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Macbeth

Shakespeare is a 16th century playwright who is known for many of his plays, one his most famous is *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, the story of the Scottish soldier Macbeth who is crowned king and lets his ambition cloud his judgement, ultimately leading to his downfall. Ambition serves as the instrument of destruction as Macbeth and his wife Lady Macbeth display their tyranny and eventual guilt; similarly, ambition prevails through Macbeth's rival Macduff's noble actions.

Macbeth gradually earns the title of a tyrant and gradually becomes undone by his guilt of the treachery acts he's committed. Macbeth was once an honorable soldier; he defeated Macdonwald who was a threat to the throne, and received the title of the Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth's path towards wickedness begins after Macbeth and Banquo come across the witches who give them three prophecies which of most significance saying Banquo's descendants will be king, but that contrasts to the other prophecy that was stated saying Macbeth would be king. Driven by his ambition to become king Macbeth is persuaded by his wife Lady Macbeth to King Duncan, although he is hesitant at first he decides to finally go through with it. The plan was to wait until Duncan fell asleep, drug his guards, kill him with the guards daggers, and then smear his blood on the guards bodies. After Duncan's murder Macbeth was crowned king, causing Duncan's sons to flee Scotland out of fear. After Macbeth's seizing of the throne he faced a

growing insecurity and deep suspicion brought on by the witches prophecy saying Banquo's descendants will be king.

Macbeth arranges three murderers to kill by convincing them that it's Banquo's fault for their oppression and gets them to ambush him and his son Fleance to secure his throne. With the death of his best friend, the late king Duncan and, the supposed death of Fleance Macbeth hosts a coronation and invited all the thanes and lords all of which who come except for Macduff he feels some type of way but doesn't think too much of it. The murderers who Macbeth hired come back and tell him that they killed Banquo but Fleance escaped. Hearing that sentence Macbeth gets very upset as expressed here "I am in blood / Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more, / Returning was as tedious as go o'er" (act 3 scene 4). During his coronation Macbeth was sitting and eating and saw Banquo's ghost. Due to his overwhelming fear he proceeds to have a mental breakdown in front of all his guests at the table of thanes and lords because the ghost is sitting in his spot. Lady Macbeth sees him freaking out and tries to call him but Macbeth ignores her and continues to yell at Banquo's ghost as he disappeared only to reappear moments later. At this point Macbeth has become so distressed and frightened that Lady Macbeth that she just asked all the guests to leave. His ambition led to a psychotic break and eventually his demise.

Speaking of Lady Macbeth she was a treacherous person herself, who too was engulfed by guilt. She was the one who set Banquo and Fleance to be ambushed, and laid out the sequence of events to kill King Duncan. She was once insulting Macbeth about not being man to commit the treachery she wanted, and in the she killed herself because she couldn't handle the guilt that came from being involved in the murders she was complicit in. The guilt consumed her so much that the gentlewoman called a doctor to see about her condition. She was sleepwalking, writing letters, and confessing the murders then returning back to bed. But the doctor could not diagnose

what was wrong with her. The gentlewoman and doctor observed for days and saw no change in her behavior. Then came the great confession by Lady Macbeth: “Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; don't look so pale. ... I tell you again, Banquo's buried. He can't come out of his grave.” / Act 5/ Scene 1. Ironically, the most seemingly strong-willed character broke and ended up killing herself before the final curtain call.

Likewise the other characters i have mentioned Macduff is a character driven by ambition but not for the good of himself but for the good of his country. He was one of the first to suspect Macbeth of his treachery and was the only thane that did not show at Macbeth's coronation. He fled to Scotland to seek help from King Duncan's son Malcolm, he went to persuade Malcolm to provide an army and help him overthrow Macbeth. He left his family behind clueless who ended up getting murdered by order of Macbeth, however Macduff had stated how his family's life is insignificant to the good of his country. He fought for his country in the revolt against the great tyrant Macbeth, he felt as though he needed to kill Macbeth to avenge his family. Ultimately his goal was to rid Scotland of Macbeth's tyranny.

While ambition fuels Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's destructive pursuit of power, ultimately leading to their demise, it also motivates Macduff's courageous and noble acts to restore justice and order in Scotland. Ambition is not evil nor good, instead it magnifies the personality of the beholder. Wise use of it can achieve noble goals or it can send you down a dark and dreadful path as seen with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth's ambition became twisted by greed, poisoning a once noble soldier into a corrupt traitor with an insatiable lust for power.