



## The Tragedy of Macbeth

*William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616)*

Read by:	Multiple readers	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	2 hours 13 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1124
Language:	English	UPC:	0683422134456
Style:	Dramatic	MSLP:	\$9.99
Genre:	Plays, Tragedy		

*The Tragedy of Macbeth* dramatizes the consequences of the naked lust for power and political position. It is also about the devious workings of the mind: its willingness to believe and fulfill a prophecy, to see what it wants to see and overlook what it needs to overlook, and how the power of guilt and fear of retribution can lead to paranoia and desperate actions to remedy a consumptive insecurity.

We see Macbeth first as a hero, a general who has defeated an uprising by traitors and is rewarded by a grateful king with the title and property of one of the conspirators. The reward had been mysteriously forecast by The Three Witches he and colleague Banquo encountered, along with the prediction of his eventual kingship. He shares

the prophecy with Lady Macbeth, who convinces him to fulfill the destiny immediately by scheming to kill King Duncan in his sleep and pin it on his chamberlains. They proceed and guilt, remorse, paranoia take over. Macbeth becomes a vicious tyrant, ruthlessly eliminating threats from rivals real and imagined. Lady Macbeth, wracked with guilt, sleepwalks, washing her hands and babbling her regrets before taking her own life. Macbeth seeks comfort in the further prophecies of the Three Witches but misinterprets their meanings and inevitably falls victim to the campaign of his avenging enemies Malcolm and Macduff. Double, double, toil and trouble, indeed.

Macbeth was written at about the time the Scottish King James VI ascended to the English throne as James I, and likely reflected uncertainty about England's future in the hands of a king from its bloodied, traitorous northern neighbor. It also contains numerous allusion to the Gunpowder Plot of 1606, which resulted in the execution of Jesuit Henry Garnet for crimes of treason and equivocation. The play carries with it a superstition that its name not be mentioned aloud in the theatre, for fear of bad luck resulting from the curse by the witches, and is often called "the Scottish play" as a result.

**William Shakespeare** (April 26, 1564 – April 23, 1616) was an English playwright and poet widely considered as the world's greatest dramatist and the greatest writer in the English language. He produced 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two narrative poems and other verse, most between the years 1589 and 1613. His earlier works consist mostly of comedies and histories, considered as some of the best work ever done in these genres. He turned to tragedies from about 1600 until about 1608, producing *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth* in this phase, considered the finest works in English. His last phase brought us the tragicomedies and romances such as *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. All but two of his plays were collected in the First Folio in 1623.

Little is known of his personal life apart from his marriage to Anne Hathaway at age 18, his three children, and his work as an actor and part owner of the King's Men theatre company in addition to his writing. The paucity of information has led to speculation about his appearance, beliefs, sexuality, and even the authenticity of his works. He retired to Stratford in 1613 and died three years later.