

## “Do Now” Work

28th November

How is ambition presented in 'Macbeth'?

*Be able to identify relevant quotations and explore the effect on the audience.*

Task: Write down this definition of ambition in 'Macbeth':

In 'Macbeth', ambition is presented as a dangerous quality. It causes the downfall of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and triggers a series of deaths in 'Macbeth'. Ambition is therefore the driving force of the play.

In Silence Please

 **BOURNVILLE**  
SCHOOL

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Vocabulary:

**hamartia:** a fatal flaw leading to the downfall of a hero.

**hubris:** excessive over confidence (adjective: hubristic).

**patriarchal:** a society controlled by men.

Using the words in a sentence:

Macbeth's hamartia is ambition.

Macbeth is hubristic.

Women were subservient in the patriarchal society of 1606.

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Macbeth: Ambition

Macbeth's ambition is driven by a number of factors including:

- **Prophecy:** The Macbeth witches prophesise that Macbeth will become King. Macbeth believes them and the various prophesies are realised throughout the play. However, it is unclear whether these prophesies are preordained or self fulfilling.
- **Lady Macbeth:** his wife is the driving force that encourages Macbeth to overcome his strong sense of guilt and take action on the prophesies.

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Macbeth's ambition soon spirals out of control and forces him to murder again and again to cover up his previous wrongdoings. Macbeth's first victims are the Chamberlains who are blamed and killed by Macbeth for the murder of King Duncan. Banquo's murder soon follows once Macbeth fears that the truth could be exposed.

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### Consequences

Ambition has a series of consequences in the play: Macbeth is slain as a tyrant and Lady Macbeth commits suicide. Shakespeare does not give either character the opportunity to enjoy what they have achieved – perhaps suggesting that it is more satisfying to achieve your goals fairly than to achieve them through corruption.

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Macbeth: "valiant" soldier



"dead butcher"

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**First Witch**

All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

**Second Witch**

All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, thane of  
Cawdor!

**Third Witch**

All hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter!

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M

[Aside] "Glamis, and  
thane of Cawdor!  
The greatest is behind."

M

"My thought, whose  
murder yet is but  
fantastical"

M

"Stars, hide your fires;  
Let not light see my black  
and deep desires"

LM

"Art not without  
ambition, but  
without  
The illness should  
attend it"

LM

"shalt be  
What thou art  
promised"



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LM

"pour my spirits in thine ear and chastise with the valour of my tongue."

LM

"Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor! Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!"

LM

Art thou afraid  
To be the same in thine own act and valour  
As thou art in desire?"

LM

"And take my milk  
for gall"

M

"I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition, which  
o'erleaps itself  
And falls on the other."

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lm  
"What cannot you and I  
perform upon  
The unguarded Duncan?"

m  
"Is this a dagger which I see  
before me,  
The handle toward my  
hand?"

M  
"Sleep no more!  
Macbeth does murder  
sleep"

m  
"Will all great Neptune's ocean  
wash this blood  
Clean from my hand?"

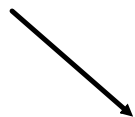
M  
"O, full of scorpions is  
my mind"

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"blood will have  
blood"



"Out, damned spot!  
out, I say!"

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Ambition:

The witches plant the seed of ambition.

Macbeth has "deep desires" but he doesn't act on them.

Lady Macbeth persuades him to kill Duncan.

Macbeth feels guilty.

The consequence of excessive ambition is death.