

Analysis of macbeth by william shakespeare

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



The play Macbeth by William Shakespeare is a tragedy between all the characters, but most importantly Macbeth himself. This play is one of the most gruesome and tragic plays Shakespeare has written. It is about a man who is hungry for power and will do whatever it takes to get his way. At first, it does not seem like he is willing to play dirty, but certain actions change his mind. Macbeth is a tragic hero. A tragic hero consists of seven characteristics where the person begins as a successful person admired by all. The person is then destined for failure, but struggles to fight against that. The person cannot accept his failure due to some kind of flaw, thus failing in his struggle against fate. All of the characteristics that will be later explained can prove that Macbeth is a tragic hero.

The first characteristic is that the person must start off in a high position. In the play, Macbeth is a Thane, so the audience knows he is noble. The audience also knows that he is respected by others. One person who respects Macbeth greatly is his cousin Duncan, King of Scotland. “ O valiant cousin! Worthy gentleman!” (1, 2, 24) This is saying how the leaders of his country speak well of Macbeth, thus showing how he is respected and honored. Duncan speaks highly of Macbeth after hearing about a success in battle of his noblemen Macbeth and Banquo. Duncan then orders for the rebel Thane of Cawdor to be executed, and sends messengers to tell Macbeth he has been given Cawdor’s title.

The second characteristic is that the person is basically good, but not perfect. Macbeth fits well into this characteristic. When he is given the title Thane of Cawdor, he then realizes that one of the prophecies the three witches gave him came true. He wonders if any more of the prophecies can

come true. This is where Macbeth's desire for power comes in. "If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me ;/ Without my stir." (1, 3, 143-144) Here Macbeth decides for a moment to leave it all to fate if he will be king or not. He will let chance decide for him rather than him to act, since he became Thane of Cawdor without doing much.

The third characteristic is the person being tempted by something; something of value can be obtained if the person is willing to give into the weakness. "All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!" (1, 3, 49-50) In this case, the three witches tell Macbeth that he will be king, he then begins to think of ways to become king. After the whole situation of the execution of the rebel thane and encountering the witches, Macbeth writes to his wife to tell her about his meeting of the three witches. She is afraid Macbeth lacks the courage he needs in order to become king. When she finds out Duncan is coming to visit, she prepares for his murder. She tries to convince Macbeth to become a villain and murder King Duncan.

Look th' innocent flower;/ But be the serpent under't. He that's coming;/ Must be provided for; and you shall put;/ This night's great business into my dispatch. (1, 5, 63-66)

Lady Macbeth is basically telling Macbeth to play the role of the welcoming guest on the night of Duncan's arrival, so no one can suspect his true intentions. He should look innocent and trusting, but at the same time he should be sneaky, ready to kill Duncan at any moment without him being given the blame.

The fourth characteristic is giving into the weakness, which then becomes the tragic flaw. This is where Macbeth kills Duncan, making him cross the line. He is petrified by what he has done. He is so mortified he brings the daggers that he used on Duncan, instead of leaving them there as Lady Macbeth had planned. She leaves to return the daggers where they should be. As she returns to Macbeth, he is still shocked and filled with horror. “ Go get some water;/ And wash this filthy witness from your hand.” (2, 2, 44-45) Not only is this quote literal, because he still had blood on his hands, but Macbeth had done the unthinkable. He has done a deed so filthy that not even washing away the evidence can get rid of how Macbeth feels. This is where the audience sees Macbeth weakening in a sense. At first he was not so sure about killing Duncan. It took the convincing of Lady Macbeth to make him take that step forward. The audience can see how this valiant soldier deteriorates to a power-hungry man who is willing to do whatever it takes to get his way.

At some point the person realizes what he has done. The person may or may not repent. The point is the realization of what he has become. This characteristic is an important one. This where the audience sees how far Macbeth will go to maintain his position as king. He wanted the prophecies to continue to come true. This part of the play has so much bloodshed, from killing his close friend, to a mass murder. “ I am in blood;/ Stepped in so far that should I wade no more;/ Returning were as tedious as go o’er.” (3, 4, 139-141) Macbeth realizes that he has killed so many people that it is easier to just continue to go forward than to try and go back. This is where the audience sees that Macbeth would rather continue to kill than to go back and

repent. He does not think much of others, since everyone who has befriended him turned against him when they discovered who truly killed Duncan.

As the play comes to an end, the person is defeated by his flaw; he dies or is ruined in some way. For Macbeth, he is killed. Macduff tried endlessly to convince Malcolm to join forces into defeating Macbeth. Macbeth feels all high and mighty after meeting with the three witches again, to learn how to make his kingship secure. Macduff feels all this anger towards Macbeth, for he killed his entire family when he learned that Macduff went to England. Macbeth feels very confident about the three new prophecies he learned about, until they slowly begin to come true. This is where the audience can see that he is paranoid. Macbeth clings with all his might that he will somehow survive this battle that is going on. Macbeth is crushed when he finds out that Macduff was not “born of woman,” referred to as a caesarean section. One of the prophecies was that no one born of woman can harm Macbeth, so he knows that what is about to happen, he can not avoid it. “Behold, where stands;/ Th’ usurper’s cursèd head. The time is free.” (5, 8, 54-55) This is where the audience can see that Macbeth has been killed, and they are all looking down at his bloody head, and Macbeth’s time as king has come to an end.

When the audience sees Macbeth as a tragic hero in detail, the audience feels pity for the tragic hero for what he was and what he has become. This is the final characteristic of a tragic hero. It is a sadness that it is possible for a person to have it all and ruin it in an effort just to get more. The

audience doesn't feel bad for Macbeth, but the fact that he started off as a good person who becomes really evil. It can be relatable in real life because a lot of people are capable of doing that. It is important to continue to know the characteristics of a tragic hero because a tragic hero basically lives in all of us. There is good in everyone, and we all have flaws of some kind. As in Macbeth, you can see how he starts off as a bold, righteous man, having everything and losing it all just to obtain more. We still need these in plays because it makes it easier to identify the hero who is suffering and it makes the audience feel pity over how the character suffers.