

The play "macbeth" by william shakespeare

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



Life is an unfolding play. An individual can determine what is right or wrong, yet, either way, the decisions made will alter someone else's fate. In the play Macbeth, written by William Shakespeare, the eponymous protagonist Macbeth has a great deal of difficulty assessing the disparity amid honest and dishonest decisions during his ascension to power. Shakespeare's Macbeth examines the life journey of Macbeth, as he ascends the ladder of the social hierarchy. Determined to become King, Macbeth will eliminate any, and all that come in his way. A respected and loyal soldier of the Scottish army changes entirely to a murderous tyrant. His downfall is complete, and he is responsible for his fate. Macbeth succumbs to performing evil acts to fulfill his ambition and is solely responsible for his downfall. Macbeth's downfall attributes to a sense of his lust for power, unrestrained ambition, and the influence of the witches' prophecy which seal his fate and destruction. The first factor which plays a vital role in Macbeth's downfall is Macbeth's absurd quest for absolute power. Macbeth craves to be the King of Scotland and as he obtains more titles, his thirst for power increases. During the commencement of play, Macbeth and Banquo have their initial encounter with the witches. As this assemblage initiates, the witches extraordinarily welcome Macbeth. Macbeth enters to the sound of a beating drum: " a drum, a drum! Macbeth doth come" (Shakespeare 1. 3. 31-32).

This dramatic device is not used once yet twice, signifying Macbeth's rising status and importance. As the " drum" noise coincides with Macbeth's arrival, it betokens how the witches have already prophesied Macbeth's ascension to power. Macbeth becomes genuinely persuaded of the

superiority he will achieve. Alongside Macbeth's eagerness to become Thane of Cawdor, he fantasizes of being king of Scotland. As the lead up to the event of King Duncan's murder, Lady Macbeth dupes Macbeth into assassinating Duncan by implementing her cunning and intricate techniques. Towards the completion of the scene, Lady Macbeth begins to reassure her husband that if he is intrepid and gallant, they will not fail in their mission of becoming king and queen: "Screw your courage to the sticking-place"(1. 7. 67). His wife convinces Macbeth into believing he will obtain more authority and power by slaying Duncan. He engages in his first evil deed to become king and attains the power he has coveted. Not only does Macbeth's quest for power cease the life of King Duncan, but he also proceeds to murder others for no purpose aside from malice. Macbeth is plotting to kill everyone in the line of Macduff's inheritance: "The castle of Macduff I will surprise/Seize upon Fife, give to th' edge o' th' sword/His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls/That trace him in his line"(4. 1. 157-160).

Macbeth establishes himself to be a nefarious tyrant as he schemes alone to kill Lady Macduff and her children. At this stage of the play, Macbeth has lost all human compassion and clemency as he thinks nothing of slaying innocents. Had he held at the first murder of King Duncan, he may have moved on from it. Although, his psychopathic behaviour turns everyone against him and can ultimately only lead to his demise. Thus, by cause of Macbeth's yearn for power, he is lead to committing evil acts, and this provokes his destruction. The second factor which plays a critical role in the demise of Macbeth is his unrestrained ambitious nature. Macbeth's ambition spirals out of control and drives him to slay again and again to cover up his

past wrongdoings. From the beginning, Macbeth can determine his destiny. The moment when he eagerly listens to the witches he requests, " Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more" (1. 3. 71). This explicates his faith in the witches words and how they are of great significance to him. The tempting words of the witches prophecies ignite a spark of egotistical ambition in him which he does not realize is there. Although the witches provoked Macbeth, it was his ambition which drives him into committing the assassinations. The witches' divinations also have a substantial impact on Macbeth. Banquo notices this and questions him, " Why do you start and seem to fear/ Things that do sound so fair" (1. 3. 52-53).

Banquo is not able to comprehend as to why Macbeth, a prominent warrior, could be disturbed as he is promised only flourishment and power in the future. Macbeth's deep thought-provoked mind is one of the prime manifestations of his unrestrained ambition. Hence, his ambitions make him realize that for these " fair" prophecies to become a certainty, he would need to perform atrocious, unspeakable acts along the way. As Macbeth deliberates the witches words, he is bothered by Banquo's prognosticated future. Macbeth darkly and skeptically questions Banquo's objectives: " Do you not hope your children shall be kings"(1. 3. 121). This indicates that Macbeth is concerned about the prediction of Banquo's future, as though it is a peril to his future. Unquestionably, Macbeth's ambition is overtaking his natural temperament as he craves to hear more of the witches' " strange intelligence" (1. 3. 77). The witches' strike a chord in Macbeth's mind, tapping into his ambition and as a consequence, he starts to become more selfish and deceitful as he sees Banquo and the king as obstacles. Lastly,

Macbeth also has no intention to murder Duncan rather than his passions. Macbeth affirms, " I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent, but only vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself and falls on th'other" (1. 7. 25-28).

Macbeth is attempting to rationalize his impending murder of King Duncan. Macbeth laments that he is driven only by ambition and not by some other worthy motive. Furthermore, we can discern that Macbeth uses his ambition to justify wicked and despicable actions, whereas most will use it for good. Macbeth's overly ambitious nature provokes him into committing sinful acts; thus, causing his downfall. The final factor which drives Macbeth to his destruction is the influence of the witches' prophecies. The three witches acquaint Macbeth that he is destined to be king, as they are responsible for the introduction of the ideas that caused Duncan's passing and Macbeth's demise. The witches had determined the precise moment to approach Macbeth; as he was full of triumph after the battle. At the beginning of the play, the three witches make a chilling prophecy saying: " All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, thane of Cawdor! / All hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter!" (1. 3. 50-51).

This foresight soon motivates Macbeth to perform acts of immorality and greed, which include the murder of King Duncan and his best friend, Banquo. This suggests that Macbeth has become impudent and has lost his moral values from becoming a well-liked and esteemed Scottish General to a heinous criminal. Notwithstanding the witches' impact on Macbeth, Banquo does warn Macbeth to be cautious of the witches' prognostications before he acts on them. Banquo attributes the witches as, " The instruments of

darkness [telling] us truths/ [Winning] us with honest trifles, to [betray]/ In deepest consequence" (1. 3 126-128). He strives to bring light to the reality of the witches words and how they may come true but only for the purpose of bringing about their destruction. Banquo's words are somewhat ironic as Macbeth prefers to follow through the witches' prophecies instead of rejecting them and conclusively as Banquo said is betrayed " in deepest consequence." Ultimately the witches represent Macbeth's fate and symbolize the sinister side of humanity and the corruption of beings.

In Act 4, the witches' contribute to Macbeth's downfall as they deceive him by revealing apparitions. The witches show apparitions which utter statements as, " none of woman born/ Shall harm Macbeth" (4. 1. 81-82). From this, Macbeth considers he is unconquerable. As an outcome, Macbeth becomes peculiarly heedless and does not recognize that the witches are leading him into a false sense of security. The witches play a prominent position in Macbeth's downfall as they undoubtedly perplex him. As Macbeth can be easily influenced, the witches reveal Macbeth's future visions that he misinterprets. Thus, Macbeth is responsible for his own downfall as he associates the witches' prophecy with murder. All factors considered, Macbeth holds accountable for his downfall as he commits atrocious acts of evil only in hopes to achieve his ambition.

By the end of the play, it is unambiguous that a valiant Macbeth no longer breathes. His destruction is sealed as he is hungry for power, blinded by his ambition and is manipulated by the witches' prophecy. Though, it must not be forgotten that the play is a tragedy. Macbeth is an individual whose

ambition is the driving force of his life and is his greatest weakness which causes him to fall from a successful position to inevitable death. Perhaps, it is not right or wrong to blame destruction on Macbeth himself. As in all tragedies, the protagonist has the ability to succeed but also the limitations to fall. To put the responsibility on a particular individual is to some extent unfair as all mortal beings have imperfections; no matter how daring and intrepid they appear.