CONTEXT

Shakespeare – Macbeth 10.1./11.1

CHARACTERS	
1. Macbeth	Considered a **hero at the beginning of the play**. Gets promoted from **Thane of Glamis to Thane of Cawdor** and eventually **King. Ambitious and manipulated by his wife.**
2. Lady Macbeth	**Manipulative and ruthless**. **Challenges Jacobean gender stereotypes.** Becomes increasingly troubled due to guilt, and **dies.**
3. King Duncan	**King of Scotland** at the beginning of the play. **Murdered by Macbeth.**
4. Banquo	Macbeth's friend. **Murdered by Macbeth's assassins**. Appears as a **ghost** at the banquet.
4. Fleance	**Banquo's son. Escapes** an **assassination attempt by Macbeth**.
5. Macduff	**Soldier, Thane of Fife and Macbeth's rival**. Grows suspicious of Macbeth. Forms an army with Malcolm in England and **kills Macbeth at the end.**
6. Lady Macduff	**Macduff's wife**. **Murdered** along with her son.
7. Malcolm	**King Duncan's son**. **Flees to England** after Duncan is killed. At the end of the play**, he becomes King.**
8. Donalbain	King Duncan's other son who **flees to Ireland** after King Duncan is killed.

CONTEXT	
1. Witches and the supernatural.	There was a **widespread belief in witches** at the time of the play. James I regarded them as a personal threat.
2. The Gunpowder Plot and Equivocation.	In 1605, a **Catholic plot to kill the Protestant King**, James I, and thereby overthrow the government. **Father Garnet** refused to disclose full details about another conspirator, **Robert Catesby**, reserving the right to **equivocate (use ambiguous language to conceal the truth).**
3. The Divine Right of Kings	The belief that **God chose the king, and therefore to kill the king (regicide) is to go against God.**
4. The Great Chain of Being	A **hierarchical structure of all matter and life**, with God at the top.
5. Patriarchy	**Male-dominated** society.
6. Tragedy	A **genre** dealing with unhappy events and an unhappy ending. See below.

THEMES	
1. Power	**6. The supernatural**
2. Ambition	**7. Appearance and reality**
3. Guilt	**8. Evil**
4. Gender	**9. Violence**
5. Temptation	**10. Fate and free will**

VOCABULARY	DEFINITION
1. Tragic protagonist	The **main character** in a tragedy, who typically undergoes a tragic fall (see peripeteia, below).
2. Tragic flaw	The **flaw within a tragic protagonist's character** that makes them prone to commit a fatal error (see below).
3. Hamartia	The **fatal error** committed by a tragic protagonist leading to peripeteia (see below).
4. Anagnorisis	The **moment of realisation**, when the tragic protagonist understands the full significance of their hamartia.
5. Peripeteia	A **reversal of fortune**: in tragedy, from high (happiness, status, etc.) to low (fear, misery, death).

ACT 1

Shakespeare – Macbeth Act 1 10.2/11.2

Plot	Act 1
Act 1.1	1. The **three witches gather to in a thunderstorm to meet Macbeth.**
Act 1.2	2. Duncan hears reports of the **battle** in which M**acbeth proves himself a hero** and also of the **treachery of the Thane of Cawdor.**
Act 1.3	3. **Macbeth & Banquo meet the witches** and hear the predictions that he will be **Thane of Cawdor and the next king.** Ross arrives to confirm that Macbeth is the new Thane of Cawdor.
Act 1.4	4. **Duncan decides to make his son Malcolm the heir to his throne** and tells Macbeth that he will visit his castle.
Act 1.5	5. **Lady Macbeth reads a letter from her husband** about the events so far and **makes up her mind to murder Duncan.**
Act 1.6	6. **Duncan arrives at Macbeth's castle** and is welcomed by Lady Macbeth.
Act 1.7	7. **Macbeth decides he cannot go through with the murder** but **Lady Macbeth persuades him to change his mind.**

Character	Quotation
1. Witches	"Fair is foul, and foul is fair"
2. Captain	"…his brandish'd steel which smoked with bloody execution"
3. Banquo	"The instruments of darkness tell us truths…to betray's in deepest consequence."
4. Macbeth	"…Stars, hide your fires; Let not light see my black and deep desires:"
5. Lady Macbeth	"…unsex me here, and fill me from the crown to the toe top-full of direst cruelty!"
6. Lady Macbeth	"Look like the innocent flower But be the serpent under't."
7. Macbeth	"I dare do all that may become a man."
8. Lady Macbeth	"When you durst do it, then you were a man."

Vocabulary	Definition
1. Soliloquy	**Thoughts spoken aloud** by a character for the audience.
2. Dramatic Foil	A **character whose qualities contrast** with another character's. Banquo's decency contrasts with Macbeth's scheming.
3. Protagonist	The **main character**.
4. Aside	A **remark** intended to be heard by the audience or another character, but **unheard by others**.
5. Pathetic fallacy	The technique by which **nature** (e.g. the weather) **reflects the mood of a scene of a character**.
6. Trochaic metre	A **poetic rhythm using a heavy-light stress pattern** – the reversal of the more natural iambic metre. Used by the witches in 1.1.

Symbols/motifs	
1. Weather	Stormy weather and darkness **suggests evil** and conveys fear and foreboding.
2. Birds	In 1.5 LM references a **raven** – thought to be a **messenger of death**. In 1.6, Duncan notes a martlet (house-martin), which builds its nest on church walls.
3. The supernatural	The **witches** scheme in 1.1 and 1.3. In 1.5, **Lady Macbeth summons evil spirits.**
4. Gender	The **witches have beards** (1.3). Lady Macbeth wants to be **unsexed**, and mocks Macbeth's alleged **lack of masculinity**.
5. Nature	See **weather and birds**, above.

ACT 2

Shakespeare – Macbeth Act 2 10.3/11.3

Plot	Act 2
Act 2.1	1. Macbeth sees a vision of a **bloody dagger, guiding him to kill Duncan.**
Act 2.2	**2. Macbeth kills Duncan.** Shaken by guilt and leaves the dagger behind. **Lady Macbeth takes charge.**
Act 2.3	3. The Porter provides some light relief. **Duncan's body is discovered by Macduff. Macbeth kills Duncan's guards.** Duncan's sons, **Malcolm & Donalbain, flee the castle.**
Act 2.4	**4. Macbeth is to be crowned King. Macduff is suspicious.**

Vocabulary	Definition
1. Hallucination	To see **something which is not present**.
2. Hyperbole	**Exaggeration** for effect.
3. Symbolism	The use of **images to suggest** or represent something else.
4. Enjambement	When a **line of poetry runs over to the next without a pause** or punctuation. (The opposite is 'end-stopped'.)
5. Equivocation	The use of **ambiguous language to conceal**.
6. Dramatic irony	When the significance of a characters actions or words is **clear to the audience but unknown to the character**.

Character	Quotation
1. Macbeth	"Is this a dagger which I see before me, The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee"
2. Macbeth	"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood Clean from my hand?"
3. Macbeth	"The multitudinous seas in incarnadine, Making the green one red."
4. Lady Macbeth	"My hands are of your colour; but I shame To wear a heart so white…"
5. Lady Macbeth	"A little water clears us of this deed:"
6. Macduff	"Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope"
7. Donalbain	"There's daggers in men's smiles:"

Symbols/motifs	
1. Birds/Nature	Opens with a shrieking 'owl' (2.2) associated with **death** and **darkness**. A 'mousing owl' attacks a 'falcon' (2.4) where predator and prey are reversed. This is strange and **unnatural** therefore symbolising M's **rebellion** against the **natural order** in murdering Duncan as also being unnatural. Duncan's horses later turn wild, and a ferocious storm occurs highlighting that the **Chain of Being** has been **disrupted**.
2. Blood	Symbolic of **violence**, **guilt** and **treason.**
3. Hallucinations	M (2.1) sees a **vision** of a **bloodstained dagger**, guiding him to kill D. This could be symbolic of his **inner ambition**, or alternatively, the witches' **magic.** Later in Act 5, when **sleepwalking**, LM hallucinates and sees **blood** on her **hands**.
4. Water	Water is symbolic of the **inescapability** of **guilt.** LM naively declares a 'little water' will wash away their guilt while Macbeth doubts whether 'all Neptune's great ocean' will be enough to wash away their deeds. Water typically symbolises **purity**, **redemption**, **forgiveness.**
5. Sleep	Associated with **innocence** and **purity.** Sleep is also **restorative** and **healing.** M and LM are tormented by a lack of sleep signifying their **guilt** and **disrupted** state of **mind.**

ACT 3

Shakespeare – Macbeth Act 3 10.4/11.4

Plot	Act 3
Act 3.1	**1. Banquo suspects Macbeth killed Duncan**. **Macbeth plans to have Banquo and Fleance murdered.**
Act 3.2	**2. Macbeth feels unsafe.** He hints, but does not tell Lady Macbeth about the plot to kill Banquo and Fleance.
Act 3.3	**3. Banquo is murdered.** Fleance escapes.
Act 3.4	4. Macbeth sees **Banquo's ghost at the banquet**. He decides to meet the witches.
Act 3.5	**5. Hecate** is angry the witches haven't involved her in their dealings with Macbeth. She **vows to lead Macbeth to his destruction.**
Act 3.6	6 Scottish lords discuss Macbeth and reveal **Macduff is in England plotting an attack on Macbeth's castle.**

Vocabulary	Definition
1. Hecate	The **goddess of witchcraft**.
2. Imperative	A **command**.
3. Mocking/ mockery	To mock is to **poke fun** at, or ridicule, something or someone.
4. Tyrant	A **cruel and oppressive leader.**
5. Manipulate	To **influence** a person through use of persuasion, coercion or deceit.
6. Remorse	Deep **regret** or guilt for a wrong committed.

Character	Quotation
1. Banquo	"Thou has it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all, As the weird women promised, and, I fear, Thou play'dst most foully for't:"
2. Macbeth	"To be thus is nothing But to be safely thus."
3. Macbeth	"We have scorch'd the snake, not kill'd it"
4. Macbeth	"O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
5.Macbeth	"Be innocent of the knowledge…Till thou applaud the deed."
6. Macbeth	"Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that Which might appal the devil."
7. Macbeth	"Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves Shall never tremble."
8. Macbeth	"It will have blood, they say, blood will have blood."

Symbols/motifs	
1. Nature	**Scorpions** (3.2) represent **poison**, **malice**, **evil**, **death**, **destruction**. Symbolic of Macbeth's psychological **deterioration** and that killing Duncan has affected him **mentally**. **Snakes** (3.2) symbolise **sin**, **treachery**, **deceit**, **immorality**. Also represent **cunning**, **temptation**, **desire**, **ambition** and **transgression**. Link to **religious** ideas around **Original Sin.**
2. Hallucination	M sees **Banquo's ghost** at the **banquet** (3.4) – a sign of M's **intense guilt**, or the start of God's **punishment** of a **sinner**.

ACT 4

Shakespeare – Macbeth Act 4 10.5/11.5

Plot	Act 4
Act 4.1	1. **Macbeth visits the witches again.** They tell him to **beware Macduff,** but say n**one of woman-born can harm him**, and that **he's safe until Birnam Wood marches against him.** Macbeth hears that Macduff has fled to England.
Act 4.2	2. **Lady Macduff and her children are murdered** on Macbeth's orders.
Act 4.3	3. **In England, Malcolm and Macduff plan to get their revenge on Macbeth to free Scotland** from tyranny. **Malcolm** is initially suspicious of Macduff, fearing he may be a traitor. He **tests Macduff's loyalty by presenting himself as a bad future king.** When Macduff is dismayed, Malcolm knows that Macduff cares for Scotland. **Macduff hears his family are killed.**

Vocabulary	Definition
1. Rhyming couplets	A **rhyming pair** of successive lines of verse, typically of the same length.
2. Refrain	**A word, line or phrase repeated** within a poem.
3. Apparition	A **ghostlike image** of a person.
4. Hubris	Excessive **arrogance** or pride.
5. Asyndeton	An asyndetic construction or list, wherein a **conjunction** between parts of a sentence or items in a list is **omitted**.
6. Self-deprecation	To **criticise or put oneself down**.

Character	Quotation
1. Witches	"By the pricking of my thumbs Something wicked this way comes"
2.Witches	"Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff; Beware the thane of Fife." "for none of woman born Shall harm Macbeth." "Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill Shall come against him."
3. Lady Macduff	"Do I put up that womanly defence?"
4. Ross	"your wife and babes savagely slaughtered"
5. Malcolm	"Dispute it like a man."
6. Macduff	"But I must also feel it like a man."
7. Macduff	"Bleed, bleed, poor country"

Symbols/motifs	
1. The supernatural	M visits the witches again (4.1). The **apparitions** warn him to beware of Macduff, but **prophecy** that **none of woman-born** can harm him, and that he's safe until **Birnam Wood** marches against him. The apparitions speak in **half-truths** and are **equivocators**.
2. Violence	Lady Macduff and her **children** are **murdered** on M's orders. On hearing his family have been **slaughtered** (4.3), Macduff vows to **avenge** M (and the disorder that M has caused through **regicide**) in battle.

ACT 5

Shakespeare – Macbeth Act 5 10.6/11.6

Plot	Act 5
Act 5.1	1. **Lady Macbeth is seen sleepwalking**, trying to wash blood from her hands.
Act 5.2	2. Scottish lords join with **Malcolm and his English army near Birnam Wood.**
Act 5.3	3. **Macbeth hears Malcolm's troops are coming to get him** but is unafraid because of the witches' predictions.
Act 5.4	4. **Malcom's soldiers cut branches from Birnam Wood to disguise their numbers.**
Act 5.5	5. **Macbeth hears Lady M is dead**; he's then told Birnam Wood is moving! **He prepares to fight.**
Act 5.6	6. **Malcom's army prepares to attack.**
Act 5.7	7. **The battle begins.** Macduff seeks for M.
Act 5.8	8. Macduff and Macbeth fight; Macduff says he was not born of woman. **Macbeth is killed.**
Act 5.9	9. Macduff enters with Macbeth's head on a pole. All declare their support for **Malcolm, the new King of Scotland.**

Vocabulary	Definition
1.Somnambulant	(adj) The act of **walking or talking during sleep.**
2. Repress/ repression	To **suppress one's thoughts or feelings** so that they remain unconscious or inhibited.
3. Erratic	**Ir regular and unpredictabl**e.
4. Nihilistic	Rejecting all religious and moral principles in the **belief that life is meaningless**.
5. Resigned	**Accepting** that something unpleasant is **unavoidable**.
6. Restoration	Th e **return of a monarch or regime** to power.

Character	Quotation
1. Lady Macbeth	"out, out damned spot"
2. Lady Macbeth	"will these hands ne'er be clean?"
3.Macbeth	"I will not be afraid of death and bane til Birnam Forest come to Dunsinane"
4. Macbeth	"tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day"
5. Macbeth	"out, out brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow"
6. Macduff	"Macduff was from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd"
7. Macduff	"the cursed usurper's head"

Symbols/motifs	
1. Sleepwalking	Symbolises the **psychological distress** LM is in. She is consequently physically and **psychologically restless** from the **guilt** her **transgressive** ways and her association with M and the murders he, and his assassins commit. LM is **tormented** by a lack of sleep signifying her **guilt** and **disrupted psyche.**
2. Hallucinations	LM sleepwalks and is hallucinating washing the **blood** from her **hands** (5.1) which symbolises the **guilt** that stains LM's **conscience** – a clear sign that LM is **tormented.** The **guilt** is too much, and she kills herself. LM's **phantasmagoria** of blood is reminiscent of M's hallucination of **'daggers'** used to kill Duncan in Act 2.
3. Water	For M, water is symbolic of the **inescapability** of **guilt**, while LM naively declares a 'a little water clears us of this deed'. Water typically symbolises **purity**, **redemption**, **forgiveness**.
4. Light and dark	**Light** is symbolic of **purity**, **innocence**, **goodness, virtue, knowledge, honesty** and **truth**. **Darkness**, in contrast, symbolises **evil** deeds, **blindness**, **ignorance, concealment, untruths** and **sin**.