

Cheat Sheet for *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth*

Q: Who is Macbeth?

A: The main character in one of William Shakespeare's most renowned tragic plays, entitled *Macbeth*.

Q: Who is Lady Macbeth?

A: The ambitious and powerful wife of Macbeth, famous for passionately goading her husband into murdering King Duncan, after which she becomes Queen of Scotland.

Q: What is "the sleepwalking scene" in *Macbeth*?

A: In the final act of the play, Lady Macbeth has become overwhelmed by guilt because of the many brutal murders Macbeth has carried out in order to remain King. We see her sleepwalking and imagining that her hands are covered with blood, which she tries and tries to rub away, as she relives and recollects, in agony, the killing of King Duncan and others.

Q: Who are the Three Witches?

Q: Who is Lady Macduff?

Timeline:

***Macbeth*/First Years of English Colonization in America**

1606 - First performance of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, under the patronage of King James I

1607 - Founding of Jamestown (named after King James I), America's first permanent English colony, on Native American Powhatan land

1609 - 1610 - The English carry out war with the Powhatans and attempt to decimate the Indigenous population.

1619 - Jamestown, Virginia: The first enslaved Africans—50 men, women, and children—arrive in America.

***Synopsis: Macbeth* by William Shakespeare**

A victorious and brave Scottish general named Macbeth receives a prophecy from a trio of witches that one day he will become King of Scotland. Consumed by ambition and spurred to action by his wife (Lady Macbeth), he brutally murders King Duncan--his kinsman--and takes the Scottish throne for himself. Wracked with guilt and paranoia, he feels compelled to commit more and more murders to protect himself from enmity and suspicion, and soon becomes a tyrannical ruler. He murders his former ally Lord Banquo--whose ghost later appears to Macbeth at a banquet. He engages assassins to slaughter the innocent wife of the Thane of Fife, Lady Macduff, along with all her children. The bloodbath and consequent civil war swiftly take Macbeth and Lady Macbeth into the realms of madness and death.

Lady Macbeth

Lady Macbeth passionately goads her husband into murdering King Duncan, after which she becomes queen of Scotland. Later, however, she suffers pangs of guilt and remorse for her part in this crime and other murders, which drives her to sleepwalk. She dies off-stage in the last act of the play, an apparent suicide. (adapted from Wikipedia)

Fleance

Fleance is Lord Banquo's son who escapes the assassins Macbeth sends to kill both him and his father. During Shakespeare's time King James I was thought to have descended from the real Banquo, via Fleance's line.