

Macbeth - How Fate Disappointed

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How Fate Disappointed in Macbeth

How forceful was fate in the venerable Shakespearean tragedy Macbeth? Did it deprive either of the Macbeths of their ability to choose? This essay intends to answer these and other fate-related questions.

In his critical volume, *Macbeth: a Guide to the Play*, H. R. Coursen explains the concept of Fate within the play:

Macbeth's tragedy is not that he decides to kill Duncan but that he cannot become independent. Even if a weaker agency than God, he would be his own, himself alone. But he cannot fight free of his [implication](#) in the way things are any more than Lady Macbeth can free herself of its embeddedness in her. The world and all within it must be of a piece if their particular version of destiny is to be acted out. Fate cannot "come . . . into the lyst." Fate is not an option except as it - like "Chance" - is [allied](#) with God, a category properly defined as the will of God. (56)

Macbeth: "If Chance would have me king, why, Chance may crown me without my stir."

A.C. [Bradley](#) in *Shakespearean Tragedy* references Fate in the play to the Witches' prophecies:

The words of the witches are fatal to the hero only because there is in him something which leaps into light at the sound of them; but they are at the same time the witness of forces which never cease to work in the world around him, and, on the instant of his surrender to them, entangle him inextricably in the web of Fate. (320)

Blanche Coles states in *Shakespeare's Four Giants* the place of Fate in Macbeth's life:

Then, like a cog slipping naturally into its own notch, his thoughts turn to the Witches and their prophecy, and he concludes that he has defiled his mind for the...

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