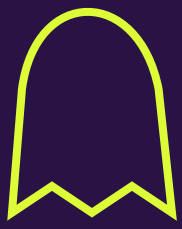
THE WITCHES

Key features · development · paired evidence



THE BIG IDEA

The witches create temptation and uncertainty. Their partial truths become dangerous when Macbeth turns them into guarantees.

FOLLOW THE CHARACTER

1 Speak in paradox › **2** Offer advancement › **3** Supply equivocal assurances › **4** Leave Macbeth overconfident

DECEPTION ANNOUNCED

“Fair is foul, and foul is fair”

Witches, 1.1

PAIRED WITH

“So foul and fair a day I have not seen”

Macbeth, 1.3

METHOD → MEANING

The opening paradox unsettles moral distinctions. Macbeth’s echo connects his language to theirs before he hears the prediction, creating unease rather than proving total supernatural control.

AN ASSURANCE MISREAD

“none of woman born”

Second apparition, 4.1

PAIRED WITH

“Macduff was from his mother’s womb untimely ripped”

Macduff, 5.8

METHOD → MEANING

The first fragment sounds universal when Macbeth interprets it; the later disclosure exposes the limit hidden in its wording. Equivocation works through a hearer’s assumptions.

PUSH THE ARGUMENT

The apparitions speak the later promises. Macbeth’s interpretations are more absolute than the words warrant. He remains responsible for decisions that go beyond any prediction.

COVER THE SHEET. CAN YOU EXPLAIN…?

Which murders does Macbeth choose without being instructed by the witches?