

# Lady macbeth – human weakness

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Lady Macbeth in William Shakespeare's play 'Macbeth' is a character who suffers greatly because of her human weakness, which is her vaulting ambition. This ambition is not for her, but for her husband. This woman, who seemed so in control at the beginning of the play, only cared for her husband and his success, later becomes so consumed with guilt and remorse that it results in her tragic death. Through the discussion of characterisation and key scenes, I shall reveal that Lady Macbeth's human flaw is not only a major contributor to the ruthlessness of her husband but creates a huge influence in how the play unfolds.

The effect of Lady Macbeth's ambition and compassion towards her devoted husband is immediately shown in the first scene of which she appears. When she receives a letter from Macbeth informing her on his meeting with the three witches, who they promise him that he will be king. This is, in Lady Macbeth's eyes, his rightful position and by her first words, 'Glamis art thou now, and shalt be what thou art promised' makes us instantly recognise that she will stop at nothing to make sure that he gets what she feels Macbeth deserves.

So when Lady Macbeth's disturbing soliloquy about her becoming un-womanly to make sure her plan to kill Duncan will not fail, is not all of a surprise. She calls upon the spirits of evil in her quest to become completely absent of feeling and emotion. 'Come you spirits, which tend on mortal thoughts/ unsex me here and fill me from the crown to toe/ top-full of direst cruelty'. She wishes for all her innate womanly qualities to disappear and replace it with evil 'Come to my woman's breasts and take my milk for gall'.

She calls upon the evil spirits to prevent her in failing her mission to make her husband king. 'no computations visiting of nature/ shall shake my fell purpose'. She asks for 'Come thick night, and pall thee to the dunnest smoke of hell' to hide her malicious thoughts and plans from everyone. As well as wishing for herself to become overwhelmed with ambition and callousness, she wants her husband to do the same. As in the same soliloquy she states her concerns for Macbeth that his soul is 'too full of the milk of human kindness/ to catch the nearest way'.

This means that she thinks that Macbeth's natural kindness is a bad thing and that he would be unable to murder Duncan, the quickest way to become king. However, when Macbeth returns home from fighting he is greeted with the plan to kill Duncan. At first he refuses to co-operate but his wife manipulates him to change his mind. She throws at him insults, such as 'once you durst do it, then you were a man' and to call a man who just fought bravely for his king a coward in a mighty insult. She also throws at him 'From this time such I account thy love'.

At the end, in order to make sure Macbeth does commit the unnatural deed she tells him a disturbing image of her with her newborn child 'And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you'. Even so, if Lady Macbeth was a heartless, truly selfishly ambitious and a ruthless character then she would not have to call upon spirits to help become evil and take all her womanly qualities. Thus implying that she has womanly qualities that she wants rid of. And Shakespear makes us weary of this by allowing her to speak her thoughts and agony's but only when Macbeth is not around.

When Macbeth commits the murder, in Act 2, he is truly distraught and cannot think correctly and brings back the blood laden daggers with him. So Lady Macbeth, again, takes control of the situation. Earlier in the scene Lady Macbeth, who we first thought would commit the murder could not as 'had he not resembled my father as he slept/ I'd had done it'. This shows flaw in her ruthlessness and shows that her calling of evil did not completely work. It also shows that her human weakness, has weakness' in itself. However she collects herself and brings the daggers back to Duncan's body. To do this must have taken super human strength.