Macbeth

A tragic hero whose unchecked ambition leads to his downfall.

Starts as "brave Macbeth" (Act 1, Scene 2), admired for loyalty and valour.

Becomes consumed by the witches' prophecy and his "vaulting ambition" (1.7).

His moral conflict gives way to tyranny and paranoia.

Ends as a "dead butcher" (5.8), destroyed by his own ambition and guilt.

Lady Macbeth

Ambitious, manipulative, and initially the driving force behind Duncan's murder.

Rejects traditional femininity: "unsex me here" (1.5).

Gains power through Macbeth, but ultimately collapses under guilt: "Out, damned spot!" (5.1).

Her mental deterioration contrasts with her early control and cruelty.

Macduff

Macbeth's ultimate nemesis; represents justice and moral order.

Driven by personal loss and loyalty to Scotland.

"O horror, horror, horror!" (2.3) – shocked at Duncan's murder.

Born by Caesarean ("from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped" 5.8) – key to Macbeth's downfall.

Banquo

Macbeth's foil: also hears the prophecy but does not act immorally.

"Lesser than Macbeth, and greater" (1.3) – morally superior.

Murdered by Macbeth to prevent the witches' prophecy.

His ghost haunts Macbeth, symbolising guilt and lost honour.

The Witches (Weird Sisters)

Symbolise fate, chaos, and the unnatural.

Speak in riddles and paradoxes: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1).

Plant the seed of ambition in Macbeth but never tell him what to do - raising questions about free will.

Represent subversive female power in a patriarchal world.

King Duncan

The embodiment of divine kingship: generous, just, and God-like.

His murder is unnatural and catastrophic.

"His virtues / Will plead like angels" (1.7) – highlights the horror of Macbeth's betrayal.

His death begins the collapse of natural and political order.

Malcolm

Duncan's son and rightful heir.

Tests Macduff's loyalty in England – wise and cautious.

Restores order at the end, symbolising hope and legitimate rule.

"What I am truly / Is thine, and my poor country's" (4.3) – embodies integrity.

Macduff, Thane of Fife   Three witches   Malcolm, Duncan's son and heir to his throne.   Banquo, friend of Macbeth   Macbeth   Lady Macbeth   Duncan, King of Scotland