
Summary: How Macbeth's Need and Ambition For Power Destroyed Him

Macbeth's character changes greatly throughout the play. At the beginning Macbeth was loyal, and respectable. He even became the Thane because of his loyalty to King Duncan. But yet, by the end of the play Macbeth has succumb to ambition. He was encouraged by a prophecy and Lady Macbeth, murders the king to take his throne. This betrayal throws Macbeth into a state of fear and guilt, prompting him to murder again and again to satisfy his paranoia. He sent murderers to kill Banquo and his son, and sent the same murderers to kill off all of Macduff's family and servants. Greed and ambition destroyed Macbeth's life and in this essay we'll see how it all happened.

At the start of the play Macbeth was awarded the name "Thane of Cawdor". 'For brave Macbeth — well he deserves that name — Disdaining Fortune, with his brandish'd steel, Which smoked with bloody execution, Like valour's minion carved out his passage Till he faced the slave.' I. ii. 16-20. Everyone believed that Macbeth was so brave and loyal and he was at first. But once he got a tiny taste of gratitude and attention he needed more. He would do whatever it took to have more. Lady Macbeth encouraged him and came up with a plan to kill the king so Macbeth can take his throne.

When Lady Macbeth first introduces the idea to Macbeth he declines, after much convincing he starts to agree. After thinking Macbeth is half determined to give up the project; but when he meets Lady Macbeth the fall soon comes. She knows the weak points in his character, and he is taunted with cowardice, irresolution, and weakness. She shows him how easy it will be to kill Duncan, now that the time and place 'have made themselves,' he agrees to the plan: 'I am settled, and bend up, Each corporal agent to this terrible feat. Away, and mock the time with fairest show: False face must hide what the false heart doth know.' i. vii. 79-82.

Macbeth has finally got what he wanted and his character undergoes a change. He isn't the cautious and hesitant plotter he used to be, but becomes bolder and more energetic in his scheming. He now doesn't care about bloodshed and murder. Lady Macbeth doesn't need to taunt him anymore to get her way. He plans the murder of Banquo in a most careful and business-like manner and even hires murderers. He tells the murderers: 'I will advise you where to plant yourselves; Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time, The moment on't; for 't must be done to-night.' III. i. 129-131. He, who was so cautious over the murder of Duncan, without any hesitation or thoughts of the aftermath, hires murderers to kill lady Macduff, her children, and all of her servants.

Macbeth started out as a noble hero and ended as an evil tyrant. Ambition took over Macbeth's life and not only did he kill many innocent people but he lost the respect of everyone who loved him just before he became king. He was flooded with guilt from all of his killings so he didn't even enjoy what he worked so hard for. Basically, Macbeth was introduced as a beloved Thane and by the end he turned everyone who cared about him against him and for what? His one minute of fame where he wasn't even happy. Macbeth's need and ambition for power destroyed him and hurt everyone around him.