

Characterization of lady macbeth



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Many have tried to define the character of Lady Macbeth, perhaps the most memorable character of Shakespeare's legendary tale of murderous ambition, Macbeth. As the play opens and Lady Macbeth is introduced, her motives are not fully visible until her second appearance in Act II Scene 2. As her motivation is realized, it seems very detestable. As the play unfolds, it seems that Lady Macbeth is actually quite insane. In this essay I will attempt to delve into the character of Lady Macbeth and attempt to shed some light on her actions and role in Macbeth's climax, and downfall.

When Lady Macbeth first appears in Act I Scene V, she is reading a letter sent to her by Macbeth. When Lady Macbeth learns about the witches' prophecy, she begins doubting that Macbeth has what is necessary to take advantage of this. This is best exemplified by these lines "What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature; / It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness" (Pg. 318, 15-16) in this passage she is suggesting that Macbeth is full of the natural human feelings of compassion and loyalty. She then takes the responsibility of Macbeth's prophecy coming true. She claims that she will reprimand all that impedes Macbeth from the "golden round" or the crown. In another soliloquy she claims to give up her femininity in order to be better suited for the murderous deeds ahead. So Lady Macbeth has already begun a transformation into a person who is overcome by greed and desire.

Her motivation is now clear, she desires that Macbeth become King, undoubtedly for the power, wealth, and social domination that would accompany this position. Whenever Macbeth began to falter, she began to question his manhood, in an effort to manipulate him, which caused him to

put away any qualms and do the dirty deed. Towards Act III and IV Macbeth begins to take charge, but Lady Macbeth is still in the background, making sure that Macbeth's position of King is secured. In conclusion I feel that Lady Macbeth is by far the most compelling character in the play. Her actions and presence change the atmosphere of the play dramatically to an almost insane slew of events, all set into motion by Lady Macbeth herself. Try to consider this play without Lady Macbeth. It is likely that Macbeth would not have had the determination to procure the crown, and Duncan would likely still be King. Shakespeare used Lady Macbeth as a way to drive the beginning of the play, in other words, get the ball rolling.