

## The Knowledge: Macbeth, by William Shakespeare



### Macbeth

1. Macbeth begins the play as **'brave'** and ends as a **'dead butcher'**.
2. He believes that Duncan is a good king and has been **'so clear in his great office'**.
3. Macbeth's **'vaulting ambition'** leads him to kill Duncan, although he initially says he will **'proceed no further in this business'**.
4. Lady Macbeth accuses him of being **'green and pale'** and calls him a **'coward'** when he expresses doubts.
5. He worries that Duncan's blood will never wash clean from his hands and that he will **'sleep no more'**.
6. In the aftermath of the murder, Lady Macbeth accuses Macbeth of being **'infirm of purpose!'**
7. With Duncan **'in his grave'**, Macbeth hires murderers to kill Banquo and Fleance.
8. Macbeth's mental fragility is demonstrated when he accuses Banquo's ghost of shaking **'thy gory locks'** at him.
9. With the feast disrupted, Lady Macbeth once again accuses him of being **'unmann'd'**.
10. At the end of the play, isolated and deluded, Macbeth vows that he will **'not be afraid of death and bane'**.

|       |          |           |             |          |
|-------|----------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| Brave | Ruthless | Ambitious | Treacherous | Deluded  |
| Loyal | Violent  | Hesitant  | Cowardly    | Isolated |

### Lady Macbeth

1. Lady Macbeth is ambitious and intelligent, but at the end of the play she is described as a **'fiend-like queen'**.
2. She believes her husband is equally ambitious, but also **'too full o' the milk of human kindness'** (i.e. not ruthless enough).
3. Lady Macbeth evokes the power of evil spirits to **'unsex'** her and fill her **'top-full of direst cruelty!'**
4. She is the architect of the plan to murder Duncan; she tells Macbeth to **'leave all the rest to me'**.
5. In the aftermath of the murder, Lady Macbeth is decisive and domineering; she orders Macbeth to **'give me the daggers'**.
6. She scolds Macbeth for his weakness by saying that it is **'a foolish thought to say a sorry sight'**.
7. When Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo, Lady Macbeth attempts to calm the situation by asking the **'worthy'** thanes to **'sit'**.
8. Towards the end of the play, Lady Macbeth sleepwalks and **'rubs her hands'**.
9. She sees spots of Duncan's blood on her hands and says that **'all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand'**.
10. The doctor eventually reports to Macbeth that Lady Macbeth is **'troubled with thick coming fancies'**.

|             |            |              |             |          |
|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| Intelligent | Charming   | Manipulative | Domineering | Cruel    |
| Ambitious   | Persuasive | Decisive     | Ruthless    | Troubled |

### Macduff

1. Macduff arrives to wake the Duncan the morning after the murder takes place; he was commanded **'to call timely on him'**.
2. Macduff dutifully describes Duncan as **'royal'**, his **'master'** and his **'king'**.
3. Upon discovering Duncan's dead body, he loudly exclaims **'O horror! horror! horror!'** in anguished confusion.
4. Macduff's loss of control contrasts to Macbeth's hyperbole; Macbeth eulogises Duncan's **'silver skin'** and **'golden blood'**.
5. Macbeth furiously notes Macduff's absence at the feast, remarking that he **'denies his person at our great bidding'**.
6. The witches warn Macbeth to **'beware Macduff'**, but he is confident that **'none of woman born shall harm'** him.
7. Macbeth hires murderers to kill Macduff's wife and family; the first murderer calls Macduff a **'traitor'**.
8. Before being slaughtered, Macduff's son calls the first murderer a **'liar'** and **'shag-hair'd villain!'**
9. Meanwhile, in England, Macduff bemoans Macbeth's **'great tyranny'** and calls him a **'hell-kite'** for slaughtering his family.
10. In the final stages of the play, Macduff demands that Macbeth **'show thy face!'** before killing him.

|            |         |        |             |           |
|------------|---------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| Principled | Dutiful | Moral  | Intelligent | Vengeful  |
| Honourable | Devoted | Honest | Suspicious  | Merciless |