Key characters

Macbeth – A mighty and ambitious warrior who has always been a ruthless killer deep down. He is one of Duncan’s leaders in the battle. A witches’ prophecy leads him to committing treason (killing Duncan) so he can be king himself. Once he’s committed treason his conscience will never let him rest.

Lady Macbeth – Macbeth’s wife. She is more ambitious than her husband and has fewer moral principles. She urges Macbeth to kill Duncan refusing to understand his hesitations and doubts. She follows the supernatural and wants to become a witch. Eventually her relationship crumbles away with Macbeth.

Duncan – The King of Scotland. He is a true and gracious monarch (king) and is everything the Elizabethans believed a ruler should be. He was appointed by God and followed his path and teachings to the best of his ability.

Malcolm – Duncan’s eldest son. He is next in line for the throne when Duncan is killed. He flees to England (because he was scared) and becomes a prime suspect when his father is murdered. He later comes back to face Macbeth and takes his rightful place as the King of Scotland.

Banquo – Macbeth’s best friend who is his co-commander in Duncan’s army. He follows the natural order of life and is loyal to Duncan. He is present when the witches give their prophecies to Macbeth; he does not listen to them. His friendship with Macbeth disintegrates when he ignores the witches and Macbeth doesn’t.

Macduff – A Scottish thane (Thane of Fife) who helps Malcolm raise an army against Macbeth. He is forever loyal to the king and Scotland even though his rash actions and hot temper raise concern, from other characters, after Duncan is murdered and later on when he leaves Macbeth’s banquet early.

Ross – A Scottish thane. He is a valuable commentator on the action of the play and its effects in the wider world outside Macbeth’s castle.

The witches – There are three witches (the supernatural). They are referred to as the ‘weird sisters’. They are fictional characters but represent how the supernatural affect people’s lives at this time. There are those who believe in them and there are those who do not. They represent the three fates in classical mythology: Clotho spun the “thread” of human fate, Lachesis dispensed it and Atropos cut the thread determining when the individual’s death will occur. Fate was personified as three very old women who spun the threads of human destiny.

Lady Macduff – Macduff’s wife. She, and her children, are savagely murdered at Macbeth’s request. She and her children are killed after Macbeth visits the witches for the second time. Macbeth has no reason to fear Macduff, according to the witches’ prophecy but decides to kill his family anyway.