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English 4

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Macbeth Essay

“And oftentimes, to win us to our harm, the instruments of darkness tell us truths, win us with honest trifles, to betrays, In deepest consequence.”- Banquo. Consequence is the result of an action that affects another soul and depending on the intensity of that action does one finally get what they deserve. Other times one endures a horrible consequence for something they never committed. Those things which are dark or evil will lead to a misguided truth. The truth that is misapplied to the problem one faces, when something trivial occurs great importance for justice is often taken for granted. Throughout the play many characters suffer of utter misfortune that is brought on by other characters selfish actions. Among these characters I believe that Macbeth deserved the suffering that he was plagued with, whereas King Duncan and Banquo do not deserve to suffer for Macbeths own self-indulgences.

Macbeth is controlled by a self-defeating prophecy throughout the play and is confronted with power and violent thoughts to sustain his reign. When Macbeth becomes the thane of Cawdor he is then viewed as a strong and brave man, however he is pretentious and the people do not realize this until he is faced with adversity. Macbeth feels threatened by King Duncan and his sons and in return for those feelings he commits crimes that haunt him in the future. Macbeth proves with his actions that he cannot be a leader since he lacks the skills necessary to rule without being a tyrant. Macbeth’s response to every problem he is faced with has a pattern of violence and murder. Macbeth is heavily influenced by his wife, Lady Macbeth whose ambition for power is extremely ruthless. Due to Lady Macbeths strength to sway her husband’s thoughts, she urges him to kill King Duncan and seize the throne. When she witnesses the death of Duncan and Macbeths emotions towards his wrong doing, she is overcome by guilt and sadness and goes insane. Only until she realizes that her and her husband are experiencing the guilt together does she being to express her conscience and begins to fall into alienation with Macbeth. She then commits suicide and leaves Macbeth to deal with these crimes he has embarked upon on his own and through all of this madness Macbeth suffers from a great amount of psychological consequences that he is unable to bear. His feelings begin to fluctuate as he falls in and out of action and terrible guilt to secure the throne. , Macbeth never seems to foresee suicide “Why should I play the Roman fool, and die on mine own sword?” (5.10.1–2). Instead, he goes down fighting, bringing the play full circle with Macbeth winning on the battlefield and ending with him dying in combat.

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King Duncan is the good king of Scotland who Macbeth murders for the power that he attains and the perception of the people seeing him as a benevolent leader. Duncan has two youthful sons who could take the throne if anything of misfortune should happen to him, Malcom and Donalbain who are also the victims of Macbeths plot for power. Duncan is viewed as a relentless and farsighted ruler who embodies everything that Scotland is about. When Macbeths twisted mentality allows him to look at the world with eyes of fear, he murders Duncan which is symbolic of the death of a country and the destruction of an order in Scotland that can be restored only when Duncan’s in rule. He was a generous father figure whose murder is grieved all over Scotland. “Wherever in your sightless substances you wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night, and pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell…” (1. 5.49-51) Lady Macbeth builds herself up to kill Duncan, although cowardly and prepares herself for his murder that she contemplates until she makes Macbeth commit it. King Duncan was simply staying the night at their castle, completely oblivious of the hatred and lust of power that these poor souls possessed and lost his life to their greed. This is completely undeserving and absurd for Duncan to endure, especially since he possessed all the right qualities of a deserving king to end up suffering upon the selfishness of two uncertain and weak people.

Banquo plays a role as both a human and a ghost to haunt Macbeth of his deviant ways and warns Macbeth that evil will offer men a small, hopeful truth only in order to catch them in a deadly trap. As a ghost Banquo serves as an omniscient character since he is one of the only ones who hears the witches prophecy and takes it for what it is. The witches proceed to tell Macbeth and Banquo that Banquo’s descendants will be encountering the throne in years to come. Immediately after hearing this news Macbeth is filled with envy and lust for power, yet again and sees Banquo as a threat when in reality it is his relatives that he should fear. Throughout the play Banquos character serves as a foil and an example of the path that Macbeth refuses to take. A path that doesn’t consist of betrayal and murder, but rather of honesty and ambitious thoughts. Banquos ghost is there to serve as a guilty conscience in the back of Macbeths mind that is there not allowing him to forget all of the actions he took towards innocent souls. Banquo does not deserve the death he experienced since he resists the temptations of evil within the play and prays to heaven for help, while Macbeth seeks darkness, and prays that evil powers will aid him.

Macbeth establishes a clear difference between kingship and tyranny among a thirst for personal power and ends up getting what he deserves. An overwhelming amount of guilt plagues him with uncontrollable corruption as he manipulates his way to kingship. The obstacles along the way with the death of undeserving innocent souls such as King Duncan and Banquo are symbols of the death of Macbeth in the end of the play. As Macbeth is close to taking reign of the throne, he is struck down in battle and it is symbolic for him not deserving the throne due to his selfish actions.