

The problem of guilt in shakespeare's macbeth

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



A lot of people deal with guilt, whether they are children or adults, everyone deals with guilt at least once in their lifetime. Lots of guilt is shown in Shakespeare's play Macbeth. Since guilt affects you physically and mentally, some characters are affected by guilt so much that it leads to their death, or even to commit suicide. It may lead to death because they were not able to handle the consequences that had happened.

Guilt is shown a lot through Macbeth when Macbeth begins as a good and loyal king but as the play continues, he becomes weak when his conscience always reminds him of killing Duncan, and all the blood he saw: " One cried, ' God bless us!' and ' Amen,' the other, as they had seen me with these hangman's hands. List'ning their fear, I could not say ' Amen,' when they did say ' God bless us'. Methought, I heard a voice cry, ' Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep'" (Macbeth, Act II, scene II). This quote is said by Macbeth after killing Duncan with the weapon (dagger). He feels guilty after killing him. His goal to become a King ruins his life leading him to guilt, killing Duncan.

Macbeth's conscience shows when he murders Duncan, because of his bad acts. After Duncan dies, Macbeth is so worried that someone will figure out that he did such a thing and killed him. Lady Macbeth starts off the play with being a strong and good character but as the play goes on, she becomes so different and worried because of her conscience. She always told Macbeth that the blood on his hands will wash away but as the play goes on her conscience gets to her; ' How is't with me, when every noise appals me? / What hands are here! Ha, they pluck out mine eyes. / Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather /

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The multitudinous seas incarnadine, / Making the green one red. ' (Macbeth, Act II, scene II). This quote is spoken by Macbeth after he is slapped by Lady Macbeth when he brought the dagger with him after murdering King Duncan. His bloody hands which he said he no longer recognized as his own are symbols of his guilt and murder.

Even though she does not seem to be affected by the murder of Duncan as Macbeth, Lady Macbeth suffers the result of her guilt as she begins to lose sleep, she also becomes so stressed up by having to live with such a bad conscience she commits suicide which she thought was the only way of escaping such a bad conscience: " Out, damned spot! out, I say" (Act V, Scene I). This quote is spoken by Lady Macbeth when she is confused and depressed after the death of Duncan. Lady Macbeth doesn't even know that she is feeling guilty of the acts that she had done even though the blood on her hands is a sign of crime. Lady Macbeth went insane because she kept seeing the blood stain. Lady Macbeth's conscience always haunted her and kept reminding her of all the crimes she had done. She continuously rubs her hand to get rid of the blood, which will never be washed away. Lady Macbeth's constant rubbing of her hands leads to insanity and eventually to suicide.

Lady Macbeth's own conscience leads to her death. The blood from Duncan's death is used most in the play to symbolise guilt as it is blood which stains Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's hands: " I am in blood, Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more, Returning were as tedious as go o'er" (Macbeth, Act III, Scene IV). Macbeth is wishing that he hadn't killed all those people to

become king. He feels like he is surrounded by their blood because he can't get their deaths out of his mind, so he feels surrounded by that and surrounded by their blood. Macbeth tries to clean his hands of blood; Lady Macbeth also finds her hands stained with bad deeds after they have been committed. Even though she easily tries to calm Macbeth, but eventually she also suffers from her conscience in her dreams, she tries to clean her hands and tries to remove the thought of murder from her conscience, but she never manages to clear them of blood. Lady Macbeth also uses the blood she keeps on imagining of as a sign of guilt which gets to her conscience. She also has trouble sleeping which was a sign of guilt.

After the murdering, the characters' conscience gets to them, causing them to lose sleep. Troubled sleep and dreams also trouble the characters which is why they can no longer sleep peacefully. By this lack of sleep, it shows how both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's conscience are not at peace but troubled.