

TRAGEDY  
“MACBETH” BY  
SHAKESPEARE

BY GEETA R. CHAUDHARI  
(ASSIST. PROF.)

# Shakespearean Tragedy

- ▣ Shakespeare used the word tragedy, tragic and tragical 24 times in his four main tragedies.
- ▣ A. C. Bradley says,
- ▣ “A Shakespearean tragedy may be called a story of exceptional calamity leading to the death of a man in high state.”
- ▣ It is the story of one person the Hero.
- ▣ It is based on Greek tragedy
- ▣ The Heroes are responsible for their fall and their errors bring about their tragic doom.

# Shakespeare's Main Tragedies

- ▣ In *King Lear* the tragic flaw is Lear's fondness of flattery.
- ▣ In *Othello* the tragic flaw is jealousy.
- ▣ In *Hamlet* it is his indecision.
- ▣ In *Macbeth* it is his over ambition which brings about the tragic doom.

# Tragic Hero

- ▣ The Tragic Heroes of Shakespeare are men of high rank and noble stature.
- ▣ Macbeth is a great warrior and the general in Duncan's army.
- ▣ According to A. C. Bradley, "Tragedy with Shakespeare is concerned always with person's of high degree often with King or prince."

# Characterization

- ▣ Characters
- ▣ Duncan – King of Scotland
- ▣ Malcolm – Duncan's elder son
- ▣ Donalbain – Duncan's younger son
- ▣ Macbeth – a general in the army of King Duncan; originally Thane of Glamis, then Thane of Cawdor, and later King of Scotland
- ▣ Lady Macbeth – Macbeth's wife, and later Queen of Scotland
- ▣ Banquo – Macbeth's friend and a general in the army of King Duncan
- ▣ Fleance – Banquo's son
- ▣ Macduff – Thane of Fife
- ▣ Lady Macduff – Macduff's wife

- ▣ Macduff's son
- ▣ Ross, Lennox, Angus, Menteith, Caithness – Scottish Thanes
- ▣ Siward – general of the English forces
- ▣ Young Siward – Siward's son
- ▣ Seyton – Macbeth's armourer
- ▣ Hecate – Queen of the witches
- ▣ Three Witches
- ▣ Captain – in the Scottish army
- ▣ Three Murderers – employed by Macbeth
- ▣ Third Murderer
- ▣ Two Murderers – attack Lady Macduff
- ▣ Porter – gatekeeper at Macbeth's home
- ▣ Doctor – Lady Macbeth's doctor
- ▣ Doctor – at the English court
- ▣ Gentlewoman – Lady Macbeth's caretaker

# Quotes From Macbeth

“Fair is foul and foul is fair” .

(macbeth Act-I,Scene-I)

“There is no art to find the minds construction in the face,

He was a gentle man on whom I built and absolute trust.” (Act I Scene IV)

“Had he not resembled

My father as he slept,I had done” (ActII SceneII)

“Her’s the smell of blood still, All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand oh oh oh  
“ (Lady Macbeth)



# PLOT Act -I

Macbeth and Banquo encounter the witches for the first time

The play opens amidst thunder and lightning.

- ❑ Macbeth, who is the Thane of Glamis, and Banquo – have just defeated the allied forces of Norway and Ireland, who were led by the traitorous Macdonwald, and the Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth, the King's kinsman, is praised for his bravery and fighting prowess.
- ❑ The Three Witches enter and greet them with prophecies. Though Banquo challenges them first, they address Macbeth, hailing him as "Thane of Glamis," "Thane of Cawdor," and that he shall "be King hereafter." and Banquo will be father a line of kings though he himself will not be one.
- ❑ King Duncan welcomes and praises Macbeth and Banquo, and declares that he will spend the night at Macbeth's castle at Inverness; he also names his son Malcolm as his heir. Macbeth sends a message ahead to his wife, Lady Macbeth, telling her about the witches' prophecies. Lady Macbeth suffers none of her husband's uncertainty and wishes him to murder Duncan in order



# Act-II

- ▣ Macbeth stabs sleeping king Duncan.
- ▣ a hallucination of a bloody dagger.
- ▣ Duncan's sleeping servants are murdered .
- ▣ Early the next morning, Lennox, a Scottish nobleman, and Macduff, the loyal Thane of Fife, arrive. A porter opens the gate and Macbeth leads them to the king's chamber, where Macduff discovers Duncan's body.
- ▣ Macbeth murders the guards to prevent them from professing their innocence, but claims he did so in a fit of anger over their misdeeds.
- ▣ Duncan's sons Malcolm and Donalbain flee to England and Ireland, respectively.
- ▣ The rightful heirs' flight makes them suspects and Macbeth assumes the throne as the new King of Scotland as a kinsman of the dead king. Banquo suspicious of Macbeth.

# Act-III

- ❑ Macbeth invites Banquo to a royal banquet.
- ❑ Fearing Banquo's suspicions, Macbeth arranges to have him murdered, by hiring two men to kill them
- ❑ The assassins succeed in killing Banquo, but Fleance escapes. Macbeth becomes furious: he fears that his power remains insecure as long as an heir of Banquo remains alive.
- ❑ At a banquet, Macbeth invites his lords and Lady Macbeth to a night of drinking and merriment.
- ❑ Banquo's ghost enters and sits in Macbeth's place.
- ❑ Macbeth raves fearfully, startling his guests, as the ghost is only visible to himself.
- ❑ The others panic at the sight of Macbeth raging at an empty chair, until a desperate Lady Macbeth tells them that her husband is merely afflicted with a familiar and harmless malady.
- ❑ The ghost departs and returns once more, causing the same riotous anger and fear in Macbeth. This time, Lady Macbeth tells the lords to leave, and they do so.

# Act-IV

- ❑ Macbeth visits the three witches to reveal the truth of their prophecies to him.
- ❑ They tell him to beware of Macduff.
- ❑ Second, a bloody child tells him that no one born of a woman shall be able to harm him.
- ❑ Thirdly, a crowned child holding a tree states that Macbeth will be safe until Great Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane Hill.
- ❑ Macbeth is relieved and feels secure because he knows that all men are born of women and forests cannot move.
- ❑ Macbeth also asks whether Banquo's sons will ever reign in Scotland: the witches conjure a procession of eight crowned kings, all similar in appearance to Banquo, and the last carrying a mirror that reflects even more kings.
- ❑ Macbeth realises that these are all Banquo's descendants having acquired kingship in numerous countries.
- ❑ Macduff has fled to England. Macbeth orders to kill Macduff's wife and children.

# Act-V

Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking ,Bemoaning the murders of Duncan, Lady Macduff, and Banquo.

Her belief that nothing can wash away the blood on her hands is an ironic reversal of her earlier claim to Macbeth that

"[a] little water clears us of this deed" .

Malcolm leads an army, along with Macduff and Englishmen Siward (the Elder), the Earl of Northumberland, against Dunsinane Castle.

While encamped in Birnam Wood, the soldiers are ordered to cut down and carry tree limbs to camouflage their numbers.

- ▣ Lady Macbeth committed suicide causing him to sink into a deep and pessimistic despair and deliver his "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" soliloquy (V.v.17-28).

- ❑ Macbeth boasts that he has no reason to fear Macduff, for he cannot be killed by any man born of woman.
- ❑ Macduff declares that he was "from his mother's womb / Untimely ripp'd" and is not "of woman born"
- ❑ Macbeth realises too late that he has misinterpreted the witches' words.
- ❑ Though he realises that he is doomed, he continues to fight. Macduff kills and beheads Macbeth.
- ❑ Macduff carries Macbeth's head onstage and Malcolm discusses how order has been restored.
- ❑ His last reference to Lady Macbeth, however, reveals "'tis thought, by self and violent hands / Took off her life" , but the method of her suicide is undisclosed.
- ❑ Malcolm, now the King of Scotland, declares his benevolent intentions for the country and invites all to see him crowned at Scone.
- ❑ Although Malcolm, and not Fleance, is placed on the throne, the witches' prophecy concerning Banquo ("Thou shalt get kings") was known to the audience of Shakespeare's time to be true: James VI of Scotland (later also James I of England) was supposedly a descendant of Banquo.