

To what extent does  
macbeth fulfill the role  
of a shakespearean  
tragic hero essay...



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Macbeth is a Shakespearian play involving an ambitious brave warrior, (Macbeth) who is cousin to the King of Scotland. The play focuses on Macbeth's ambitions. Macbeth meets three weird sisters, who predict that one day he would be king. But Macbeth's ambition overtook his life as he ended up doing anything to become king, even kill the ones closest to him. There is a great battle at the end of the play in which Macbeth is killed, proving that Macbeth would even be prepared to die to make his ambitions come true.

Is Macbeth a Shakespearian tragic hero? To fulfill the role of a tragic hero the character must complete some criteria.

The character should be a central character of noble birth and status. The character should build up tragic flaws throughout the play and should have a fall from grace

de casibus near the end. The audience must identify the character as not a fully bad person but should have a personality of almost innocent in a chaotic ensuring sense and the character must be aware of their own faults, to make the audience feel a sense of waste and catharsis. To fulfill the role of a Shakespearian tragic hero Macbeth must complete this criterion.

Macbeth's character has many different aspects and characteristics and his tone to other characters change throughout the play. Near the beginning of the play Macbeth writes a letter to his wife lady Macbeth, in the letter there is evidence of his love towards her, as he writes, ' my dearest love' and ' my dearest partner in greatness.' These two quotes show lady Macbeth that

Macbeth is in love with her and this could almost be Macbeth signing his life

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away to the extremely ambitious but impatient Lady Macbeth as she then bullies him into murdering Duncan. Although Macbeth writes as if he is madly in love with Lady Macbeth and obeys her commands, I didn't feel Macbeth reacted in a way a man in love would react, he doesn't really seem to care when becomes insane or even when he is given the news of her death. Macbeth shows a sign of a weak mind and bad judgment and that through this is liable to persuasion and inducement he is unable to deal with awkward situations. Macbeth throughout the play reveals that nothing is sacred; everything is disposable. He loves his king but murders him for his own benefit. He loves his best friend but murders him to prevent detection and his wife goes mad due to the crime he committed.

A Shakespearian tragic hero is also known for being a great waste of talent and a good character of noble birth and status. There is evidence of Macbeth having all of these aspects as Duncan refers to him as 'valiant cousin' and 'worthy gentleman.' The captain calls him 'brave Macbeth,' and compares him to a lion or an eagle. These quotes were all being referred to Macbeth's fine warrior skills, a talent that not every man has, and a talent that will be wasted due to ambition. Macbeth's official title is 'Thane of Cawdor' but changed to 'Thane of Glamis' after he has achieved victory in a great battle. But not any man could be given the title Thane. During Shakespearian times you would have to be born of wealthy status to be considered a noble man. Wealthy men are usually given titles such as Thaness. This is evidence that Macbeth is a character of noble birth and status.

To fulfill the role of a Shakespearian tragic hero, the character has to have tragic flaws throughout the play and I believe that Macbeth's biggest flaw is <https://assignbuster.com/to-what-extent-does-macbeth-fulfill-the-role-of-a-shakespearian-tragic-hero-essay-sample/>

his wife. Lady Macbeth an ambitious impatient character leads Macbeth into fulfilling his tragic flaws. Lady Macbeth was able to persuade him to commit his first crime, in which triggered off a life of crime for Macbeth. As she bullied him into murdering Duncan, Macbeth began to worry about his noble reputation and was in fear of losing his new title of king. Therefore he would murder anyone who stood in the way of his ambition.

Macbeth was not only influenced by his wife, the weird sisters had escalated Macbeth's ambition, as he was determined to become king after he met them. We don't actually meet Macbeth's character until he is being told three prophecies from the three sisters, so we cannot define his character until he is under their influence, is he usually as ambitious as he is in the rest of the play? The meeting of the three weird sisters is Macbeth's biggest tragic flaw.

The main and most recognized point of fulfilling the role of a tragic hero is their fall from grace. In Macbeth's case he does this in the most extreme way, as his fall is from being King to being killed in battle. In act 5 scene 6 Macbeth says ' I gin to be awary of the sun, and wish th'estate o'th world were now undore,' just after he hears the news of Birnam wood is moving. This is evidence that Macbeth is weary of his responsibilities and wishes it to end. Other evidence of this is when Macbeth says ' at least we'll die with harness or our back,' this suggests that Macbeth expects the end of his reign and his life but also this could be Macbeth realizing his own faults and knowing there is no going back and therefore Macbeth puts his trust with the three weird sisters, as he believes he has a ' charmed life;' for he cannot be killed by anyone born of a woman. He shows this confidence and arrogant

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attitude in Act 5 scene 8 when he announces it to Macduff. Macduff then tells Macbeth 'despair thy charm' and reveals that he was from his mother's womb 'untimely ripped.' That Macduff was a cesarean birth. At this point just before Macbeth falls from grace, the audience is made to feel sorry for Macbeth and that the blame for his catastrophic reign should be aimed at the three witches, and that Macbeth is innocent.

The audience are made to believe that Macbeth was tricked by the three weird sisters and bullied into his crime by Lady Macbeth, this is another part of the Shakespearian tragic hero criteria, that Macbeth must identify to the audience as not fully bad but should have a personality of innocence.

Shakespeare tries to make the audience feel sympathetic towards Macbeth by making him have visions of insanity. At first he sees 'a dagger before' him, the audience are made to feel sympathy for Macbeth's insanity but Macbeth is not entirely sure that he should commit the crime, and that it is Lady Macbeth's influence and so the audience are made to think that Macbeth is innocent. Macbeth's biggest vision is of his best friend Banquo just after he had been killed; Macbeth becomes frightened and turns into a cowardly defenseless king whilst at a feast. The people he is entertaining also become frightened about the state they see their king in and feel sympathetic for Macbeth just like the audience are made to feel.

The last piece of criteria to fulfill the role of a Shakespearian tragic hero is that once the hero has its fall from grace de casibus the audience should notice and sense a waste and catharsis. This is easily found in Macbeth, as the great warrior Macbeth has died and his great talent of bravery, strength and determination towards being a great soldier and superb thane is wasted.

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The audience are reminded of act 1 scene 2 in the last scene as the new rulers of Scotland talk about Macbeth's evilness, 'producing forth the cruel ministers,' just as they spoke about his righteousness, 'o' valiant cousin' at the start of the play. The audience is reminded of what a good person Macbeth was known to be and how he turned into an evil person. This then gives the audience a sense of waste fulfilling this piece of criteria. Personally I do feel innocence for Macbeth as I believe that he was defiantly bullied by his wife into committing these crimes. Macbeth is known for his bravery and strength and Lady Macbeth uses this against him, questioning him of his manhood when he is not sure weather to commit the crime, 'When you drust do it then you are a man.' This quote changes my view on the whole situation as it proves that Lady Macbeth is the enforcer in the murder. This is why I feel sympathetic for Macbeth because Lady Macbeth uses his reputation and status against him, knowing that he would not give this up.

I have researched the criteria for a Shakespearian tragic hero and have shown evidence that Macbeth fulfills this role. But I believe that Macbeth only fulfills this role as a faade. There is more to Macbeth than this mask he puts on to become a tragic hero. Macbeth commits all of his crimes himself physically but mentally he has Lady Macbeth goading him on and as he puts his trust in the hands of the weird sisters he has no fear. There is evidence of Macbeth wanting to put on a faade in the play when he gets nervous or when he is being forced to do something, in Act 1 scene 7 he says 'False face must hide what the false heart doth know.' I believe this means that Macbeth is comfortable with becoming someone else and so is weak when Lady Macbeth is encouraging him to commit his crimes. Lady Macbeth's

persuading words encourage Macbeth's ambition to grow out of control and finally overtake Macbeth completely, leaving Macbeth with only one dream and a heart full of confidence in the weird sisters' prophecies.

I believe that Macbeth fulfills the role of a Shakespearian tragic hero to the extent that he is his own self and not the character that is under the influence of Lady Macbeth or the weird sisters. Macbeth is his own self when he is not hiding underneath a mask from the truth, when he is not being bullied by his possessive wife Lady Macbeth or when he has his ambition of becoming king in his mind. Noble Macbeth, Thane of Glamis, the great warrior Macbeth fulfills the role of a tragic hero because the last piece of criteria for a Shakespearian tragic hero is that the audience must feel a sense of waste and catharsis and losing a great warrior is a waste, while losing an over-ambitious, murdering King is not. Macbeth fulfills the role of a Shakespearian tragic hero to the extent where he is his own man, not under the influence of anyone else.