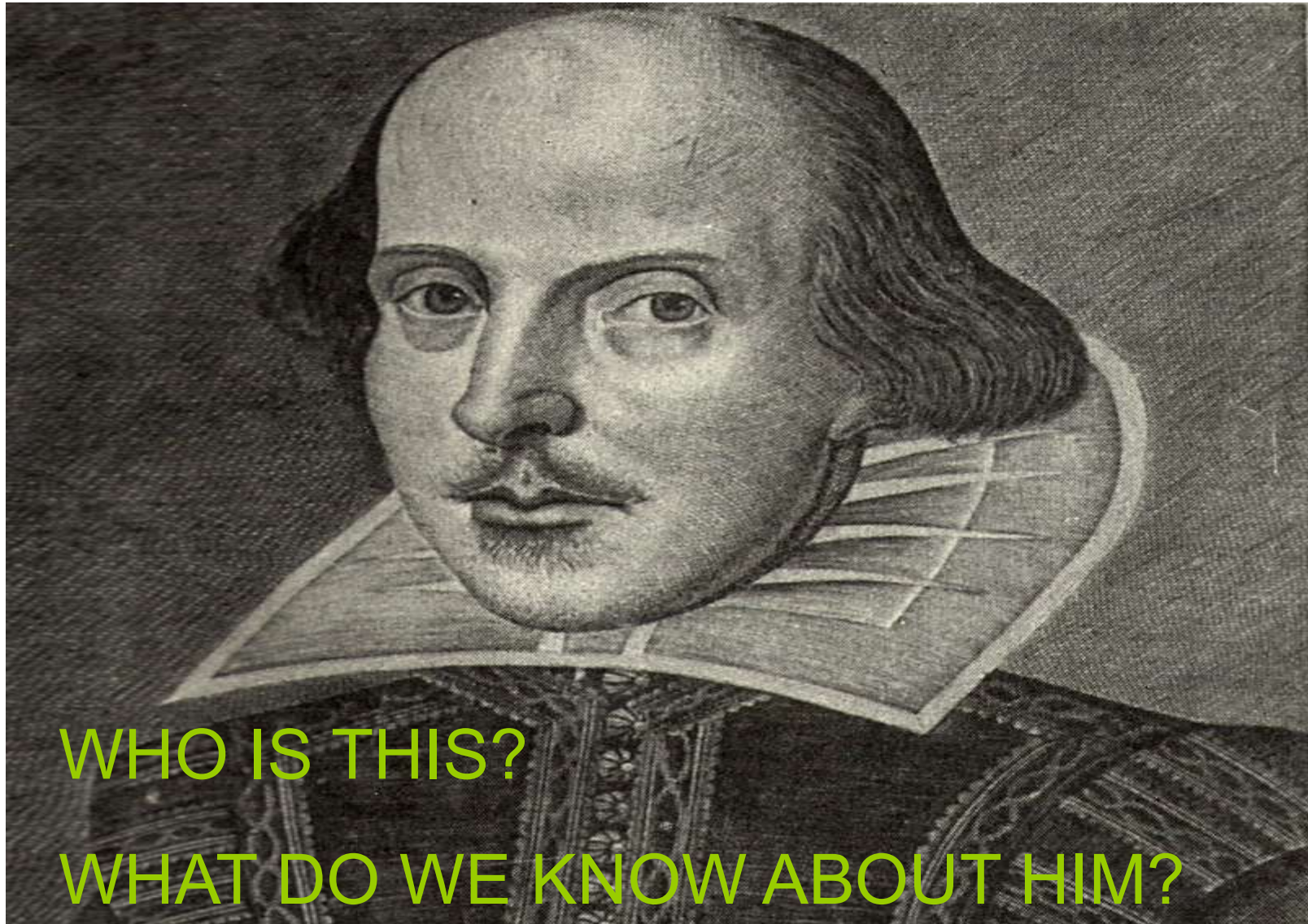


Macbeth: Summary



WHO IS THIS?

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HIM?



The play opens in a wild, lonely part of Scotland at the end of a battle.

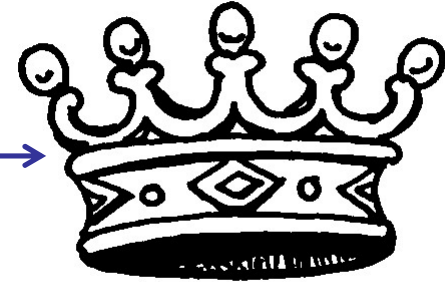
We quickly meet **Macbeth and Banquo, who are friends but also generals** fighting for **Duncan, King of Scotland.**

They **have both fought well** and are returning to the King when they **meet three witches.**

The **witches tell them three things:**

1. Macbeth will become The Thane of Cawdor (which is like a lord)

2. Macbeth will become the King of Scotland →



3. Banquo's sons or grandsons will become Kings of Scotland.



Banquo laughs at all this, but Macbeth takes it seriously and can think of nothing else.

When Macbeth and Banquo meet the King they are treated as **heroes**
and the King rewards **Macbeth** by making him **The Thane of**
Cawdor, **exactly as the witches had foretold !!!!**.



*This makes him believe the witches even more, and he starts to think about how he might become **King**.*

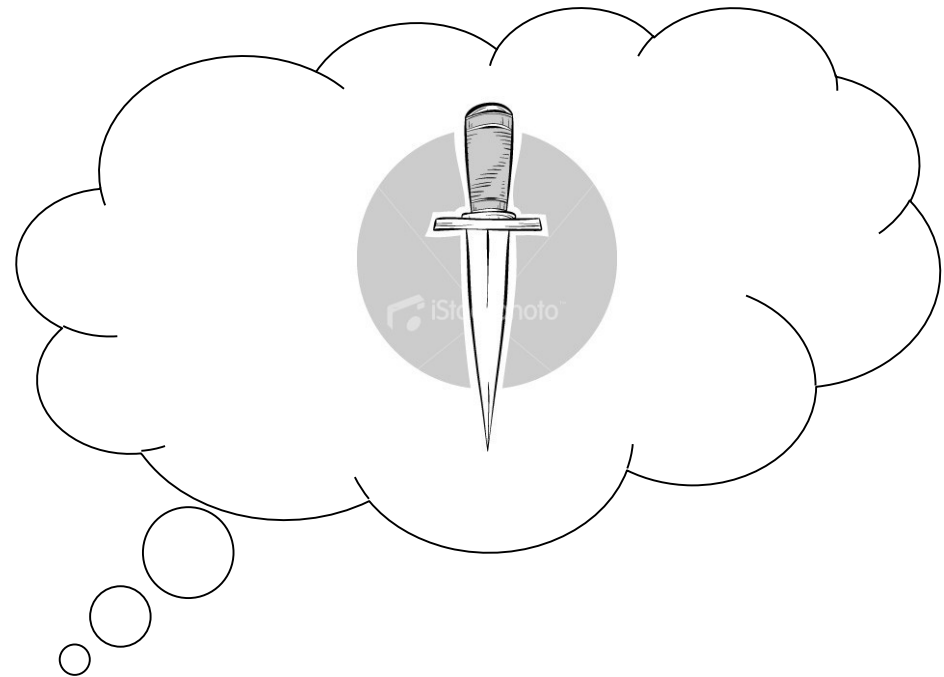
Lady Macbeth reads a letter from her husband about the predictions and is as excited as he is. She thinks Macbeth isn't as ambitious as she is, but she is determined he will be king and even summons up spirits (like magic forces) to help her.



The King and the court go to Macbeth's castle as guests. Macbeth is unsure about what to do but his wife convinces him to murder Duncan and she comes up with a clever plot. They will drug the king's two servants, use their daggers to kill the king, then blame the murder on the servants.

Murderer?

It is after midnight in the courtyard of "Macbeth's" castle, Banquo can't sleep and is joined by Macbeth. Banquo chats about how pleased the king is and how he respects Macbeth. Banquo also mentions the witches' predictions, but Macbeth lies to him and says he hasn't thought about it. However, Macbeth takes a chance and basically says that if Banquo does what he's told later on, it will be for his benefit. It might not be clear to Banquo what Macbeth means, but he seems to be suspicious and goes to bed.



Macbeth is left on his own and suddenly has a vision of a dagger.

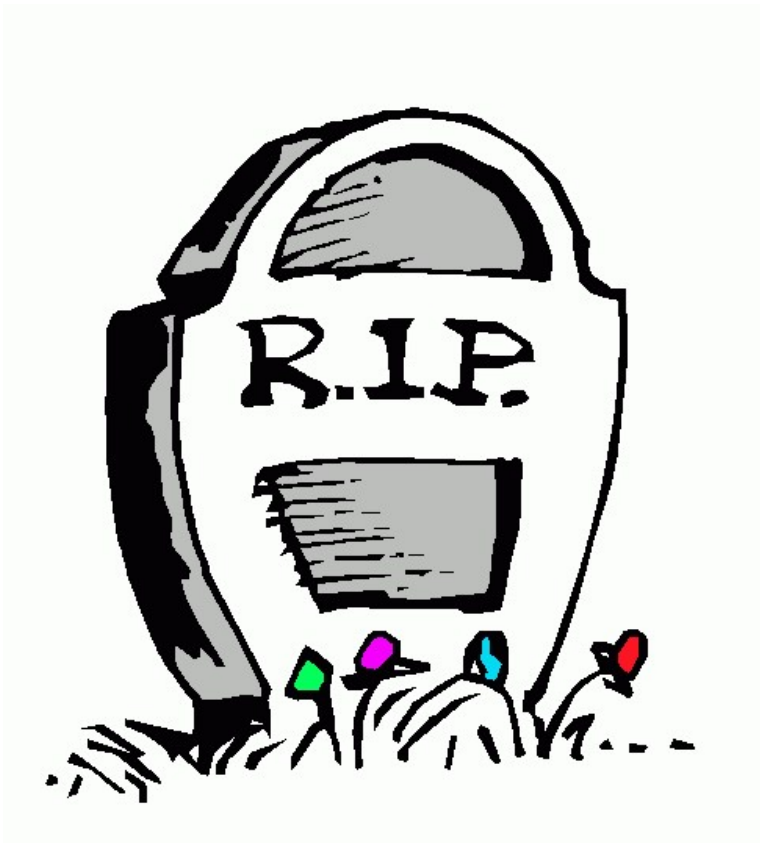
He is completely unnerved - this vision seems to be leading him towards murder, and when a bell rings, he leaves to kill Duncan. He returns later with two bloody daggers, having killed Duncan. He is frightened and tells his wife how the two servants woke up, and how he heard a voice in his head. Macbeth is already regretting his actions but his wife handles everything, calming him down, taking the daggers back and wiping blood onto the sleeping servants so that they can be blamed.



Macbeth is scared and almost unable to do anything but his wife again takes control. There are noises in the castle now as people are woken up so she tells him to wash the blood off his hands and put on his night gown so that they look innocent. She tells him to pull himself together whilst he voices his regrets. He even wishes Duncan, who he's just killed, could be woken up.



Duncan is discovered dead and his two innocent servants are accused of the murder and killed by Macbeth. Everyone starts to suspect everyone else. Duncan's sons disappear, so they look guilty. Macbeth is due to be crowned king, so people (Banquo in particular) also begin to suspect him.



Macbeth knows that two of the predictions have come true, and the third is that Banquo's son will become king, so he arranges for both Banquo and Fleance, his son, to be killed. Macbeth doesn't tell his wife about this plot and it goes wrong, because Fleance escapes.

Macbeth starts to panic and feels he is going mad. He has more visions, seeing Banquo's ghost, and decides he must go back to the witches.



They have three more predictions for him:

They warn him about Macduff, a powerful Scottish lord

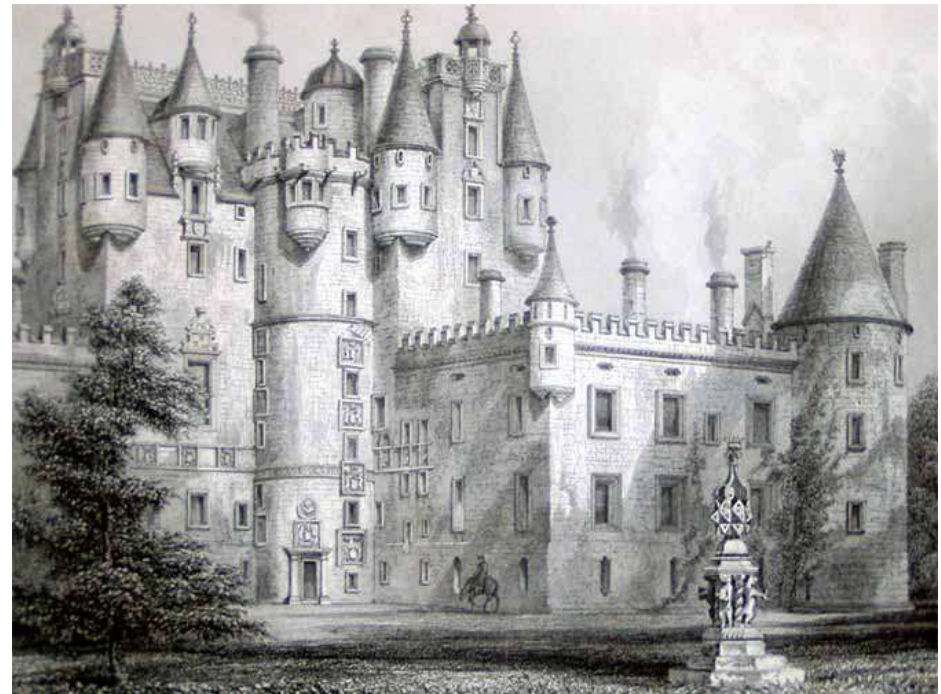
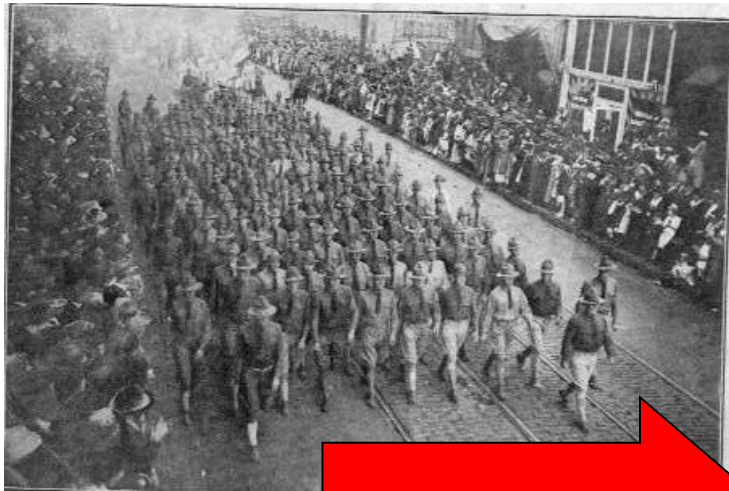
They say that no-one born of a woman will ever harm him

He will never be defeated until Birnam Wood comes to Macbeth's castle at Dunsinane



Macbeth thinks he is safe, but finds out that Macduff has left so he orders the murder of Macduff's wife and children.

Macduff and Duncan's son, Malcolm, raise an army in England and march to attack Macbeth in his castle at Dunsinane. Macbeth waits in his castle but his wife seems to be mentally ill and unable to cope with what she has done.



In Macbeth's castle at Dunsinane. Macbeth is confident he is safe and repeats two of the witches' predictions. His servants are not convinced and he treats them like cowards. He also shows his regrets, saying he is sick at heart and has no friends or honour left.

Another servant arrives and Macbeth calls for his armour then asks after his wife. Macbeth doesn't seem worried about her - in fact he is now showing the determination she showed earlier in the play. It is clear that Macbeth is now far more decisive and doesn't seem to be afraid of anything, mentioning the Birnam wood prediction again.



Meanwhile the English army is assembling at Birnam Wood and Malcolm orders the soldiers to each cut down a branch and use this to disguise the number of soldiers they really have. Of course, when the army advances, each soldier carrying a branch, Birnam Wood will 'come to Dunsinane', just as the witches predicted.

Back at the castle Macbeth is still confident. He hears a cry from the women and is told his wife, Lady Macbeth, is dead. Again he seems cold-hearted and talks about life being meaningless. In Macbeth's eyes, his wife's death, like anyone else's, is inevitable, and now appears to view her life as signifying nothing to him.

A messenger then arrives with the news that Birnam Wood is moving closer. Macbeth suddenly becomes worried, again repeating the prediction about the wood and realising it is now true. However, like the brave soldier he is, he prepares to fight.

The play ends with Macduff forcing his way into the castle and confronting Macbeth. Macbeth tells him about the witches' prophecy, but we learn that Macduff's mother had a Caesarean birth, so technically, he was not 'born' from a woman. Macduff kills Macbeth, cuts off his head and presents this to Malcolm, Duncan's oldest son, who is immediately recognised as the new king.



Answer the following questions in full sentences

- 1) Who do Macbeth and Banquo meet on their way home from battle?
- 2) Name two of the three things the witches advise will happen to Macbeth in the future.
- 3) What plot does Lady Macbeth come up with to kill King Duncan?
- 4) What does Macbeth do to try and stop Banquo's son becoming king? Does he succeed?
- 5) What do the witches tell Macbeth when he returns to see them for the second time?
- 6) Who is more brave? Lady Macbeth or Macbeth?
- 7) How does Macbeth react to Lady Macbeth's death?
- 8) Why is Macduff able to kill Macbeth?