

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth Cheat Sheet

Note: A Synopsis and Timeline for *Macbeth* are below

Who is Macbeth?

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

Who is Lady Macbeth?

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

Who are the Three Witches?

Three supernatural, female characters whom Macbeth mysteriously meets, and who prophecy that he will become the King of Scotland. In *Lady M.* the Witches have been reimagined as goddess-like prophetic Spirits, rather than evil witches.

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

A: In the final act of the play, Lady Macbeth is overwhelmed by guilt because of the many brutal murders Macbeth has carried out in order to remain King, and which she herself set in motion. In this scene, we see her sleepwalking and vividly 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 several others. She later dies off-stage, an apparent suicide. (adapted from Wikipedia)

Who is Lady Macduff?

The innocent wife of Lord Macduff, the Thane of Fife. Macbeth engages assassins to brutally slay her, along with all her children. In *Lady M.*, Lady Macduff appears as a ghost.

Who is Fleance?

Fleance is the young son of Lord Banquo, Macbeth's former friend and ally. Fleance escapes the assassins Macbeth sends to murder him and his father. Before Lord Banquo is killed, he cries out to his son, "Fly, Fleance, Fly!"

Synopsis of *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 (partially adapted from Wikipedia).

Macbeth/First Years of English Colonization in America

TIMELINE

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.

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