

Fictional account of macbeth's trial

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Although undoubtedly guilty of murder, there is no doubt in my mind that this is a clear-cut case of diminished responsibility. Throughout the whole sordid business the defendant whom I am representing has been beset with evil influences designed to erode his free will and conscience. If there was a penalty for the only flaw which he showed before he was mercilessly exploited by these evil forces, which was that of ambition, I believe we would all be convicted at some point in our lives. Without the manipulations of evil, the idea of kingship would never have occurred to the brave and loyal Macbeth, who has time and again proven his courage and fealty in battle. Ironically it was after one such battle, in which Macbeth acquitted himself gloriously and refused many tempting offers from the rebel cause to join their seemingly more powerful side, when the three strange apparitions of evil I will henceforth refer to as the 'weird sisters' (which is the title they give themselves) first appeared to him. This clever ploy caught him at the worst possible - exhaustion from the battle clouding his reason and rightful proud for his victory enhancing his sense of ambition. At first he refuses to believe their prophecy that he will be Thane of Cawdor and then King, which is in my opinion the correct way to deal with evil. Both he and Banquo, who I am sure this court all accept as an example of goodness in this matter, were naturally inquisitive as to how this would come about and the details of the prophecy, so his inquisitiveness does not necessarily show that he was accepting of their prophecy. His wish that they had stayed is perfectly understandable in this context of innocent curiosity, and he even joked about the absurdity of the prophecy afterwards with Banquo. He only began to believe the prophecy after the first half unexpectedly came true, which is also perfectly

understandable; it seemed to him almost as far beyond belief that he would become Thane of Cawdor as well as of Glamis as that he would become king. He was still at this stage fresh from the battle, and weariness makes all such men fanciful and overconfident; he was also fighting an internal battle against the evil spirits that the weird sisters have planted in him, the idea of murder which he recognised as a foreign thought that had been planted in him by outside forces and had no reality, but was overwhelming due to the force of evil behind it. He still hoped that if he is to be King, it will be merely by chance as with his becoming the Thane of Cawdor, and decided just to let events take their course without his interference; he consciously denied and put aside the thought of murder. The next evil influence brought to bear on the defendant was his wife, Lady Macbeth, whose streak of ambition was mixed with cunning and the capacity for evil. She herself said that her husband is 'too full of the milk of human kindness' to murder on his own initiative, and that she would try to possess him with the evil spirits that she holds inside her and persuade him to murder the King. To make sure that she had sufficient evil in her nature to carry this plan through, and that goodness would not be able to interfere, she asked the evil spirits present to possess her fully and make her into a witch, and hide her actions from Heaven. The plan for this first murder was all Lady Macbeth's work, and her husband did not know precisely what was happening until it was too late to resist. Even on the night of the murder, where the evil influences were pressing him hardest, Macbeth had doubts about the murder, and wished that he didn't have to go through with it. It appears that his main reason for this murder was not to further his own ambition but to make an end to all the

confusion and internal conflict he was going through, to please his wife and placate the evil spirits which had been planted within him. He was clearly not in his right mind at this point due to the pervasive evil surrounding him. Even so, he tried to make an end to it, and to refuse to murder the King, but his wife scorned him - for a man who had proven his courage so many times in battle, it was unbearable to be outdone by a woman, and the self-doubt his wife provoked was enough to push his already unstable mind over the edge into accepting the task of murder. From here on in, fear and the evil admitted into his mind after the dreadful battering it had taken from many influences had caused him to accept the murder of Duncan drove him further and further into insanity and possession. As long as evil spirits may possess a man I do not believe it is fair to hold him responsible for the actions taken while so entirely under their influence and held in a constant state of fear and confusion. The only thing he may be held responsible for is admitting the evil spirits - for they must be accepted by their host - and as I have detailed above he was under tremendous duress. I believe if there is a guilty human party in this matter it is Lady Macbeth, as it was mere ambition that led her to admit her host of evil spirits rather than the level of stress Macbeth was under.