

Macbeth's Fall into Evil



Macbeth is, by all accounts a good and virtuous man at the beginning of the play. By its end, he has become a murderer of women and children who is not even bothered by his own wife's death. Throughout the play, the influence of others seems to cause the decay of his sense of morality. Discuss to what extent Macbeth may have been influenced by people and events in each act of the play.

Act 1: The gift from Duncan and the Witches' prophecy.

The effect on Macbeth:

Act 2: The murder of King Duncan.

The effect on Macbeth:

Act 3: The murder of Banquo.

The effect on Macbeth:

Act 4: More from the Witches and the murder of Macduff's family.

The effect on Macbeth:

Act 5: Prophecies fulfilled.

The effect on Macbeth:

Analysis: Lady Macbeth



Lady Macbeth is more ambitious and ruthless than her husband, yet she suffers more acutely from guilt at the crimes she helps Macbeth commit. Look at the following scenes and discuss Lady Macbeth's influence on the events of the play, especially her influence on her husband.

Act I, Scene 5: Trying to be more like a man.

Act I, Scene 5: Talking her husband into murder.

Act I, Scene 7: Bullying Macbeth into going through with the murder.

Act II, Scene 2: Lady Macbeth sets up the murder and helps clean up after.

Act III, Scene 2: Lady Macbeth comforts and seeks comfort from Macbeth.

Outraged Nature



Throughout *Macbeth*, nature—especially the weather—is almost as much a character as any other. It reflects the events and the moods of the characters. Discuss the role played by the nature's odd behavior in each of the following scenes.

Act 1, Scene 1: The Witches.

Act 1, Scene 3: Macbeth and Banquo meet the witches.

Act 2, Scene 3: Storms the night of Duncan's murder.

Act 2, Scene 4: Darkness in the day and strange animal behavior.

Act 3, Scene 5: The Witches meet their Mistress.

Acts 4 and 5: Weather not mentioned at all. Why?