
Macbeth By William Shakespeare: Lady Macbeth Character Analysis

Macbeth is a play created by Shakespeare that emphasizes and brings out the true tones of humanity through greed, ambition, and wanting, however through the use of figurative language as well as the combination of dramatic techniques, Shakespeare is able to express the dire emotions of Lady Macbeth as she begins to fall into madness and despair as for she is overcome with guilt and pity over the murders and actions that she carried out with Macbeth. This scene on the other hand introduces us to the leading themes of this play, blood, supernatural, and ambition. The meaning of this scene within the play was used to help show that as people become infected with greed and ambition, they are driven by those factors to commit horrible things, yet as time progresses they will come back to bite you in spite of what you have done and gained. Lady Macbeth is clearly suffering from those demons that are the remorse of her contribution to the murders with Macbeth. In this passage, Shakespeare will use techniques such as figurative imagery and dramatic techniques to express these emotions.

The clear message of Act 5 Scene 1, is to highlight and exploit the fact that Lady Macbeth is falling into madness and insanity due to her guilt and pity for what she has caused in the path to ensure that her husband is crowned king. This is shown when Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking and the Doctor and Gentleman are able to eavesdrop on what she is saying, when she says the statement: "A soldier, and afeard?" and "What need we fear who knows it when none can call our power to account?" These parts of the passage are her talking to herself in her sleep in which she attempts to comfort herself about the murders and try to make sure that she can soothe herself out of the guilty conscience. When Lady Macbeth says: "A soldier, and afeard?", what she means is that she has the mentality of a soldier, which is needless to say, brave, strong, and carries out actions without remorse due to the fact that they are instructed to go through life-threatening and changing aspects as a show of loyalty for their country and people. Lady Macbeth calls herself a soldier as she was the one that creates the drive of greed within Macbeth and is the leading cause of King Duncan's murder as she pushes Macbeth over his own set line and killing his own leader. This requires the "mentality" of a soldier in which she calls herself. Yet she is afraid of the consequences, unlike a soldier, as for they are driven by loyalty and are shielded from the factors that might affect them when they are sent into battle. However, Lady Macbeth is still afraid of what will happen to her after the action she just did due to guilt and pity for the murders. When she says "What need we fear who knows it when none can call our power to account?", it once again insinuates the fact that she is worried for her life that she may get caught and exposed for her actions against the kingdom even though, she was able to cover her tracks to the connections of the murders. Yet this does not change her mentality and still lives in guilt and fear that no matter what, she will eventually get caught and face a penalty for her crimes. This once again links back to the main message and drive of this scene which is to show that Lady Macbeth is getting eaten up by her own guilt.

Another point and key message within the play that insinuates the guilt of Lady Macbeth is the constant upbringing of "blood" on her hands. Within the scene, Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking around her house, constantly rubbing her hands as if washing them and murmuring the fact that they won't come off and no matter what, there is still one stain of blood on her hands, this is shown when Lady Macbeth says: "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!—One, two. Why, then, 'tis time

to do 't. ” and “Here’s the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, Oh, Oh!”. This is one of the most iconic scenes in the play as you can clearly tell that Lady Macbeth is suffering from guilt and pity with the blood on her hands a clear figurative expression that she was the cause of the murders and the blood on her hands will stain her legacy and mind, started out when she says: “Out, damned spot! Out, I say!”. This dialogue message is her attempting to scrub off the imaginary blood that plagues her hands and mind and is supposed to symbolize guilt for her actions. Yet when Lady Macbeth says “Here’s the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, Oh, Oh!”, it is once again backing up the point that she is scared from the actions that she carried out. When she says that “Here’s the smell of the blood still”, it is used to symbolize that the blood of King Duncan is so evident on her body that it could be smelt, stating that she is no longer confident about her carrying out such horrendous acts and getting away with it. It is further more taken into consideration when she says: “All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, Oh, Oh!”. This is meant to show that no matter what she will do, the smell of blood will reek off her body signaling that she committed the murders. It is expressed by the statement of perfumes of Arabia, as for a perfume is meant to mask and conceal a smell however not even that from as far as Arabia will assist in pulling herself away from the murders.

Finally, one of the most idolized figurative and dramatic techniques used within this scene to express how Lady Macbeth is feeling, is when her sleepwalking comes to an end and she says the terms: “Wash your hands. Put on your nightgown. Look not so pale.—I tell you yet again, Banquo’s buried; he cannot come out on ’s grave.” and “To bed, to bed. There’s knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come. Give me your hand. What’s done cannot be undone.—To bed, to bed, to bed!”. This part of Act 5 Scene 1 is used to show that Lady Macbeth is attempting to hide and push down her fears of getting caught as well as guilt while at the same time, she is attempting to try to pass off the fact that she was associated with the murders to other people in order to protect herself. When Lady Macbeth says “Wash your hands. Put on your nightgown. Look not so pale.—I tell you yet again, Banquo’s buried; he cannot come out on ’s grave.”, she is meant to insinuate the fact that she can still try to get away with murders and have nothing to relate with it when she says: “Wash your hands. Put on your nightgown. Look not so pale.”. It is a clear indication that she will try to play off the murders by looking normal so that people will not suspect what she has done to the victims. She also tries to calm herself down by saying “I tell you yet again, Banquo’s buried; he cannot come out on ’s grave.”, which she means that Banquo can not come out of the grave to expose them and tell the others of her actions and that the deed is done and can not be reversed. This is also backed up by the phrase: “To bed, to bed. There’s knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come. Give me your hand. What’s done cannot be undone.—To bed, to bed, to bed!”, in which she once again will try to calm herself down by saying that she can no longer reverse the pass and she must learn to adapt to her actions. This backs up the point that Shakespeare is attempting to make a show that guilt is biting back on Lady Macbeth and for the actions, she committed with Macbeth himself.

To conclude, Shakespeare conveys clearly to the audience that Lady Macbeth has fallen on a dark path with extreme guilt, but also manipulating Macbeth’s actions to the dark. This is extremely sinful as she also forced in some way Macbeth to do horrible actions that he had never imagined doing at any normal time. This once again backs up and builds upon the point that Macbeth is a play created by Shakespeare that emphasizes and brings out the true tones of humanity through greed, ambition, and wanting, however through the use of figurative

language as well as the combination of dramatic techniques, Shakespeare is able to express the dire emotions of Lady Macbeth as she begins to fall into madness and despair as for she is overcome with guilt and pity over the murders and actions that she carried out with Macbeth.

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