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English

2 February 2025

Ambition

The Story of Macbeth is a Tragedy written by William Shakespeare in which Macbeth a noble Thane who becomes so caught up in power that he will do anything to get what he wants even if it means killing his best friend. Macbeth begins by fighting in the war between Scotland and Norway where he challenges and kills one of the leaders of the other army. After his fight he and Banquo get a meeting with three witches that gave both of the men three prophecies about their future. After the witches left Macbeth got a message for King Duncan that the Thane of Cawdor had betrayed Scotland and had been killed and the title of Thane of Cawdor would be given to Macbeth fulfilling the second prophecy. While celebrating the victory, Lady Macbeth comes up with a way to kill King Duncan so Macbeth can be named king. This began a line of murders that were organized by Macbeth to keep him on the throne. All of these acts began to make the other lords suspicious of Macbeth being behind the terrible things going on in Scotland. After some time a rebellion was formed against Macbeth and was successful and led to the death of Macbeth. Throughout the story, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* shows how ambition drives Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to their ultimate downfall, showing ambition not as inherently destructive but as a force that, when unrestrained by moral integrity, leads to corruption, guilt, and ruin, as seen in Macbeth's descent into tyranny and Lady Macbeth's psychological collapse.

Ambition becomes a huge problem in the events that he causes to get what people want.

The first time we see ambition come into play is at the beginning of the story. We see Macbeth challenge one of the top generals of the Norwegian army. Through this achievement of killing Macdonwald, the Norwegian general, Macbeth got reward with being named the Thane of Cawdor which was the second prophecy that the witches told him would happen which led to him wanting more. This made Macbeth want to become king even more so he decided he would do anything to get that done. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's ambition for power continued when they came up with a plan to kill the king. Through this we can see the willingness Macbeth had to do anything to get what he wanted. The next time we see Macbeth's ambition was to get back at MacDuff for becoming a traitor. He got back at him by hiring murderers to go to his castle and murder his family while he was in England scheming with Malcolm. The last main time we see ambition play a role in someone's mind set would be with MacDuff. We see him want to get back at Macbeth for killing his family and is willing to risk his own life to get revenge.

The reason for Macbeth's downfall in the play is wholly contributed to by his ambition, taken advantage of by other factors to commit horrific acts. Macbeth's ambition was stirred by the witches' prophecy stating that he would be king. It is, however, Lady Macbeth that pushes him into committing the murder of King Duncan and pushes him past moral hesitation. Immediately after taking the throne, Macbeth's paranoia gets hold of him, and he's driven into other atrocities: having Banquo murdered and Macduff's family. His move into tyranny makes him alienated, and he starts only trusting what the witches have spoken of. This false sense of invincibility leads to his tragic end when Macduff, revealed to have been "from his mother's

womb untimely ripped" (Act 5, Scene 8), kills him, thus fulfilling the prophecy that no man born of a woman shall harm him.

William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was written to demonstrate the effect ambition can have and in this particular play, ambition drives Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to their ultimate downfall. The play has a negative connotation for ambition as its turn towards inherent destructiveness when moral integrity is amiss. The ambition Macbeth has, led to corruption, guilt and utter ruin that lead him to rule through tyranny and cause the psychological collapse of Lady Macbeth.

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. William Shakespeare, 1623.