

The Consequences of Power

Power is a silly thing; it attracts ignorant people towards it and collapses on those not knowing the weight of its responsibilities. Only those who do not seek it are those who are worthy of it. In *Macbeth*, written by William Shakespeare, you can not say we, you, us, I in a formal essay see a representation of misfortune for seeking out power through the characters Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, and Banquo. We see Lady Macbeth underestimate the consequences of achieving power through any means, Macbeth's inevitable collapse of his reign of power due to being corrupted by his power, and Banquo's vastly different decision and the consequences he received for it.

Lady Macbeth underestimates how severe the consequences are in obtaining power through any means. She believes that to acquire great power, Lady Macbeth must resolve herself to use any means necessary. We see that in Act 1, Scene 5, where Lady Macbeth says, 'Come, you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, / And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full / Of direst cruelty...' (Shakespeare I.V.47–50). This quote shows herself becoming resolved in doing anything to secure that great power. That now, she will cast away her natural femininity, her innocence; to do any bloody deed necessary to obtain that great power, that crown. In Act 2, Scene 2, Lady Macbeth talks to Macbeth about the bloody deed they had done with her saying, 'A little water clears us of this deed.' (II.II.86). She believes that what she had done is of very little concern. She believes a small amount of water can clean the blood off their hands. Encompassing that with a very negligible amount of acting and they will be in the clear. Nevertheless, Lady Macbeth soon regrets saying that as the small deed comes stabbing her right in the back. We see this in Act 5, Scene 1, where Lady Macbeth starts to sleep talk, 'Out, damned

spot, out I say! / Yet who would have thought the old man to have so much blood in him?' (V.I.37-42). In this quote, we begin to see Lady Macbeth suffer from the consequences of what she did. It showed her starting to feel guilty about killing King Duncan. The minuscule amount of water she used to wash off his blood is no longer enough. That now, no amount of water can wash away the bloody deed that she did. This quote clearly shows that she is no longer her former self but instead a so-called insane person. Overall, Lady Macbeth underestimated the consequences of trying to acquire great power using any means possible. Lady Macbeth very clearly, reaps what she sows.

Macbeth's inevitable collapse of his reign is due to being corrupted by his power. Macbeth is an honorable and respectful man at the start of the play but soon becomes more corrupt after obtaining that power. We see that difference in Act 2, Scene 2, in Macbeth's soliloquy, 'Is this a dagger which I see before me / The handle toward my hand? / Come, let me clutch thee.' (II.I.44-45). In this quote, we see a big difference in this Macbeth. We see him starting to feel the weight of his actions and the consequences he has to face because of it. He feels guilty about killing King Duncan; that guilt had soon caused him to be hallucinating about the bloody dagger he used to kill King Duncan. The honorable and respectful Macbeth we know is no longer there but one who became corrupt in trying to obtain great power. We see Macbeth's delusion more when speaking to the murderers in Act 3, Scene 1, saying, 'With barefaced power sweep him from my sight'(III.I.135). Macbeth believes that now that acquiring the power of a king and knowing the witch's prophecies, he is now omnipotent and can sweep away Banquo any time he wants. He is under the delusion that no one can threaten his power anymore but that thinking soon is thrown out the window. In Act 5, Scene 8, we see Macduff speaking to Macbeth,

saying, 'Tell thee Macduff was from his mother's womb / Untimely ripped' (V.VIII.19-20). This quote has Macduff tell Macbeth that he is not born from a woman but ripped out of one. It finally causes Macbeth to feel fear and notice that he is not omnipotent with his power. It finally shows Macbeth that the consequences of his power finally caught up to him and that the punishment for believing he is omnipotent is death. All in all, Macbeth's collapse of his reign is due to being corrupted by his power. After all, it was not Macbeth's fault for being corrupted but instead for making a deal with the devil.

Banquo made a vastly different choice compared to the Macbeth couple, yet he still received consequences for his decision. In Act 1, Scene 3, we see Banquo's decision through his warning to Macbeth, saying to him, 'That trusted home, / Might yet enkindle you unto the crown, / Besides the thane of Cawdor. / But 'tis strange. / And oftentimes, to win us to our harm, / The instruments of darkness tell us truths, / Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's / In deepest consequence.' (I.III. 132-138). If the quote is over 4 lines this is how you put it in the paper.

Banquo warns Macbeth about the witches. He tells Macbeth that frequently, agents of evil will only tell them the truth if only it leads them down to destruction. Banquo believes the witches only told them the truth about the little things to entice them in trusting them. Only for them to later betray them when it can damage them the most. This quote clearly shows Banquo's distrust for the witches and his unwillingness to follow their plans. This unwillingness showcases itself in Act 2, Scene 1, where Macbeth offers an invitation to Banquo only for him to reply, 'So I lose none / In seeking to augment it, but still keep / My bosom franchised and allegiance clear, / I shall be counseled.' (you need to put the lines here) In this quote, Banquo states he will accept

Macbeth's invitation to ally up with him on a condition. He says that he will only join him if it allows him to have a clear conscience. Banquo is not willing to do any bloody deed to obtain power but instead slowly and righteously. Yet the consequences for that decision later show in Act 3, Scene 3, when Banquo states, 'O treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly! / Thou may 'st revenge —O slave!' (III.III.25-26). In this quote, Banquo learns the stark difference between their decisions; it is the consequence of not accepting Macbeth's invitation. That Macbeth chose a bloody bath and that he is no longer a righteous and honorable man but instead a treacherous and vicious man. He declares to Fleance that he should take revenge against that man before shortly dying as a consequence. Though Banquo's decision was vastly different, he still could not bear the repercussions of it. Simply put, he was a dead man walking.

In conclusion, we see a representation of misfortune for seeking out power through the characters Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, and Banquo. We see Lady Macbeth underestimate the consequences of achieving power through any means and reap what she sows. Macbeth's inevitable collapse of his reign of power is due to being corrupted by his power with his devil deal. Lastly, Banquo's vastly different decision and the consequences he received was becoming a dead man walking. It all happens due to seeking our power. Power is a silly thing; it attracts ignorant people towards it and collapses on those not knowing the weight of its responsibilities. Only those who do not seek it are those who are worthy of it.