

## **The Character of Macbeth - Transcript**

**Witches:** 'Hail Macbeth, hail Macbeth'.

'All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!'

**Macbeth:** 'Stay you imperfect speakers.

Tell me more'... To be king, stands not within the prospect of belief.'

**Presenter:** Macbeth's first encounter with the three witches sees him witness a tantalising prophecy.

Which would see him fulfil his ambitions and gain great power.

Macbeth's character is used to explore the very idea of ambition, leading to sin, guilt and a man losing his grip on reality itself.

Shakespeare first introduces the character of Macbeth as a brave man, with his allies using strong verbs like 'carved' and 'brandished' to describe his actions in battle.

But even from the start, his mind is plagued by 'black and deep desires', a hint toward his ruthless ambition.

An ambition that he struggles to balance with his sense of right and wrong.

Toward the start of the play, he changes his mind about moral questions, like... Should he murder Duncan?

Committing regicide - the killing of a king - in an era where doing so was just about the worst crime imaginable.

Ultimately, encouraged by Lady Macbeth, Macbeth goes through with it, seizing the throne.

Before ordering a series of assassinations, killing anyone that he sees as a potential threat.

But haunting, blood soaked visions begin to plague him of one of his victims, his good friend Banquo.

**Macbeth:** 'Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold.'

**Presenter:** His ghost appears at a banquet, rife with tension, where Macbeth's guilty conscience and wavering emotional state is witnessed by his guests.

From here, it's all downhill.

Macbeth's guilt ridden mind rightly predicts that 'Blood will have blood', and his rule descends into cruelty, fear and isolation.

Until 'brave Macbeth' becomes a 'tyrant' and a 'dead butcher'.

His murder a fitting end to a character whose arc warns of the dangers of unchecked ambition.

But it all began with the seed planted by the three witches.

Shakespeare deliberately leaves ambiguity.

Was the character afflicted by dark supernatural forces all along, or did they simply encourage the violent ambitions already in his head?