

How does
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How does Shakespeare show us that each murder is easier than the last for Macbeth? Macbeth is renowned for his continuous list of killing, for example that of Duncan and Banquo, and the potential killing of Fleance. In this essay, Macbeth's thoughts and actions leading up to these murders will be analyzed and a conclusion will be drawn from this deciding if murder appears easier for Macbeth as each of his 'enemies' are eliminated. Lady Macbeth instantaneously thinks of killing, or getting Macbeth to kill Duncan, when she receives the letter from Macbeth informing her of what the witches foretold. She says "hie thee hither, That I may pour my spirits into thine ear", which means that she has already made the intention of persuading Macbeth into killing the king, just moments after reading the letter. There is evidence that Macbeth attempts to avoid the conversation with his wife by saying "We will speak further," which means he is trying to say, 'we'll talk about it later, and trying to put the subject off. However, Lady Macbeth responds by saying 'Leave the rest to me,' Macbeth's uncertainty is clear, it is Lady Macbeth who fully supports the idea. As the day of the deed approached, Macbeth began to doubt whether or not he should commit this act of treason, he is torn between two ways "if it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well- it were done quickly; if th'assassination could trammel up the consequence" This demonstrates Macbeth as being confused and doubtful, Shakespeare has used euphemism to emphasize this. An example of this can be found in the previous quote, Macbeth refers to the act of murder as 'it' on numerous occasions, providing the impression that he is trying to avoid what he is contemplating on doing, not once does he actually use the word murder. In Macbeth's train of thoughts in his famous soliloquy, he is much more biased

towards letting Duncan live, The only real argument for killing the king is weak, and this is "if the assassination could trammel up the consequence... Might be the be-all and the end-all here," he would kill the king. But Macbeth knows that there is no way he can avoid punishment. This shows Macbeth as being thoroughly confused about what he should do. Macbeth informs his wife that "[they] will proceed no further" in the killing and gives his reasons. He has won "golden opinions from all sorts of people," and the king himself has "honored [Macbeth] of late," and he does not want to jeopardize the enviable position he has climbed towards. When the dagger appears before Macbeth, he hesitates repeatedly before he grasps it. At first, there is a sense of uncertainty when Macbeth asks himself "Is this' a dagger which I see before me the handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee'.

Shakespeare begins this speech with a rhetorical question, which could illustrate the uncertainty Macbeth possesses. The word 'clutch' seems desperate; Macbeth is trying to finish the act as quickly as possible, arguably showing that he does not want to do it. When the news of the murder actually does break out, there is hysteria running through the castle. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth act very distressed, but Shakespeare provides the idea that Macbeth is the only one of the two who is not putting on a two-faced show. Macbeth, in this madness, kills the guards who were accused of killing the king. This was not a smart motive, as Macbeth had no reason for doing so, and therefore he becomes suspicious under the eyes of the others. He tries to redeem himself by saying that he had done it in a fit of emotion, and is very poetic when he describes Duncan "skin laced with his golden blood." However, this is done very dramatically and causes people to

become more skeptical. Macbeth's actions are due to guilt and panic, showing that he is not accustomed to killing. Banquo's death, however, portrays Macbeth as being completely different. The witches' prophecy stated Macbeth would have the throne, but Banquo's sons would rule the throne after Macbeth. Macbeth did not want this to happen. He did not ponder on the thought of murdering his closet friend, once the idea that Banquo was suspicious formed in his mind, it clouded his thoughts until he hired three murderers to complete the act for him. Rather than doing the murder himself, Macbeth claims that he must mask 'the business from the common eye.' It's also usually easier to have someone else do your dirty work than to do it yourself, however I believe that the thought of killing your closest friend and his son represents evil in itself. Up to this point, one may argue that Macbeth's killing is due to Lady Macbeth constantly propelling him. But for this particular kill, Macbeth did not even consult his wife, he only informed her of the events before they were about to happen. In conclusion, Shakespeare shows us that each killing is easier than the last for Macbeth; this is because the murder of Duncan hardened him and set in motion his moral decline. It is usually easier to commit a sin the second time rather than the first. Furthermore, although Macbeth kills Duncan with his own hands, he merely orders the deaths of his other victims, showing a disregard for the life of his closet friend and young son. Shakespeare means to show that Macbeth has a strong capacity for evil and that, once it's lost, he quickly proceeds from bad to worse.