

Walker Probst

Mrs. Graning

English 11

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*Macbeth*

In Europe, from Scotland to England travels Macbeth, a tragic hero in the tragedy, *Macbeth*, where he is influenced by many supernatural elements. These supernatural elements lead to a few victories for Macbeth, but in the end cause many losses for him and his wife, Lady Macbeth. Macbeth's reign eventually comes to an end after these elements get the best of him and lead to him being slain by Macduff. There are many supernatural elements that affect the outcome of Macbeth including the witches' manipulation, Macbeth's frightening hallucinations, and the three apparitions.

Macbeth is easily manipulated by the three witches who are very tricky and are trying to lead him to his downfall. The witches first manipulate Macbeth by telling him three prophecies one of which he already knows is true. The witches speak these prophecies in a weird way by chanting:

Witch 1: All hail, Macbeth. All hail to thee, Thane of Glamis.

Witch 2: All hail, Macbeth. All hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor.

Witch 3: All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter, (Shakespeare 1 : 3 : 48 - 50).

Macbeth is already the Thane of Glamis and will soon find out he's been named Thane of Cawdor. When he finds this out his ambition drives him to make the last prophecy come true, no matter what it takes. Similarly, the witches give Banquo three prophecies which he does not care

much of, but these prophecies all eventually come true and really mess with Macbeth's mind.

The witches also tell Banquo his prophecies by chanting them one after the other, saying:

Witch 1: Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

Witch 2: Not so happy, yet much happier.

Witch 3: Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none, (Shakespeare 1 : 3 : 65 - 67).

Banquo doesn't believe these prophecies and thinks the witches are just weird liars. Later in the story Macbeth is worried about the prophecy of Banquo having descendants as kings, and it leads to Banquo's death. Overall, the witches speak in a very weird language different from normal humans. The witches chant a lot of random spells and at the end of them they say, "Double, double, toil and trouble;/ Fire burn and cauldron bubble (Shakespeare 4 : 1 : 35 - 36). This is a very different type of language and the witches' saying has become very famous throughout time.

Macbeth has many hallucinations and hears many voices which cause him to go even crazier and eventually make the other characters suspicious of him. Macbeth first sees a bloody dagger pointed towards Duncan's room which is foreshadowing Duncan's death. This is Macbeth's guilty conscience trying to stop him from killing Duncan, Macbeth says:

Is this a dagger which I see before me,

The handle toward my hand? Come let me clutch thee.

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible

To feeling as to sight, or art thou but

A dagger of the mind, A false creation,

Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain, (Shakespeare 2 : 1 : 34 - 40).

Macbeth is starting to lose his mind and question if he should do these acts, but his wife eventually convinces him to do them. In conclusion, Macbeth kills Duncan with the daggers and hears a voice calling him a murderer. This voice scares Macbeth and he tells his wife:

Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more;  
Macbeth does murder sleep' — the innocent sleep,  
Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,  
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,  
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,  
Chief nourisher in life's feast, (Shakespeare 2 : 2 : 34 - 39).

After Macbeth hears this voice he feels wrong for killing Duncan, but his wife keeps telling him everything will be fine. Furthermore, Macbeth has Banquo murdered and while at dinner with the Thanes he sees his ghost. Banquo's ghost is sitting at the table causing Macbeth to freak out and say:

Blood hath been shed **ere** now, i' the olden time,  
Ere human statute purged the gentle weal.  
Ay, and since too, murders have been performed,  
Too terrible for the ear. The times have been,  
That, when the brains were out, the man would die —  
And there an end. But now they rise again, (Shakespeare 3 : 4 : 79 - 84).

Lady Macbeth covered for him and got all the guests out, but this was a big mistake by Macbeth as it caused all the Thanes to become suspicious of Macbeth and how he became king.

The witches manipulate Macbeth again when they show him three apparitions which give him more over-confidence. Macbeth goes to the witches to see what he should do next and the

witches first show him an armed head. The armed head is the first apparition and it says, “Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth, beware Macduff;/ Beware the Thane of Fife. Dismiss me, enough (Shakespeare 4 : 1 : 78 - 79). This worries Macbeth and leads to him having Lady Macduff and her son murdered. Likewise, Macbeth asks for another apparition and they show him a bloody child. The bloody child tells him, “Be bloody, bold, and resolute. Laugh to scorn/ The power of man, for none of woman born/ Shall harm Macbeth (Shakespeare 4 : 1 : 87 - 89). This vision means Macbeth can not be killed by any man born of a woman making him think he can not be killed and gives him even more confidence. Similarly, Macbeth is shown a third apparition which is a crowned child holding a tree in his hand. This crowned child says:

Be lion-mettled, proud; and take no care  
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are.  
Macbeth shall never vanquished be, until  
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill  
Shall come against him, (Shakespeare 4 : 1 : 99 - 103).

This apparition is telling Macbeth that he will not fall until the Birnam wood forest marches onto his castle. Macbeth is even more confident he can not be defeated by Macduff because the woods could never march, but in the end Macduff kills him.

Macbeth’s short reign was sparked by many supernatural elements while the witches’ manipulation, frightening hallucinations, the three apparitions also helped cut it short. The witches are the reason he got throne in the first place, but show him the apparitions which ultimately leads to his death. Macbeth’s hallucinations and voices he hears leads to suspicion which cause many to turn on him in his final battle. Macbeth likely would have lived a good life if he was never affected by these supernatural elements.

Works Cited

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