

## The Role of Ambition in *Macbeth*

In *Macbeth*, William Shakespeare shows that ambition is a big problem for Macbeth because it makes him do bad things. At the start of the play, Macbeth is a good soldier who fights for Scotland and wins battles. But after he meets the witches, he starts thinking about becoming king. They tell him, "*All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis! / All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor! / All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be king hereafter!*" (1.3.48-50). This makes Macbeth excited, and he starts thinking about how he can be king. His wife, Lady Macbeth, pushes him to kill King Duncan, so he does it.

Macbeth's ambition grows stronger after he becomes king. He realizes that other people might take his place, so he kills Banquo and tries to kill Banquo's son, Fleance. He also kills Macduff's family because he feels threatened. At this point, Macbeth is no longer the same person he was at the start. He becomes cruel and paranoid, which makes people turn against him. This shows that ambition can make people do terrible things if they don't control it.

Lady Macbeth also has ambition, but she can't handle the guilt. In the beginning, she is very confident and tells Macbeth to be brave. She says, "*When you durst do it, then you were a man*" (1.7.49), which pressures Macbeth to kill Duncan. However, later in the play, she starts feeling guilty and goes crazy. She keeps washing her hands, saying, "*Out, damned spot! Out, I say!*" (5.1.30). This shows that ambition can destroy people emotionally and mentally.

In the end, Macbeth's ambition leads to his downfall. Macduff kills him, and Malcolm becomes king. If Macbeth had not listened to the witches or let ambition take over, he might have lived a good life. Shakespeare teaches us that ambition is dangerous and can ruin people.