

Lady Macbeth Essay

Is Lady Macbeth the true antagonist in Macbeth?

With multiple villains present, *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare presents many figures who insight and cause the atrocities observed in the play. Lady Macbeth is not the antagonist in the play, she is a catalyst for Macbeth's evil, but not the direct source of his murderous actions. Shakespeare makes Lady Macbeth appear as the insidious source of these crimes, but in fact she is not. Both before and after her influence on Macbeth we observe the darkness in his true nature and furthermore his manipulated mind by the wicked beings of the play.

While Lady Macbeth does appear to be the true villain as she manipulates Macbeth, the beginning of the book demonstrates there is a darkness hidden behind his "noble" façade. As the witches stated, "fair is foul and foul is fair", demonstrates how Macbeth's "honourable" appearance is a show. This is reflected in Act I Scene III directly after he hears the Witches' prophecies. His mind cannot stray from the prospect that this "murder...is but fantastical". Macbeth demonstrates he is a "butcher" and Lady Macbeth's manipulation is only an aid to his guilty conscience of wanting to kill the king. He feels that he has the approval of those around him to commit this murder and hence have an excuse for, but deep down it is the "ambition" he wants. Macbeth reveals his true character long before Lady Macbeth learns of the prophecies and therefore demonstrating that he is mostly the main villain of the play, but not entirely.

The Witches play a much larger villainous role in *Macbeth* than Lady Macbeth as they are "instruments of darkness". They played with his mind, and implanted ambitions above all