

# The relationship of macbeth and his wife in act 1 scene 5 and 7

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



The Relationship of Macbeth and his wife in Act 1 Scene 5 and 7 From the beginning of the play, the relationship between Macbeth and his wife seem to be the expected partnership in romance, however, as the play progresses, our expectations seems to change for the worst. We are informed that Macbeth desires to be King of Scotland and initially, his wife appears to be supportive of him as a wife should be but her response to this changes quite drastically as we read further on. We are first introduced to Lady Macbeth when she reads the letter which Macbeth sent to her recapping his encounter with the three witches.

She now becomes aware of Macbeth's wish to become king but she knows that his conscience inhibits him from partaking in any risky business. She uses the phrase " yet do I fear thy nature, is too full o'th'milk of human kindness... " in her opening soliloquy which suggests that he is a very kind and worthy gentleman. " Thou wouldst be great, art not without ambition but without the illness should attend it. " She explains how he has the ambition to become king but lacks the boldness to become violent if needed to get the crown.

This helps to show how sensible and timid Macbeth can be and why Lady Macbeth has to intervene to make the situation progress further. To our surprise, Lady Macbeth appears to be the complete opposite of her husband's supposed character. She is determined to make sure that Macbeth becomes king under any circumstances that need to be undertaken. At the end of her soliloquy, she says " Hie thee hither, that I may pour out my spirits to thine ear, and chastise with the valour of my

tongue all that impedes thee from the golden round... which means that she wishes to persuade and talk him out of whatever may be keeping him from seizing the crown. This furthermore emphasizes her persistence to crown him as king and shower her with glory. Throughout this act, Lady Macbeth appears to be the stronger partner and this is reflected when she calls upon supernatural powers, much greater than her own, to make her less of a woman and more like a man. "Come, you spirits that tend on moral thoughts, unsex me here and fill from the crown to the toe topfull of direst cruelty... She has made herself aware that she has to uphold the greater position in the relationship so that their aim of getting the crown is accomplished. The audience finds this act quite shocking as females are meant to be the fairer sex. During the rest of her call to the spirits, she develops the sense of maliciousness and ruthlessness which accentuates the depth of her serious attitude. At this point in the play, the audience has reached a full understanding of Macbeth and his wife's ambition.

When Macbeth is introduced in Scene 5, he begins with "my dearest love" focusing on Lady Macbeth which shows the position he holds his wife at proving quite admirable to the audience. However, Lady Macbeth shows no mercy to the situation. King Duncan planned to go to the castle that night and wished to leave tomorrow but Lady Macbeth's response to this was "O never shall sun that morrow see" which implies he will not be leaving tomorrow leading to the cruel suggestion of death. This line reflects her decisive character showing that she is taking the lead role here.

She also teaches Macbeth the way in which he must deceive Duncan and instructs him on the arts of hypocrisy as she says "... look like th'innocent flower, but be the serpent under't. " By using this metaphor, it shows that she is manipulating Macbeth and challenges his feelings of guilt and pity for Duncan and replaces them with demeaning and spiteful emotions. Lady Macbeth encourages him to be deceitful to his loyal and trusting leader that is Duncan and the audience can begin to make the judgement that the evil spirits are now manifesting in Lady Macbeth's heart from her evil suggestions.

She knows that Macbeth hasn't got what it takes to make this plan work so she takes the leading role by saying ' Leave all the rest to me" at the end of Scene 5. At the beginning of Scene 7 opening with Macbeth's soliloquy, we as the audience, really get a sense of guilt that seeps through Macbeth. This is beyond his usual attitude so this is hard for him to cope with. He knows how much he wants to be king but what frightens him the most are the consequences. He uses the metaphor " If th'assassination could trammel up the consequence and catch with his surcease, success... e'd jump the life to come... " which translated means " If this assassination could work like a net and prevent any consequences, he would be more than happy to risk the afterlife to do so. " Macbeth knows that Duncan is a highly respected man because of his good intentions and purely hearted nature so he is afraid if he is made known to the people that he is responsible, the chances of him becoming king will be shattered. He contemplates the idea of killing Duncan and weighs up the advantages and disadvantages. The only know advantage is that he will become King.

However, the disadvantages are what he already is considered to Duncan. "First, as I am his kinsman and his subject, strong both against the deed; then as his host who should against his murderer shut the door, not bear the knife myself." This quote from Scene 7 shows that Macbeth is in conflict with what Lady Macbeth is instructing and his loyal personality is urging him not to fulfil the "horrid deed". After considering what a "meek" leader Duncan was, we as the audience can really depict a picture as to what Macbeth was emoting.

When Lady Macbeth enters, Macbeth's final decision has now been displayed. "We will proceed no further in this business. He hath honoured me of late..." He has decided to cancel the plan because of how nicely Duncan had treated him that evening. The amount of guilt was too much for him to bear so the easiest escape for him was to abort the business. To his misfortune, Lady Macbeth did not take the current news very lightly. She begins to bombard him with insults and various accusations. "Art thou afeard to be the same in thine own act and valour, as thou art in desire? Lady Macbeth begins to question him and whether he is afraid to do what he must to achieve what he desires. As she has handed herself to the powers of darkness, she speaks to him brutally by saying "Was the hope drunk wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?" suggesting that he was drunk when he made the decision to kill Duncan. His raging fury increases furthermore when she says "Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life, and live a coward in thine own esteem, letting I dare not wait upon I would, like the poor cat i'th'adage? calling him a coward if he doesn't take the crown that he has always wanted to own. At this point in the play, the relationship between Lady Macbeth and his wife reaches its peak as they have a great

dispute. Macbeth's counter argument is not as furious as Lady Macbeth as he simply responds with " Prithee, peace. I dare do all that may become a man; Who dares do more is none. " He believes that he has done all that a man can do in this situation however Lady Macbeth disagrees. She believes that his definition is wrong and that he only becomes and man if he does the deed.

Now Lady Macbeth is raging, she decides to use the excuse that Macbeth doesn't love her which is the typical response for a woman to use in an argument with her partner. In addition to this, to emphasize the depth of evil in her she creates a vivid inhuman image in the audience's mind " I have given such and know how tender ' tis to love the babe that milks me: I would, while it was smiling in my face have plucked the nipple from my boneless gums and dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you have done to this. As she is the mother of the child, this makes the image even more disturbing as she has sworn to herself that she would have done it just as Macbeth swore he would do the rotten deed. The audience can really see the evil thoughts capturing her mind at this point as thoughts like this would not be evoked from a normal female figure. Macbeth is emotionally moved by the lengths Lady Macbeth would go to keep her word so he sees this as an opportunity to voice his fear of failure. " If we should fail? " Lady Macbeth's response is " We fail? But screw your courage to the sticking-place and we'll not fail. which suggests that it is impossible for them for them to fail if he just becomes more courageous. Lady Macbeth has planned the whole murder and reveals it to Macbeth which he can find no faults for himself. At this point in the scene, there is finally some common ground between

Macbeth and his wife. " When Duncan is asleep, whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey soundly invite him, his two chamberlains will I with wine and wassail so convince that memory the warder of the brain shall be fume, and the receipt of reason a limbeck only. She plans on making the guards so drunk so that they won't be able to remember any affairs that take place during the night. Macbeth begins to understand his wife's plans and knows that once the blood is put onto the guard's daggers, people will assume they are the culprits. By the end of the scene, Macbeth has decided to go ahead with the murder, using every muscle in his body to help him carry out this task.

He appears to have changed his tone also as he ends with " False face must hide what the false heart doth know" which in some aspects is similar to what Lady Macbeth had originally told him to do. By the end of both scenes, the audience can really determine the flow of Macbeth and his wife's relationship. Originally, Lady Macbeth supported Macbeth's desire to become King of Scotland but as the play went on, the support had turned into force and she did not have a friendly approach to the situation as she called upon the dark spirits to disable any feelings of remorse as a human being should have.

Macbeth knew that the deed he was influenced to pursue was cruel and would have rotten consequences but his the persuasive tone of his wife led him to change his mind and use the same words she used on him to her. It is not an ordinary relationship as the audience can see the manifestation of the

dark powers between one side of the partnership which leads to other side to perform murderous tasks.