch tells a story about how a sailor's wife refused to give her chestnuts. She plans to torture her husband.
- The first witch calls Macbeth 'Thane of Glamis', which he is. The second calls him 'Thane of Cawdor', which the audience knows is true, but which hasn't been revealed to Macbeth (first prophecy).
- The third says he will be king (second prophecy): 'All hail Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter.'
- Banquo is told that even though he is 'lesser' he will be 'greater' because he 'shalt get kings' (third prophecy). This means that his children will be kings.
- Macbeth is torn. On the one hand, what the witches have said is good because he is now Thane of Cawdor. But he is afraid that something would have to happen to King Duncan for him to become king.
- He decides that, if fate has decided he will be king, he can become king without doing anything: 'If chance will have me king, why chance may crown me / Without my stir.'
- Macbeth decides he will ride to see the king.

Act 1 – Scene 4

- The scene begins with King Duncan and his son, Malcolm, talking about the previous Thane of Cawdor's execution.
- Macbeth arrives. King Duncan praises him and Macbeth says it was his duty to kill the traitor. King Duncan announces that his eldest son, Malcolm, is the heir (next in line) to the throne.
- In an aside, Macbeth says that Malcolm is now an obstacle for him. He admits that he wants the crown, even though it is disloyal to want it: 'Stars, hide your fires, / Let not light see my black and deep desires'.

Act 1 – Scene 5

- The scene begins with Lady Macbeth reading a letter aloud from her husband. The letter tells her what the witches said to him.
- Lady Macbeth is worried that Macbeth is too soft-hearted to take action. She wants to manipulate him into getting the crown.
- The attendant tells Lady Macbeth that the king is coming to stay with them that night.
- After the servant leaves, Lady Macbeth talks to the spirits. She asks them to make her less womanly so that she can be cruel and do what she needs to do for Macbeth to become king.
- Lady Macbeth makes her intentions clear to Macbeth.

Act 1 – Scene 6

- King Duncan arrives and Lady Macbeth comes out to greet him.
- King Duncan uses praising language to address her: 'honour'd hostess'; 'fair and noble hostess'; 'by your leave, hostess'.

Act 1 – Scene 7

- Macbeth has a **soliloquy** at the start of this scene where he thinks through what would happen if he murdered King Duncan.
- He thinks that if he could kill King Duncan and that could be the end of the matter, it would be fine.
- Lady Macbeth comes onto the stage and Macbeth tells her that they will not go further with their plans: 'We will proceed no further in this business'.
- She uses several techniques to persuade Macbeth:
 - She becomes aggressive in her language.
 - She tells him he's a coward for not doing what he needs to do.
 - She tries to show him the positive outcomes if he does it
 - She makes him feel guilty for breaking a promise to his wife.
- Lady Macbeth tells Macbeth that she plans to get King Duncan's men drunk. She wants to do this so that they can do whatever they like to the unprotected king and then blame the servants.
- Macbeth agrees to go through with the plan and they return to the celebrations.

Act 2 – Scene 1

- Banquo and his son, Fleance, are outside Macbeth's castle.
- Macbeth enters. Banquo tells him that he dreamt of the three witches. Macbeth says that he doesn't ever think about them.
- Macbeth is left alone and speaks his soliloquy. He can see an apparition (ghostly image) of a dagger in front of him: 'Is this a dagger which I see before me, / The handle toward my hand?' He isn't sure if it is a sign from fate or a sign that he's confused.

Act 2 – Scene 2

- Lady Macbeth has drugged the guards and feels bold after drinking the same alcohol.
- Macbeth comes in holding two bloody daggers and tells Lady Macbeth that he has killed King Duncan: 'I have done the deed'.
- Macbeth seems disturbed. He looks at the blood on his hands and says 'This is a sorry sight'.
- He thought he heard a voice say 'Sleep no more: / Macbeth does murder sleep'.
- Lady Macbeth is angry at Macbeth for bringing the bloody daggers with him. She calls him a coward ('Infirm of purpose!').
- She returns the daggers to the murder scene and smears the servants in blood so that they look guilty.
- When Lady Macbeth returns, her hands are now red with blood. She says she doesn't feel guilty: 'My hands are of your colour, but I shame / To wear a heart so white.'
- There is a knocking outside and they go to bed.

Act 2 – Scene 3

- The scene begins with a drunken porter – he is woken by a knocking sound. Macduff, the Thane of Fife, and Lennox, another Thane, arrive to see King Duncan.
- Macduff goes to find and wake King Duncan.
- Lennox talks about the conditions of the previous night. He says they were very 'unruly' with storms.
- Macduff returns in shock: 'O horror, horror, horror'.
- Macduff sounds the alarm for murder and treason.
- Malcolm and Donalbain wake up. Macbeth tells them their father died.
- Lennox tells them that the guards were covered in blood. Macbeth says that he killed them because he was angry at what they had done.
- The thanes decide to meet up to take action. Malcolm and Donalbain flee instead – Malcolm goes to England and Donalbain goes to Ireland. They believe they are under threat because Donalbain says, 'There's daggers in men's smiles'.

Act 2 – Scene 4

- Ross speaks to an old man about all of the unnatural things that have been happening that night.
- Macduff enters. He tells them that the king's sons have fled. This makes them seem suspicious.
- Ross says that it's likely that Macbeth will become king. Macduff tells him that Macbeth has already been named as King Duncan's successor.

Act 3 – Scene 1

- The scene begins just after Macbeth has been crowned king.
- Banquo speaks to himself. He is afraid that Macbeth has done something bad to get the crown: 'I fear / Thou played'st most foully for't'. Banquo still hopes that this means his children will be kings.
- Macbeth enters. He calls Banquo his 'chief guest'. This implies that he still treats Banquo like his best friend. Banquo sets out on a horse ride with Fleance.
- Macbeth speaks in another soliloquy. He says that having the crown is not enough. He must feel secure as king: 'To be thus is nothing, / But to be safely thus'.
- Macbeth is afraid that the wise Banquo is a threat to his crown: 'There is none but he, / Whose being I do fear'.
- Macbeth knows that the witches also prophesised that Banquo's sons would be kings, and so he feels they must be a threat.
- Two murderers enter the stage and agree to kill Banquo and Fleance.

Act 3 – Scene 2

- Lady Macbeth is worried that Macbeth is thinking a lot of bad thoughts about killing King Duncan. She says: 'what's done, is done'.
- Macbeth tells her that this is just the beginning: 'We have scorch'd the snake, not killed it.' This means he still feels that his crown is at risk.
- This shows where Macbeth is beginning to take control of his own future, instead of letting Lady Macbeth tell him what to do. Here, she wants him to enjoy being king and move on, but Macbeth wants to secure his future by continuing to kill anyone that threatens his rule.
- Macbeth is almost shown to be paranoid here.
- Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth that he is suffering from nightmares.
- Macbeth hints that something bad is about to happen, but does not tell Lady Macbeth of his plan to kill Banquo. This is surprising because she seemed to be the driving force behind the murder of King Duncan.
- When Lady Macbeth asks Macbeth what he means, he says that she doesn't need to know: 'Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck'.
- This is a **turning point** – before this point, Macbeth has told his wife everything and allowed her to take control of his decisions. Now, Macbeth doesn't even feel the need to tell his wife about his plan.

Act 3 – Scene 3

- The two men hired to kill Banquo are waiting for him when a third man comes - Macbeth has sent another murderer. He wants to make absolutely sure that Banquo is killed.
- Banquo and Fleance show up and they are attacked.
- Banquo is killed: 'O treachery!'
- When he is dying, he tells Fleance to run so that he can take revenge later. Fleance escapes.

Act 3 – Scene 4

- Macbeth's feast has begun. He tells the lords to sit.
- One of the murderers arrives at a side door and tells Macbeth that Banquo is dead but Fleance escaped.
- Macbeth feels scared again ('I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in / To saucy doubts and fears') because he has not eliminated the threat to his crown. But he is happy Banquo is dead and returns to the feast.
- The ghost of Banquo enters the stage. He sits in Macbeth's seat. Macbeth doesn't notice until he raises a toast to his absent friend.
- The ghost points at Macbeth and Macbeth becomes very distressed – 'never shake / Thy gory locks at me!' – however it becomes clear that he is the only one who can see it.
- Out of earshot, Lady Macbeth questions Macbeth's manhood: 'Are you a man?' She eventually asks the guests to leave.
- After the guests have left, Macbeth says 'It will have blood they say: blood will have blood.' This suggests that he fears being punished for the murders he has committed.
- Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth he plans to go and see the three witches the next day because he needs to know more about his future.
- Lady Macbeth is worried about him and says that he needs more sleep.
- Macbeth fears they are still just starting out on the path of destruction: 'We are yet but young in deed'.
- Macbeth feels scared and paranoid about the future – the initial murders are not enough for him because he feels that he has to keep killing people to try to protect his crown.

Act 3 – Scene 5

- The witches meet with Hecate, their queen.
- Hecate is angry that she has been left out of the witches' meeting with Macbeth.
- She tells them to meet with her later. She will share his destiny (fate) with them.
- They plan to trick Macbeth by showing him illusions (fake images).

Act 3 – Scene 6

- Lennox is talking to another lord (thane). Both Lennox and the other lord suspect that Macbeth has been involved in the murders.
- The other lord reveals that Macduff has gone to England to join with Malcolm, King Duncan's son. He is trying to petition King Edward for help to gather an army. He wants the people of Northumberland, under Lord Siward, to return to Scotland so that Macbeth can be removed from power and peace can be restored.
- Macbeth has heard this and is preparing for war. He ordered Macduff to return to Scotland. Macduff refused.
- Lennox says that Macbeth is a 'tyrant' and Scotland needs saving.

Act 4 – Scene 1

- The scene begins with thunder in an isolated place. The three witches meet to cast a spell. They chant: 'Double, double toil and trouble; / Fire burn and cauldron bubble.'
- Macbeth arrives ('How now, you secret, black and midnight hags') and tells them he is there to get answers.
- Three apparitions (ghost images) come from the cauldron to give Macbeth a message. The first tells Macbeth to beware of Macduff. The second tells him that no man born of a woman can hurt him. The third tells him that he will not be removed from power until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane Hill, where his castle stands.
- Macbeth now thinks he is invincible because no man can kill him and the wood will never move. He finally asks if Banquo's children will be kings still, but the spirits won't answer him.
- The witches show him a vision of a line of kings. Fleance is following. All are looking like him.
- The witches vanish. Lennox meets Macbeth and tells him Macduff has fled.
- Macbeth decides to order an attack on Macduff's castle and kill his family: 'give to th' edge o'th sword / His wife, his babes'.

Act 4 – Scene 2

- Lady Macduff is at home with her sons, speaking to Ross. She wants to know why Macduff has fled Scotland without speaking to her. She is worried that they will now look like traitors to Macbeth.
- Lady Macduff feels like she has lost her husband. She tells her son that his father is dead. She tells him that Macduff was a traitor.
- A messenger arrives and tells them that they need to leave because danger is on its way.
- Lady Macduff says that she has done nothing wrong.
- A murderer enters. He demands to know where her husband is.
- They argue and the murderer kills her son: 'He has killed me, mother.'
- As he is dying, he begs his mother to run away. Lady Macduff runs off stage, with the murderers chasing her.

Act 4 – Scene 3

- Malcolm is talking to Macduff in England. Malcolm tries to pretend he has many poor qualities that would not make him a good king. This is to test Macduff to make sure that he would be loyal to Malcolm and not side with Macbeth.
- Macduff clearly shows his hatred of Macbeth and joins Malcolm's cause.
- Ross arrives and reluctantly tells Macduff that his family is dead: 'Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes / Savagely slaughtered.'
- For Macduff, this has now become a mission of personal revenge against Macbeth.
- Linking back to fate and tragedy, Macbeth may have caused his own death at this point – his murder of Lady Macduff and her son mean that Macduff only wants revenge now.
- Ultimately, Macbeth may have been killed anyway, but this act of violence against Macduff's family definitely sealed his fate.

Act 5 – Scene 1

- A doctor and a gentlewoman are talking about Lady Macbeth.
- The gentlewoman is one of Lady Macbeth's ladies-in-waiting, a close friend and servant. She has been sleepwalking.
- The doctor asks if Lady Macbeth has spoken. The gentlewoman refuses to say what Lady Macbeth said. She is nervous about what she has overheard.
- Lady Macbeth enters, sleepwalking. She carries a candle. She rubs her hands frantically saying, 'Out, damned spot: out I say' and 'who would have thought the old man to have so much blood in him?'
- As she continues to talk, now about Macduff's wife, the doctor realises that he and the gentlewoman are in danger. They now know things that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth want to keep secret, and Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have clearly killed multiple people already.
- The doctor says that bad things have happened: 'Unnatural deeds / Do breed unnatural troubles.' He tells the gentlewoman to look after Lady Macbeth and they leave.

Act 5 – Scene 2

- Noblemen are discussing the army advancing from England. Malcolm leads the army.
- Angus says that Macbeth is now starting to see the consequences of his actions: 'Now does he feel / His secret murders sticking on his hands'.
- Macbeth's murders are metaphorically 'sticking on his hands' because he cannot escape the consequences of his actions.
- This links to Act 5 Scene 1, where Lady Macbeth feels that she cannot get the blood off her own hands.
- People are responsible for their own actions, and that all actions have consequences that people must face.

Act 5 – Scene 3

- In his castle, Macbeth isn't interested in the reports he's hearing about the army. He still believes in what the spirits said. He tells his advisors he will not be worried: 'Till Birnam Wood remove to Dunsinane, / I cannot taint with fear'.
- A worried servant comes in to tell Macbeth that there are 10,000 men. This moment contrasts with Macbeth's first meeting with the witches. Here, Macbeth is living his life based on the prophecies from the witches and ignores warnings.
- Seyton, one of Macbeth's men, arrives. He confirms that the army is coming. Macbeth decides to put on his armour and be ready for them: 'I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hacked'.
- The doctor tells Macbeth that Lady Macbeth is troubled. Macbeth asks him to cure her: 'Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased, / Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow'.
- Macbeth knows that the thanes are abandoning him. He wishes that the doctor could cure Scotland too.
- Macbeth leaves and says again that he won't be afraid. The doctor tells the audience that he's leaving the castle and won't return for any amount of money. Macbeth has been abandoned by all of his thanes, seems to have abandoned Lady Macbeth herself.

Act 5 – Scene 4

- The army is marching towards Macbeth. The army has reached Birnam Wood.
- Malcolm orders the soldiers to cut branches off the trees and hold them in front. It is a tactic to hide the size of the army.

Act 5 – Scene 5

- Macbeth enters the stage with his men. They are beating drums and they are flying their colours to show they are ready.
- The castle is well protected, so Macbeth still doubts that this will happen.
- Seyton tells Macbeth that Lady Macbeth is dead.
- The messenger tells Macbeth that Birnam Wood is moving.
- Macbeth is alarmed but sees that there is not much he can do and feels that he can at least die fighting. He orders the ringing of the alarm bell to signal the attack.

Act 5 – Scene 6

- Malcolm orders the men to drop their branches.
- As Macduff says, 'Make all our trumpets speak, give them all breath, / Those clamorous harbringers of blood and death'.
- For Macduff, and Macbeth, the trumpet sound signals coming deaths.

Act 5 – Scene 7

- Macbeth is trapped in his castle with no way of escape. He is still thinking about the prophecies: 'What's he / That was not born of woman? Such a one / Am I to fear or none.' Macbeth thinks he can't be harmed by anyone that a woman gave birth to.
- Siward's son is the first to fight Macbeth, but he loses. Macbeth believes that the prophecy is protecting him. He does not fear anyone: 'But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn, / Brandished by man that's of a woman born.' He exits the stage.
- Macduff enters. He is looking for Macbeth so he can get revenge.
- Malcolm enters. He hears the news that the fight is almost won.

Act 5 – Scene 8

- Macbeth and Macduff meet. Macduff challenges: 'Turn, hell-hound, turn.'
- Macduff refuses to go and they fight. Macbeth tells him he is protected: 'I bear a charmed life, which must not yield / To one of woman born.'
- Macduff then replies that he was born before his time by being taken from his mother's womb: 'Macduff was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped.'
- Macbeth realises that Macduff was not technically 'born' of a woman.
- Macbeth curses those that told him the prophecies and refuses to fight on.
- Macduff tells him to surrender, but Macbeth refuses: 'Lay on Macduff, / And damned be him, that first cries, 'Hold, enough''.

Act 5 – Scene 9

- Malcolm enters the stage with Siward and Ross, other thanes and men.
- Macduff enters the stage carrying Macbeth's head.
- They hail Malcolm as the King of Scotland.
- Malcolm thanks them. He hopes those who fled the country under Macbeth's reign can now return to see him crowned.