

# Macbeth is a complex character essay sample

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Macbeth is a complex character who changes dramatically through the course of the play. Discuss the complexities of his character, the changes that take place in him and why they happen. What is your personal response to him?

During this course work, I will be saying about how the Thane of Glamis turns into a tyrant king. I will also write about how the feelings towards Macbeth change over the play.

At the beginning, his relationship with Lady Macbeth is very close as he tells her every thing. This is shown in act 1 scene 5 " Whiles I stood in rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who hailed me, ' Thane of Cawdor' by which these weird sisters saluted me." Most people would not have told their wives this in fear of being called mad but Lady Macbeth believes her husband. They also seem very close as when Macbeth first returns to his castle in act 1 scene 5 she yells " Great Glamis! Worthy Cawdor!" to which Macbeth replied " My dearest love."

The turning point of their relationship is when he does not tell Lady Macbeth about the planned murder of Banquo. After this their relationship deteriorate rapidly until the suicide of Lady Macbeth. I believe this deterioration of her relationship with Macbeth is the main reason of her end. To add insult to injury Macbeth shows little grief and even says it should have happened sooner in act 5 scene 5 " she should have died here after."

He loses every important relationship to him through the course of the play. He kills King Duncan whom he admired and respect for being a good king. He kills his best friend Banquo and starts the deterioration with his wife. This

deterioration with his wife increases steadily until her death. The proof of this is in act 5 scene 5

Macbeth at the beginning has a disliking for witchcraft as he says in Act 1, Scene 3, line 70 " Stay, you imperfect speakers." Then by Act 3 Scene 4 he is seeking their advice as he says " I will tomorrow (And betimes I will) to the weird sisters: more shall they speak for I am bent to know." This shows corruption and how he turns his back on good.

Macbeth loses himself at many points during the play. The first time he has a momentary lapse in sanity was when he kills Duncan in act 2 scene 2 " Whence is that Knocking? How is't with me, that every noise appals me." He is shown here to worry about a knocking which shows this first madness. The second time is when he sees the ghost of Banquo in act 3 scene 4. He keeps going from his normal happy self to his paranoid self that panics and worries the room. The final straw for his last remain shred of sanity is when the witches tell him that he is practically invincible. This happens in act 4 scene 1 when apparition 2 says " Be bloody, be bold and resolute: laugh to scorn The power of man; for none of woman born shall harm Macbeth." When this is said he believes he is invincible, so need to hold no fear.

Macbeth becomes paranoid in the play. He believes that the only way to keep is by killing people. We see this in that he kills his best friend, Banquo and then goes on to kill Macduff's whole family. When he kills Banquo, he hires two murders. When the deed is about to be done, he hires a third, act 3 scene 3 says

“ Murder 1: But who bid thee join with us?

Murder 3: Macbeth

Murder 2: He need not our mistrust,”

Maybe he was being careful because they still fail to kill Banquo's son but they seem to think it was Macbeth's mistrust that made him hire a third killer. This is the start of the end for Macbeth as he is riddled with guilt after the deed. This also shows that Macbeth is also losing his trust in people. By the time he is looking to kill Macduff he is doing it because murder is the only way he knows of dealing with opposition.

Lady Macbeth seems to push her husband into killing king Duncan in act 1 scene 7. In this scene she says " I have given suck, and know how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me- I would, while it was smiling in my face, have plucked my nipple from its boneless gums, and dashed its brains out." She says that she would kill her own baby during the tenderest moments if she had sworn to and she believes that Macbeth has sworn to commit the king's murder. She is the one whom drugs the guards and lays out the daggers. In act 2 scene 2, she consumes some alcohol and asks for the help of dark spirits " That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold, what hath quenched their thirst hath given me fire." She is the one we are made to dislike and mistrust.

I believe this is a clever ploy by Shakespeare to throw us off the sent. Lady Macbeth never kills anyone through the course of the play. She tries to kill Duncan but fails to when she says in act 2 scene 2 " I laid their daggers

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ready, He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled My father as he slept I had done it." I believe that the way he resembled her father was her conscience telling her not to do it. This could also be a sign that she still has not turned evil. Another thing which makes us dislike her is the way she deals with Duncan's death. Macbeth deals with it by grieving and showing his guilt in one huge chunk. This helps him get over his guilt and allows him to carry on as normal. Lady Macbeth on the other hand shows no guilt and buries it all deep inside. This could also be another deceive point in her insanity and premature death.

Macbeth throughout the play never becomes fully insane or evil. He always shows some signs of humanity. When he kills Banquo he acts happy until he sees the ghost of Banquo. When Macbeth, sees the ghost of Banquo and says in act 3 scene 4 " Thou canst not say I did it: never shake Thy gory locks at me." This could be his conscience projecting the image of his murdered friend. There are many reasons to show this. No one else can see Banquo, when he says he did not murder Banquo the ghost shakes its head at him showing that the guilt is still upon him. In the act 5 scene 8 Macbeth shows his last bit of bravery when he fights the only man that can kill him. " Despair thy charm And let the angel whom thou hast severed Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb Untimely ripped." This line tells Macbeth that he can die by Macduff's hand.

Through half of this play we are made to feel sorry for Macbeth. His wife forces him to kill king Duncan in act 1 scene 7 when she tells him that she would kill her own child if she had sworn to. When he has killed Banquo there

is grow hatred towards Macbeth but that seeps out a little when he sees his bests friends ghost. Finally when seeks the witches I mistrust him and think he has looked over the edge of sanity into the abyss. When he hires the murderers to kill Banquo and his son it shows his selfishness because his reason behind killing them. This was because Banquo's son would be king after him and he does not want to have killed Duncan for someone else's gain. When he sees Banquo's ghost in act 3 scene 4 this shows how he is still soft and can be horrified even after the thing he has done. It also shows that he still is a normal human with fears and the ability to panic.

When he has seeks out the witches' council in act 4 scene 1 it shows is dependence of things that are corrupt. In this scene he says " Then live Macduff; what need I fear of thee? But yet I'll make double sure, And take a bond of fate. Thou shalt not live." This shows how he kills even when he cannot be killed be a man born of a woman. Meaning that a very cold heart know beats in Macbeth's cheat and has gone far astray from the hero he once was. He gets some murderers kill Macduff for treason and they end up killing his son instead. This shows how he would go to any lengths to keep his power. This shows his disrespect for life and how far he has ventured into the territory of insanity. When his wife dies, whom he had a good relationship with at the beginning dies he does not grieve.

This shows how cut off he has become from all former ties. He seems to have lost everyone and thing he cared about to his own ambition, selfishness and greed. Through at this point I start to feel as though he deserved it. When everything the weird sister had foretold fits neatly in place he does the only

thing he can do, kill more people. As he speaks with Young Seyward he seems almost born and as he kills him he scorns his attempts at revenge. When Macduff comes in and the last piece of Macbeth's jagged fate fall neatly into place he does the honourable thing. This involved fighting to the end like the true hero he was at the beginning. This last act shows every side of Macbeth. He panics, he takes life without a second thought, and he is a true hero while still maintaining that uncompleted corruptness he seems to have.

The audience is meant to believe in the beginning that Macbeth is a good and hard working character. In the play he fights against the invading army. He earns his title and the land given to him by the king. He reacts with hostility when he sees the witches and doesn't want to kill the king. As the play progresses so does Macbeth's decent into insanity that leaves us hating the character.