
The Role Of Ambition In Macbeth By William Shakespeare

Macbeth Ambition can be defined as striving for some kind of achievement or distinction and requires desire and motivation to achieve it. If you let ambition take you over however, you can become obsessed with it and it can lead to destructive behaviors. This is called greed. Ambition and greed play a major role in the book Macbeth by William Shakespeare.

Macbeth starts out as an innocent noble war hero who used his strong ambition as a benefit. However, ambition takes over him and he becomes power hungry, leading him to be self-destructive and deranged. Macbeth's ambition for power leads to murder, guilt, and chaos. Ambition is an excellent quality, but when it becomes out of balance it can lead to selfish and dangerous behavior. At the beginning of the book, Macbeth was an innocent war hero, who would never dream of murdering someone for his own sake. Unfortunately, this changed when he was told a prophecy about him becoming king. This is when his ambition began to take over him. Macbeth decided he was going to kill King Duncan so he could become king like the witches told him. "My thought whose murder yet but fantastical, shakes so my single state of man that function Is smother'd in surmise." The witches never actually told Macbeth that he had to kill Duncan in order to become king. All they told him was "All hail, Macbeth! That shalt be king hereafter". Macbeth was over-ambitious and assumed that he had to kill Duncan in order to become king, and so he talked himself into the idea, with the help of his wife, Lady Macbeth. He got so obsessed with the idea of becoming king he felt as though he needed to be king. "Come what come may, Time and the hour runs through the roughest day." Macbeth is saying that he will accept what he believes he has to do (kill Duncan) if it means he gets to be king. Macbeth then gets a dagger from one of the servants and stabs King Duncan. Once Duncan was killed Macbeth then became king, and got what he wanted. His great ambition had got him to wear he wanted to be, but was it really worth it? Macbeth didn't stop there however. After the king was murdered he killed the guards, and made it appear as if they had murdered the king. Now Macbeth is at a point where he will kill anyone that gets in his way. His ambition and greed have gotten out of control.

The next victim to Macbeth's greed is his best friend Banquo. "To be thus is nothing, But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature Reigns that which would be feared. 'Tis much he dares, And to that dauntless temper of his mind He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor To act in safety. There is none but he Whose being I do fear, and under him My genius is rebuked, as it is said Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters When first they put the name of king upon me. And bade them speak to him. Then, prophetlike, They hailed him father to a line of kings. Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown And put a barren scepter in my grip, Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand, No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so, For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind; For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered; Put rancors in the vessel of my peace Only for them; and mine eternal jewel Given to the common enemy of man, To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings! Rather than so, come fate into the list, And champion me to th' utterance." Macbeth views Banquo as a threat to him, so he decides to hire three assassins to murder him. If Macbeth has the ambition to have his best friend killed, this is proof that he is now so hungry for power that he can and will do anything to achieve it. His ambition for power is forcing him to kill everyone that he thinks could pose a potential threat to him. Macbeth's insanity doesn't end

here however as he now has Macduff's entire family killed because he is suspicious of Macduff fleeing the country. In the battle Macbeth also kills many people, clearly showing that he is obsessed with killing as he has now killed King Duncan, the guards, Banquo, and Macduff's family.

Macbeth's ambition is responsible for these deaths. Macbeth is also responsible for causing chaos and being a tyrant during his time as king due to his uncontrolled ambition. Macbeth has become deranged since his first murder of Duncan, which causes him to be unstable, and therefore unreliable as king. He becomes too distracted by the threats of losing his position to be focused on his day to day duties as king. Macbeth did however possess the qualities of a "good" king. He was brave, ambitious, and proud. These were also what made him a bad king however. He was too proud, too brave, and far too ambitious. Mentally, he wasn't fit to be king because he had shown many signs of insanity such as excessive fear, worry and anxiety, hallucinations, strong feelings of anger, increasing inability to cope with daily problems and activities, and denial of obvious problems, which are all signs of insanity or madness. "Thou liest, abhorred tyrant. With my sword I'll prove the lie thou speak'st". This was said by Young Siward who was killed by Macbeth.

One of the most crucial aspects of the play was guilt. Macbeth felt extreme guilt for all he had done, yet he could not stop because of his ambition. Macbeth's guilt causes him to hallucinate and become delusional. "One cried, 'God bless us!' and 'Amen,' the other, as they had seen me with these hangman's hands. List'ning their fear, I could not say 'Amen,' when they did say 'God bless us'. Methought, I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep'" Macbeth is imagining these voices after he's killed King Duncan. He feels an extreme amount of guilt for what he's done, especially because King Duncan praised him so highly and trusted him. Macbeth also became delusional after he had gotten his friend Banquo killed. Almost immediately after Banquo dies Macbeth is visited by his ghost. Seeing the ghost only makes Macbeth feel guiltier, and makes Macbeth realize the severity of the crimes he's committed. "I am in blood Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more, Returning were as tedious as go o'er." Macbeth isn't the only one to feel guilt however. Even though Lady Macbeth has acted ever so cruel to her husband telling him to be a man and to be strong throughout the play, she also feels guilt for her part in the murder of King Duncan. "Out, damned spot! out, I say". Says Lady Macbeth referring to the blood on her. Even though there is not literally blood on her, because she has washed it off, she still feels like there is because of her guilt. Do to her extreme guilt she ends up committing suicide, which puts even more guilt on Macbeth because he feels slightly responsible for her death.

In conclusion, ambition is to blame for the great downfall of Macbeth. If it wasn't for the unbalanced ambition then the murders, chaos, and guilt would never occurred. Ambition can be an amazing quality to have, as it was for Macbeth in the beginning as he was a war hero, however when it gets out of control it can lead to disastrous situations, causing any amount of damage, and leading to self-destructive behaviors from simply being selfish to becoming a power obsessed murderer.