

# Macbeth by william shakespeare: an impact of guilt on a person

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“ No guilt is forgotten so long as the conscience still knows of it”. In William Shakespeare’s “ Macbeth”, we see what guilt can do to a person’s conscience. Lady Macbeth and Macbeth are both victims of a guilty conscience because of the murder, of King Duncan. They both had a part in the murder, even though Lady Macbeth was not the one who “ physically” committed the crime. A guilty conscience is what leads to the downfall of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. By analyzing Macbeth’s internal conflicts, Lady Macbeth’s descent into insanity as well as her suicide.

Firstly, Macbeth’s internal conflicts cause him to commit irrational acts, due to his guilt. Lady Macbeth is confident when telling Macbeth to kill Duncan to become king. She starts to question his manhood when he begins having doubts about killing King Duncan, his cousin. “ When you durst do it,” she says, “ then you were a man”. She states this to make Macbeth feel unmanly, which works. After Macbeth kills Duncan he becomes distraught and starts having an internal conflict with himself, he says “ Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather The multitudinous seas incarnadine”

He states this quote when he encounters his wife after killing Duncan. He is referring to the blood on his hands which is from killing Duncan, and he was talking about the internal guilt he feels for doing it. Macbeth feels more guilty throughout the play when he decides to kill Banquo, his friend. He starts seeing Banquo’s ghost and his guilt builds up more and more. Finally, he kills Macduff’s family after the witches claim him to be a “ threat”. This shows his paranoia that everyone is a threat now and must be eliminated or

else he won't be king. This is also the turning point of the play. If he never killed Macduff's family, he would have survived, and not died by Macduff's hands in the end. Ironically everything Macbeth did was to become king and make him happy, but it made his life unhappy and full of guilt.

Secondly, Lady Macbeth was not as guilty as Macbeth in the beginning, although she does faint when hearing the murder of King Duncan which she already knew about. This might show that she may have cared and felt queasy about the fact that the murder did occur. We don't see the guilt consuming her until the end of the play when she starts sleepwalking and says " Out, damned spot! Out I say!" while rubbing her hands. This signifies the " blood" on her hands for the murder of Duncan and how she is getting paranoid, and on the brink of insanity. She had evolved from a lady who was willing to kill her baby to one who shows empathy and compassion. It's ironic as well since Lady Macbeth tells Macbeth to not let the guilt consume him when this should be applied to her as well. Macbeth and lady Macbeth were close at the beginning of the play, but due to Macbeth chasing power, their relationship is more separated. Her husband's lack of support can be seen to deepen her descent into madness as well as cause her downfall.

Lastly, Lady Macbeth's descent to her suicide was the last straw to her downfall. The guilt of the murder of King Duncan and everything that happened through the play has caught up to her. All of this guilt that was locked in her led to her death. It is said by Malcolm " Of this dead butcher and his fiendlike queen, Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands took her life". This makes us believe that the queen took her own life. The death

of Lady Macbeth was the product of her part of remorse in murdering King Duncan. In the end, she lost her mind, imagining the blood was still on her face, and she was unable to get it off. At the beginning of the play, Lady Macbeth was a strong woman, but no one can outrun guilt.

In conclusion, the guilt that Lady Macbeth and Macbeth had led to the downfall of both of them. Macbeth's internal conflicts caused him to act irrationally which led to his death. Lady Macbeth's guilt led her to insanity and sleepwalking at night. Her guilt became too much that she even decided to take her own life. This shows that guilt is a dangerous feeling that leads anyone, even a noble to their demise. Guilt is never forgotten because that inner voice in your head will never forget it.