

Out of free will

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



The books *Macbeth* written by Shakespeare and *Lord of the Flies* written by William Golding, are completely different novels yet they have very similar circumstances. Although the two stories were written in different time periods and during different events, they proclaim very relevant and corresponding messages. These stories show how strong and intelligent characters can lose all sanity from several free will decisions. The characters in these books, Macbeth and Jack Merridew, make three significant choices that completely transform their lives. One begins as a strong warrior, and the other an innocent school boy, yet they end up suffering with the same downfall. Through making the decision to listen, the decision to kill, and the decision to put their selfish ambition over ethics, they quickly lose all sense of normality. Macbeth's and Jack Merridew's demise and tragic tales were brought forth through a series of free will decisions. The first free will decision that brought Macbeth and Jack Merridew to their downfall, was the decision to listen. For Macbeth, he chooses to listen to two scheming women; the witches and his wife. To start, the three witches are the ones to spur on his devious ways. They exclaim, " All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King here after! " (1. 3. 54) This prophesy didn't necessarily mean that it was true, and would happen without Macbeth's help. Macbeth had a choice to either let this event happen naturally, or take it on himself to make it definite. He took the second option, took matters into his own hands, and murdered an innocent and just King. In addition, Macbeth listened to his selfish and manipulating wife that he loved so dearly. Lady Macbeth dared her husband to kill when saying, " When you durst do it, then you were a man; and to be more than what you were, you would be so much more the man. " (1. 7. 56)

Lady Macbeth tempted her husband, yet a great man is able to refuse temptations. Macbeth knew that those actions were wrong, yet he still decided to listen. He could have freely refused, set his wife straight, and maintained peace; but he didn't. The last point in these two novels when a character began their tragedy from the wrong reaction to another's advice was when Jack Merridew decided not to listen to Ralph's wise words. Your only hope is keeping a signal fire going as long as there's light to see. Then maybe a ship'll notice the smoke and come to rescue us and take us home. " (pg 178) This wise advice was ignored by Jack Merridew. It was under his own decision to stray from what was right, and to become savage. People were not forcing him to; they were actually encouraging him to do differently. Time after time Ralph warned him, but Jack refused to listen. Therefore, the free will decision that began Macbeth and Jack's downfall was the choice whether or not to listen. The next foolish decision made by Macbeth and Jack Merridew out of free will, was the decision to kill. There was much unnecessary violence in both of these novels. Firstly, Macbeth killed an innocent mother and her children just to intimidate a man who was a threat to his power. Macbeth instructs to, " Seize upon Fife, give to the edge o' the sword [Macduff's] wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls that trace him in his line. " (4. 1. 171) This particular murder Macbeth organized was a major part of his downfall. This aggravated a strong warrior, who had just lost his entire family. This enticed him to put Macbeth in his place, and overall strip him from his undeserving power. This murder was not out of self defense, not out of force, yet out of free will. In the same manner, Jack Merridew also freely made decisions to kill. He told Ralph, " Rescue? Yes of

course! All the same, I'd like to catch a pig first-" (pg 53) The urge to kill was in Jack from the beginning. Starting with a pig and escalating into larger issues. All of these temptations could have been prevented by more civil decisions, but Jack refused those and acted savagely. Finally, Jack led his hunters into a terrible murder of a boy named Piggy. " Jack had backed right against the tribe and they were a solid mass of menace that bristled with spears. The intention of charge was forming among them...High over head, Roger, with a sense of delirious abandonment, leaned all his weight on the lever. " (pg 180) As shown, although Jack wasn't the actual boy to perform this murder, he was definitely the one who initiated it. By his savage ways and decisions throughout the time on the island, he showed young boys that murder was okay. Even his past statements and decisions to kill was enough to show what was truly going on here. Jack Merridew was creating his own tragedy, becoming savage by free will, and making the foolish decision to kill. Thus, these novels are again very similar. Two characters lead themselves into their downfalls by freely making the decision to murder. The last free will decision that ended two characters tragic tales was the decision to put selfish ambition over ethics. In the play Macbeth, the first event that resulted in the character's demise was the selfish thoughts of gaining power. My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical, shakes so my single state of man that function is smothered in surmise and nothing is but what is not. " (1. 3. 153) This is evidence that Macbeth knew that the King's death could not be natural. He realized that his thoughts were becoming selfish and unethical, but he didn't choose to put an end to them. This was the beginning of the tragedy of Macbeth. Likewise, Macbeth showed how he put

his selfish ambition over what was ethical, when he ignored his guilt. Macbeth instructs his wife to, “ Make our faces vizards to our hearts, disguising what they are. (3. 2. 37) Macbeth knew they were guilty, he knew what he did was not moral, unethical. The thing was that he ignored it, he cared more about power. When a man disregards ethical decisions, a tragedy is easily started. In the same manner, Jack Merridew puts his selfish ambition of moral actions. “ Then the chief held up his hand. We shall take fire from the others. ” (pg 161) As shown, Jack went to unethical extents to gain and maintain his power. His selfish ambition took over what was safe, wise, and responsible. Instead of working together to keep peace on the island, he decided to steal and spark a war just so he could achieve the title chief. As seen, willingly making the decision to put selfish ambition over ethics was an event that occurred in Macbeth and Lord of the Flies. Macbeth and Jack Merridew both freely made this decision, yet achieving power only led them to their demise. In conclusion, there are many similarities in the novels Macbeth and Lord of the Flies. The two main characters in these tragic tales bring their downfall upon themselves through a series of significant free will decisions. The three main decisions that led to this was the decision to listen, the decision to kill, and the decision to put selfish ambition over ethics. The characters start off as a strong warrior and an educated and talented school boy, but both of them end up with the same result. By freely making these foolish decisions, they become savage and lose all sanity. Despite what they know is right, they continue making these irrational chooses, digging them deeper and deeper into their tragedy.

Therefore Macbeth's and Jack Merridew's demise came upon them from a series of decisions made out of free will.