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English 11

02 February 2025

### The Tragedy of Macbeth

The Tragedy of Macbeth is a Seventeenth Century novel written by William Shakespear. This novel was originally a play created as a gift to King James of England. The Tragedy of Macbeth is a tale set in Medieval Scotland, that shows the true destructive potential of unchecked power and ambition leading to an epic downfall. It shows how the forces of good and evil can be misleading and play an important role in our fate. In Macbeth, supernatural elements such as witches, ghosts, and apparitions contribute to Macbeth's fate, actively causing his death.

The Witches played a huge part in Macbeth's fate throughout this story. "The three witches of Macbeth are unforgettable figures, representing the dangers of ambition, misinterpretation, and poor moral choices" (ShakeAdmin). In Act I Scene I, these three very odd witches plan to meet Macbeth on a heath to give him a prophecy. Shortly after, In Act I Scene III, the witches do as they said and come in contact with Macbeth, who is accompanied by Banquo. Here, the witches give Macbeth the following prophecies; "All Hail Macbeth, Thane of Glamis, All Hail Macbeth. Thane of Cawdor, and All Hail Macbeth, who shall be king"(Shakespear). The witches then gave Banquo this prophecy directly after; "Lesser than Macbeth, yet greater, not so happy, yet much happier, and thou shalt get kings, though thou be none" (Shakespear).

The witches then vanish as Macbeth is demanding more out of them. The tone for the play was set in Act 1, Scene VII when the witches say, “Fair is foul, and foul is fair, hover through fog and filthy air” (Shakespeare). It is metaphorically suggested that fair and foul will be intertwined. The uncertainty of the two suggest that what appears to be good could be evil and what could appear to be evil could be good. They also speak in rhymes and riddles, which suggests intentional manipulation. Their influence pushes Macbeth forward into the darkness towards his fate as a result of these manipulative prophecies.

Banquo chooses to ignore and look past these prophecies. Macbeth, on the other hand, is already deeply invested in what these witches are telling him. These prophecies drive Macbeth so mad that he decides he is willing to do anything to make sure they all work out exactly as the witches had said. Macbeth comes to the realization that there is only one way to accomplish these prophecies, and this is by killing Banquo. Over the next few days, Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth his prophecies, and how he needs them to come to life. Lady Macbeth then comes up with a plan. One night, while Banquo is asleep, Macbeth is convinced to go in and slaughters Banquo. He can not seem to forgive himself for the horrible things he has done to Banquo, but the deed has been done. His ambition drove him to use the witches' prophecies to cross the line between good and evil.

The ghost that appears to Macbeth is a symbol of his guilt for the murders of Duncan and Banquo and the beginning of his downward spiral. He is confronted by the ghost of Banquo, who is invisible to all except him. The Ghost haunts Macbeth so bad that he begins publicly causing a

scene for everyone at the table to observe. As Macbeth begins to spill all of his secrets about the murder, Lady Macbeth quickly steps in to cover for him. Lady Macbeth says how “her husband's very strange behavior at the table is due to a condition that he has had for numerous years” (Shakespeare). This ghost throws Macbeth for yet another loop causing him to act even more insane about the situation. The killing of Banquo did not only affect Macbeth come to find out. Later on, a gentlewoman who is Lady Macbeth's neighbor, calls up a doctor to discuss Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking. The gentlewoman is saying how Lady Macbeth has these strange episodes in which she talks about a murder while sleepwalking. As the gentlewoman and Doctor are discussing, they overhear Lady Macbeth in a side room sleepwalking yet again. They then listen in, only to hear more of Lady Macbeth unknowingly giving details of the murder. Lady Macbeth then says, “Out damned spot, out I say, for my hands still smell of blood”! The Doctor then tells the gentlewoman, “This is beyond my practice, more needs she the divine than the physician”(Shakespeare). The actions of Macbeth were not treatable by the physician, but rather a psychological one resulting from his now fragile mental state.

The three misleading apparitions that appear are ultimately what leads to both the confidence to proceed with his ambitious plan and his demise. The first is an armed head, summoned to warn Macbeth that Macduff is coming back to Scotland to ruin him. This creates paranoia and panic. The second apparition is a bloody child, and it tells Macbeth that no man born of a woman can do him harm. This gives Macbeth a boost of confidence falsely associated with immortality and fuels his ambition. "Then live Macduff: what need I fear of thee?" (Act IV Scene I). The third apparition is that of a child wearing a crown and holding a tree. It declares

“Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill shall come against him” (Act IV Scene I) Macbeth is sure that the third apparition's prophecy will never be, for 'who can impress the forest?' or 'bid the tree unfix his earth-bound roots?' (Act IV Scene I). After hearing these apparitions, he has a false sense of security to proceed. As later revealed in the play, while the apparitions were accurate, they were more metaphoric, and Macbeth did not interpret them correctly. Apparition two did not consider men born of cesarean section. Apparition three was misunderstood and led him to the exact location with an army Macduff had hiding behind branches. The three collectively led to both his rise and fall. From his greed and ambition, Macbeth chose to interpret these prophecies as he wanted to see them instead of as they were.

The tragic ending to Macbeth represents how morals can be overpowered by ambition and the overwhelming power of manipulative influences. The three witches, ghosts, and apparitions created a blurred line between good and evil with their symbolism, metaphoric plays on reality and misinterpreted prophecies. In the end, Macbeth realizes that he could not fight his own fate and dies with nothing. He lost his honor, his wife, had no heir and lost his morality to his own selfish ambition. He died overwhelmed with guilt and with the realization that the prophecies were merely tricks. Apparition one, the armored head, was his true final fate as it was held on display by Macduff.

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