

Macbeth



Introducing the Play

Literary Focus: Tragedy

The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act I
by William Shakespeare

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The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act I

Introducing the Play



You cannot have power
for good without having
power for evil too.

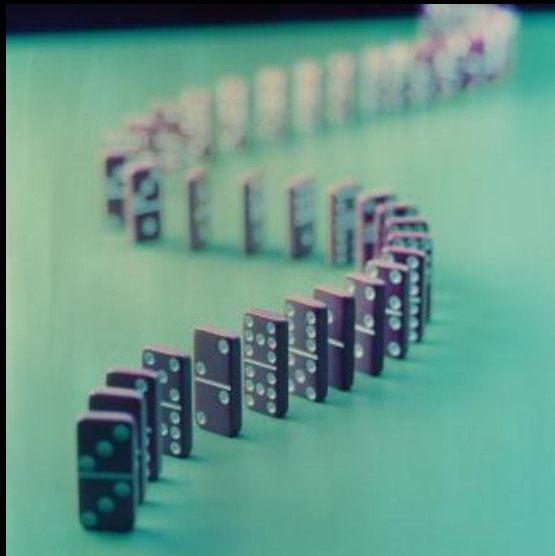
—George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950)

The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act I

Introducing the Play

The Domino Effect

Have you ever wondered . . .



how just one action might affect the entire course of your life?

Can one selfish impulse lead to a chain of decisions you will later regret?

The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act I

Introducing the Play

The Domino Effect

In *Macbeth* a brave and accomplished nobleman

- deliberately murders someone to whom he should be loyal ▼
- must then kill two other innocent men as a consequence ▼
- finds he cannot turn away from his evil course ▼

Where will this horrific chain of events lead? What will the consequences be for the main characters?

The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act I

Introducing the Play

Characters

Duncan, King of Scotland

Malcolm
Donalbain } his sons

Macbeth
Banquo
Macduff
Lennox
Ross

→ noblemen
of Scotland

Menteith
Angus
Caithness

Fleance, son of Banquo

Siward, earl of
Northumberland, general
of the English forces

Young Siward, his son

Seyton, an officer
attending Macbeth

Son to Macduff

An English Doctor

A Scottish Doctor

A Porter

[Pronunciation Guide](#)

The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act I

Introducing the Play

Characters, continued

An Old Man

Three Murderers

Lady Macbeth

Lady Macduff

A Gentlewoman attending
Lady Macbeth

Hecate

Witches

Apparitions

**Lords, Officers, Soldiers,
Attendants, Messengers**

[Pronunciation Guide](#)

Setting: Scotland; England



The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act I

Introducing the Play

Pronunciation Guide

Duncan DUHN kuhn

Malcolm MAHL kuhm

Donalbain DAHN ul bayn

Macbeth mak BEHTH

Banquo BANG kwoh

Macduff mak DUHF

Lennox LEHN uhx

Hecate HEHK uh tee

Ross RAWS

Menteith mehn TEETH

Angus ANG uhs

Caithness CAYTH nehs

Fleance FLEE ans

Siward SEE wurd

Seyton SAY tuhn

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Pronunciation Guide

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The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act I

Introducing the Play

Amid thunder and lightning a trio of witches arranges to meet after a battle. ▼

At a military camp, King Duncan learns that his generals, Macbeth and Banquo, have defeated the enemies.



The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act I

Introducing the Play



On the heath the witches offer a prophecy. They tell Macbeth and Banquo that Macbeth will be king of Scotland and that Banquo will beget rulers.

Will the prophecy of the witches come true? Will Macbeth's destiny be fulfilled?

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The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act I

Literary Focus: Tragedy



Tragedy—a literary work depicting serious events, in which the main character, who is often a high-ranking, dignified person, comes to an unhappy end

The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act I

Literary Focus: Tragedy



In a tragedy

- ill-judged human actions lead to inevitable catastrophe, usually including one or more deaths ▼
- the characters' bad deeds, crimes, and mistakes are never forgiven or rectified ▼

By contrast, in a comedy

- the characters can do as they please as long as they amuse the audience ▼
- the funny mess is easily cleaned up at the end



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Quickwrite

The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act I

Quickwrite

Make the Connection

Macbeth's lust for power is so great that he commits murder in order to fulfill his destiny of becoming king. Think of people in actual life who are so obsessed with power that they will take extreme measures to get what they want. What are some of the consequences of such shameless ambition? Write down your thoughts.

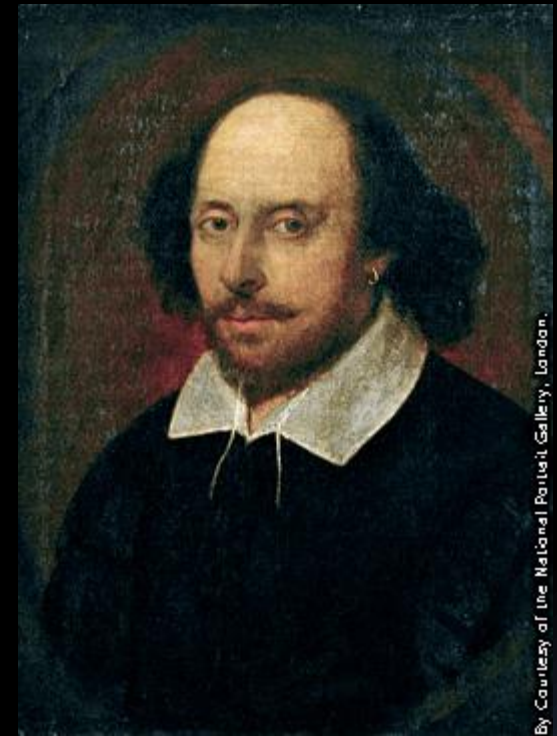
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Meet the Writer

The Tragedy of Macbeth

Meet the Writer

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) moved to London sometime around 1590. Enjoying the patronage of Lord Chamberlain and later of King James, he prospered as an actor, as a playwright, and as a shareholder in the Globe Theatre. This literary great authored more than thirty-six timeless plays.



More About the Writer

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