

Lady macbeth has at first too much, and then too little, power over her husband e...

[Literature](#), [William Shakespeare](#)



Macbeth by William Shakespeare illustrates throughout the course of the novel how the dominance in a relationship can change. Lady Macbeth is an ambitious character who initially portrays the role of a leading spouse over Macbeth but as the play progresses we witness an incredible shift in the orientation of power. The beginning involves an uncertain Macbeth who struggles to come in terms with the prophecy of the three witches. Macbeth's indecisive nature proves to be an opportunity for the success Lady Macbeth's objective. Originally both characters indicate their hopes and dreams for glory but it is Lady Macbeth who dominates and leads the ambiguous Macbeth into his drastic yet prophesized future. Macbeth's chaotic rule begins a chain of decisions made without the influence of Lady Macbeth which ultimately destroys her power in the relationship.

The desire for glory and Macbeth's uncertainty about his future allows Lady Macbeth to gain control of her husband. News of Macbeth's encounter with the three witches who prophesized his success reaches Lady Macbeth who willingly rids herself of human kindness in order to achieve her dreams. At this stage Macbeth exhibits hesitation to act upon the words of the three witches. Macbeth's arrival is met with the overly ambitious Lady Macbeth who automatically declares her evil intentions: Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor! / Greater than both by the all-hail hereafter!, (I. VI. 53-54). At this stage Macbeth fails to take authority as his ambiguity holds him back which therefore allows Lady Macbeth to overpower him: We will speak further, (I. VI. 68). Lady Macbeth's reply gives a concrete indication of her influence: ... To alter favour ever is to fear. / Leave all the rest to me., (I. VI. 70-71). This is

a significant element of Lady Macbeth's outward display of power over her husband.

Similar ambitions allow the highly determined Lady Macbeth to persuade her husband into a tempting path. The three witches provide Macbeth with foretelling that greatly interests him yet he is reluctant to take action. The ambition exists in Macbeth but it required Lady Macbeth's supremacy and convincing nature to rid Macbeth of his human kindness so that they achieve their ultimate goal. Macbeth's curiosity into the witches' prophecy suggests his desire for glory: Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more. (I. III. 69). Lady Macbeth's intentions become clear after she hears of the news from Macbeth: Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between/ The effect and it. (I. VI. 43-45). The ability of Lady Macbeth to keep her control over Macbeth comes from her solid and finalised intentions.

The start of Macbeth's tyrannical rule confirms his goal and with this the power of Lady Macbeth over him diminishes. Royalty becomes a curse for Macbeth as he keeps killing in order to keep his glorious throne whilst Lady Macbeth's influence on him begins to disappear. Initially Macbeth is acceptant of the decisions made by Lady Macbeth but when his own road of destruction begins, the reliance on his wife finishes. This is evident as Macbeth orders the killing of Banquo and Fleance without consulting Lady Macbeth: We have scotched the snake, not killed it;/ Shell close, and be herself, whilst our poor malice/ Remains in danger of her former tooth. (III. II. 13-15). Macbeth symbolises the snake as his opposition and finds it unnecessary to tell Lady Macbeth of his decisions. This ultimately marks the

end of Lady Macbeths power and dominance in her relationshipLady Macbeths supremacy in her relationship with Macbeth is significant at its beginning but as the play progresses her influence weakens. She is able to gain initial power over Macbeth at a time when he is uncertain of his future but as his authority as king increases so does his power in his relationship.

References: Macbeth, William Shakespeare, Penguin Publisher