

---

## Fair Is Foul And Foul Is Fair In Macbeth

In Macbeth, Shakespeare presents us with a powerful concept of evil. From the very opening scene of the play, the power of evil is displayed with supernatural activities, the witches, this gives the sense of evil because, during the 1600s, people who were considered to be witches were not only political traitors but spiritual traitors as well, this was punished with death.

The theme of evil and its consequences are clearly seen throughout the play as it changes the characters in the play and brings nothing but ruin. Evil is represented to be powerful in this play as it has always been the focal point to shift the characters from loyal to making them seek their own selfish desire.

Shakespeare opens with the power of evil, the three witches meet in the "Thunder and lighting" which immediately offers a foreboding setting. These very first images that are flashed into the reader's mind outlines the powers of evil. This is immediately followed by "Fair is foul, and foul is fair: Hover through the fog and filthy air", the quote to the reader creates a sense of mystery and doubt as the sisters speak exclusively in riddles. The reader gets to truly see the evil side of the witches as the three sisters can bring ruin to other people's lives for the benefit theirs. Macbeth shows that in act 1, scene 3, "I myself have all the other, And the very ports they blow, All the quarters that they know I' the shipman's card." The quote truly shows the potential and evilness of the malicious sisters as they plan ruin for a sailor's family by tossing the sailor's ship around the sea just because his wife had denied the witches some chestnuts, this is totally malicious already for this era but in the 1600s the sailor's ship would have probably meant everything for their family and destroying his ship would make their children and the whole family starve.

The reader first sees the appearance of the witches when Macbeth and Banquo encounter them. The three evil sisters "look like the inhabitance o'th' earth"- Banquo states the appearance of the witches and that paints their appearance on the audience's mind, Shakespeare had to use descriptive techniques due to the lack of special effects in the 1600s, this helped the audience have a better knowledge of how the characters looked and, how they would have behaved if they were real. The witches ignoring the questions asked by the two loyal soldiers speak and say what they had gone to do: "All hail Macbeth, hail to thee Thane of Glamis! 'All hail Macbeth, hail to thee Thane of Cawdor!' 'All hail Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!'. The unexpected quote seems to confuse the two soldiers but as Banquo takes the words with doubt, Macbeth seems to imagine the possibilities of the prophecy becoming real.

As soon as the prophecy is told to lady Macbeth there seems to be a seed implanted in her, and the transition from noble to evil immediately begins as she has to fulfill her hunger for power. The acts which accomplish the witches' prophecy will take place in the shadows and darkness of evil. Macbeth can predict the acts that he will do, the audience knows this because he expresses himself by saying "wicked dreams abuse/ The curtain'd sleep", this not only emphasizes the fact that it will be at nighttime but also indicates that it will happen in deep silence, while all the other men are quite literally in a death-like sleep. At the end of the first act, Macbeth says:

---

“False face must hide what the false heart doth know”, this quotation shows that Macbeth has lost all of his values and is now lost in a world that he detests, due to Lady Macbeth persuading him to believe everything she says. Shakespeare effectively uses language to show that even the most honorable “brave” man with the perfect stereotypes of a man for the 1600s will take away the king's power and corrupt himself by going down the road of evil selfishness. For example, we can see a clear difference in the language adopted to describe Macbeth, from the opening to the conclusion of the play. In the beginning scenes, Duncan calls him “O worthiest cousin” which implants the thought of the noble and good man in the audience, this is because it is the king who is saying that, this shows that even the king respects him, therefore no one expects Macbeth to commit all the acts that he will end up

where he finally stands. This is contrasted with the end of the play where Macduff, who in the eyes of Macbeth is an honorable man, describes him as a “hell-hound”, this suggests that because of all the deeds committed Macbeth has turned into a fearless animal and after his death, he will inevitably go to hell.

Shakespeare also uses Lady Macbeth as the character that portrays evil as her hunger for power will lead to mental problems and finally committing suicide leaving Macbeth in a world she pushed him into. This is used to reinforce the sexism in the 1600s, as it was a common belief that women should be first ruled by their father and later by their husband. This is not what happens in the play as the audience can see how Macbeth falls to his knees over lady Macbeth and will finally be pushed to do what she desires. Shakespeare might have implemented this so that society sees what would happen in a world where men are ruled by women and, the decisions that men do are controlled by women. “The raven himself is hoarse that croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan Under my battlements. Come, you spirits that tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, and fill me from the crown to the toe top-full of direst cruelty!”, this is unquestionably one of the most famous and important quotes in the whole play. Lady Macbeth says this when she is reading the recently arrived letter from her husband, Macbeth is still hesitant about betraying the king. This enrages Lady Macbeth, as she now knows that she is not able to count on her husband, as he is not ambitious enough and his loyalty to King Duncan would surely cause a moral dilemma inside of Macbeth. Unlike Macbeth, Lady Macbeth is determined to be Queen of Scotland and, this speech reflects her desire of becoming Queen as she will take it as far as giving up her conscience, her humanity, and her soul to reach her goal.

In conclusion, we see a brave nobleman who once defeated Scotland and had been called by Duncan a “valiant cousin” and a “worthy gentleman” hover his way into the darkness and silence of evil which will eventually destroy him, while seeking power with his beloved wife. Macbeth's evil will not only destroy him but will also bring chaos to the whole of Scotland. His evil actions will not be unnoticed by nature, evil will bring chaos to nature as the natural moral order has been changed. 'Fair is foul and foul is fair: Hover through the fog and filthy air.' An owl that is prey to falcon has killed the falcon. Duncan's horses have gone wild in nature, broke their stalls, and ate each other. This embraces the power that evil has not only over people but throughout the whole world. Additionally, the structure of the play reinforces supernatural beliefs (which in a way suggest evil), this was popular in the reign of James I.