

# Macbeth – analysis of fear

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Macbeth, it is evidence of how fear can affect any character. Fear is a significant factor in building a person's character, be it affecting their actions, their words, regardless of whether it is right or wrong. This emotional quality, of which can motivate one to success as well as to downfall, had played an important role in countless works of literature. As for the play Macbeth by William Shakespeare, fear was the main motivating factor in influencing the actions and reactions towards the witches' prophecies of Macbeth, in addition to of Lady Macbeth.

Seen through the development of the plotline, the final outcome of the play was affected greatly by fear and also inspired by how this particular sentiment can dominate and control the nature of mankind. Following the death of Duncan, Macbeth's subsequent acts of murder were carried out of fear and insecurity for his position as the king of Scotland. Once Duncan's body was discovered, Macbeth had immediately rushed up to the king's chamber and killed the two sleeping guards.

He justified himself by saying 'Who could refrain, That had a heart to love, and in that heart Courage to make's love known? ' (2. . 112-114) Out of fear and without thinking straight, Macbeth has slain the grooms of Duncan in order to deprive them of a chance to justify themselves. The over-exaggerated passion displayed by Macbeth, as well as the amplified account of his courage, fired up the rising suspicions of Macbeth's true intentions in the incident. His fear of getting caught and accused of Duncan's death only further enhanced his fear of Banquo, who was beginning to doubt the justice behind Macbeth's new status. As in the witches' prophecies, Banquo was destined to father generation after generation of Scottish kings.

Macbeth demonstrated his anxiety regarding his royal legacy by commenting 'To be thus is nothing; But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo Stick deep' (3. 1. 48-50). This led to his participation in the murder of Banquo, where Macbeth's cautious attitude insisted that committing a second crime would further secure his role as king. This characteristic of Macbeth's fear was also shown much later into the play after meeting with the apparitions. Upon learning that 'none of woman born Shall harm Macbeth' (4. 1. 8-81), Macbeth immediately scoffed 'Then live, Macduff.

What need I fear of thee? But yet I'll make assurance double sure, And take a bond of fate. Thou shalt not live' (4. 1. 82-84). Macbeth's psychological mindset was indicated through this quote, his vigilance drove him to the desire of murdering Macduff and hence his family. Therefore, fear precipitated Macbeth's many redundant murders, which then amplified his downfall. Lady Macbeth was greatly consumed by fear and guilt that she was slowly losing her sanity, as a result of not being able to handle what she had done to Duncan. In the quote of 'Out, damned spot!

Out, I say! ' (5. 1. 30), Lady Macbeth was trying to wash out what she saw as blood on her hands. The repetition of the word 'out' towards an inanimate object - something insignificant - emphasized her emotionally unstable behaviour and inability to control her sentiments. Also, Lady Macbeth's fear of blood contrasted greatly with Macbeth's obsession with murder and bloodbath in the latter half of the play: when Macbeth utilized his fear in evolving into a vigilant character, Lady Macbeth deteriorates from a callous character into one overwhelmed with fear.

She mentioned hell - 'Hell is murky' (5. 1. 31), announcing her fear of going there for what she has done. Initially, Lady Macbeth had been the driving force behind Macbeth's ambition to be king, masking whatever fears she occupied by calling proposed threats bluff as like in the quote 'What need we fear who knows it when none can call our power to account?' (5. 1. 32-33) Nevertheless, Lady Macbeth's role became smaller and more insignificant as the play neared the end as she was driven mad by guilt.

Unable to take the torment, it was implied that she ended up taking her own life right before the battle between Macbeth and the English troops began - 'The queen, my lord, is dead' (5. 5. 17) - which demonstrated her fear and what fear can do to a person. The witches' prophecies, particularly the apparitions, were a main source of fear for Macbeth, where he fell further into a belief of what fate had in store for him. The straightforward warning from the first apparition - 'Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! Beware Macduff. Beware the thane of Fife.' (4. 1. 1-2) - angered Macbeth greatly and drove him to kill Macduff's family. This then further motivated Macduff to slay Macbeth in combat. The second and third apparitions then told of the causes of Macbeth's downfall. Once the battle commenced, Macbeth repeatedly announced the prophecies, either to himself or to whatever audience is there to listen, fearing he would have forgotten.

He would declare 'Till Birnam Wood remove to Dunsinane I cannot taint with fear' (5. 3. 2-3) and 'I will not be afraid of death and bane, Till Birnam forest comes to Dunsinane' (5. . 61-62). The fear of Macbeth's own defeat had lead to a constant reminder for himself to continue fighting and living until the

predictions did come true. Meanwhile, his consistent repetitions of the apparitions' predictions implied a certain mindset of where he saw them as a protection against whatever harm. In using verbs like 'cannot' and 'will', the determination of Macbeth is demonstrated, as well as him trying to calm himself down in trying to be relieved of whatever emotions or fears which may affect his performance.

On the other hand, Macbeth's obsession with the prophecies also weakened himself. Once having killed Young Siward in battle, Macbeth laughed 'Thou wast born of woman. But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn, Brandished by man that's of a woman born' (5. 7. 15-17) and this led to the underestimation of Macduff once they started to fight and hence brought the tyrant and protagonist of the play to his end. In conclusion, fear plays a part in one's decisions in every day life. Though one may hide his or her fears behind a strong exterior, it remains a potent motivating force throughout life.

In Macbeth, it is evident of how fear can affect any character. For the duration of the play, Macbeth's fears of losing his position as king contributed to his many acts of murder in the means of being cautious. Similar to Lady Macbeth who found relief from her fears in death, Macbeth then buried himself into the witches' prophecies; trusting whatever was told for security and, in the end, led to his downfall. Therefore, fear can force people into great situations, motivating and hindering actions as stimuli for accomplishment in life.