

The killing of Duncan fulfills the witches' prophecy of Macbeth's kingship, leads to repercussions for Macbeth's psyche, and causes suspicion of Duncan's children. When Macbeth kills Duncan, he is horrified by what he has done, and he carries the daggers with him. Following Lady Macbeth's placement of the daggers, Macbeth realizes that he must also kill Duncan's guards to prevent them from claiming their innocence. Macbeth explains his murder of the two guards to Macduff, saying "Who could refrain / That had a heart to love, and in that heart / Courage to make 's love known?" (II, iii, 135-137). The murder of Duncan ultimately leads to the fleeing of Malcolm and Donalbain, who are consequently suspected of paying the guards to murder Duncan in his sleep. Malcolm and Donalbain suspect that the murderer will kill them, and that the "sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth" (II, iv, 42). Macbeth becomes king, and inherits Duncan's throne. Macbeth then becomes aware from the witches' prophecy that Banquo and his heirs are threats to his sovereignty as king. Banquo ponders Macbeth's kingship, saying "I fear / Thou played'st most foully for 't" (III, i, 2-3). He brings up the subject of the witches, showing his fear that Macbeth is not honest. In the third scene, Macbeth realizes that Banquo's heirs will take his place as king, telling a servant, "There is none but he / Whose being I do fear;" (III, i, 59-60). The death of Duncan leads to Macbeth's paranoia for his loss of power. Macbeth believes that in order to maintain his position of power as king, he must prevent all persons from knowing that he has murdered Duncan. Macbeth believes that he is the controller of his fate, and he does not recognize the witches' influence in himself. The murder of Duncan leads to the necessity for the deaths of both Banquo and Fleance, whom Macbeth regards as threats to his throne due to the effect of his increasing paranoia on himself.