

In Act 5 Scene 8, Macbeth kills Macduff's family and it is because of Macbeth's blind ambition that he does not expect to be defeated.

Macduff's actions prove that you can have healthy ambition and he recognises that Macbeth was not the proper king. Macduff recognised what Scotland needed and stayed loyal to King Duncan's family.

the moral = to be careful with controlling an ambition for power → it is more satisfying to achieve goals fairly rather than to achieve them through corruption.

Macbeth feels somewhat hesitant and nervous.

→ he is confident that he needs to conceal his crime.

At 54 "let not light see my black and deep desires"

→ "my seated heart knock at my ribs"

In Act 1 Scene 3, Macbeth is already contemplating killing the king, but he is struggling against his ambition. He is not naturally inclined to evil.

Macbeth is not naturally inclined to commit evil deeds but desires power and advancement. He kills Duncan against his better judgement and afterward stew in guilt and paranoia.

→ Macbeth has no legitimate reason to motivate himself to kill the king other than because of Lady Macbeth.

Act 1 Scene 7 - "I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent, but only vaulting ambition."

Macbeth battles between deciding to kill Duncan or not. He had both reasons for or against → showing his internal fight with ambition.

Once on the throne, Macbeth becomes suspicious of Banquo and orders the death of him and Fleance.

→ his ambition to keep the throne was stronger than his trust in Banquo

→ ambition isolates him, as he begins to act on his own, and wants Lady Macbeth to be "innocent of the knowledge" (Act 3 Scene 2)

+ Lady Macbeth is feeling guiltier than her husband because Macbeth's guilt is overshadowed by his controlling ambition.

the witches' prophecies spur both Macbeth and Lady M to action but they never make them do anything → it is their own want to fulfil their deepest and darkest desires and ambitions → they both want to be powerful and great and sacrifice their morals to achieve this.

ultimate ambition is Macbeth's hamartia.

In Act 1 Scene 2 on the battlefield, Macbeth is "covered" in blood → this acts as foreshadowing to the unrecognizable monster Macbeth will become when he is covered in the metaphorical blood of those he kills to achieve his ambitions.

Macbeth is driven by personal ambition which is totally opposing to Duncan and his kingship.

Lady Macbeth pursues her goals with greater determination but is less capable of understanding the repercussions of her immoral act.

Lady Macbeth can only become Queen if Macbeth becomes King so when he hesitates, she shows enough ambition for BOTH of them → once she has a plan, nothing will turn her from her course until her ambition is fulfilled.

Act 1 Scene 5 "art not without ambition, but without the juncos should infer it"

in this scene, Lady Macbeth casts upon evil spirits to help her. she feels that the most important thing is to achieve her "foul purpose" and will stop at nothing to accomplish this.

"foul purpose"
"direst cruelty"
"stop up the access to and passage to remorse"

CONTEXTUALLY = in Shakespearean times, women had very low status and seen as the property of men. 2

Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a "fleshy" cunning woman with her own ambitions. - these characteristics imply a lack of femininity + original performances would have L-M played by a man.

dagger scene: it is Macbeth's unchecked ambition that led to murder spurred by the witches' predictions.

hearing the final 3 prophecies made Macbeth feel more confident than ever he believed that he was going to be safe.

this creates a sense of sympathy for Macbeth.

Preview from Notesale.co.uk
Page 1 of 1

Ambition