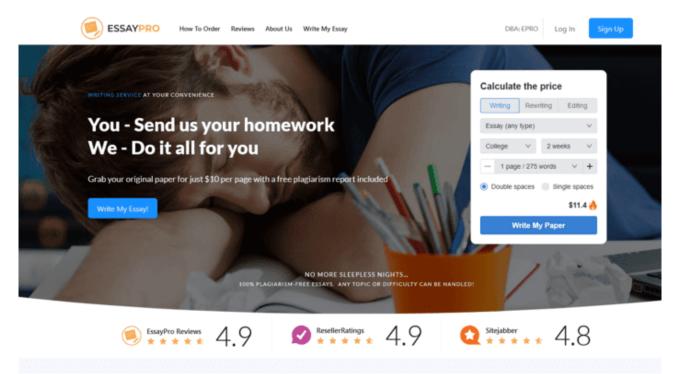
Macbeth: Destiny of Each Character is Pre-determined



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Macbeth: Destiny of Each Character is Pre-determined In the play Macbeth, written by William Shakespeare, each characters destiny seems to be predetermined. This raises the ultimate question: who, or what, controls fate? Existentialism is the belief that each person defines their future by their decided actions: that the future has not yet been written. Fatalism is the belief that the outcome of all events is preordained, and therefore, unalterable. Throughout Macbeth, the character Macbeth makes many decisions which clearly affect his future, but are they truly decisions? Or, are his decisions examples of fatalism, where another force is guiding his actions to their predetermined conclusion? Many of the characters, events, and much of the imagery in Macbeth indicates that fate plays a prominant role in advancing the plot. The characters most easily identified with having supernatural powers are, obviously, the three witches.

The Witches' ability to see into the future is demonstrated when Macbeth becomes thane of Cawdor. The line, "What? Can the devil speak true?" showes Banquo's <u>surprise</u> at the realization of the prophecy. But, would the Witches' prophecy of Macbeth's royal promotion have come true had they not made Macbeth aware of the possibility? There was no reason to warn Macbeth of the fate in store for him, since it is most likely impossible for a person to <u>alter</u> their destiny. It is quite possible that the witches have no real power at all, beyond that of <u>suggestion</u>. They may have only planted the idea within Macbeth, feeding off his already present ambition. Perhaps the only true controlling power comes from Lady Macbeth's uncontrollable greed.

Once Lady Macbeth had learned of the witches' prophecy, she immediately concluded that Macbeth would not, with his present persona, be able to attain that which fate had bestowed upon him.

"...Hie thee hither,

That I may pour my spirits in thine ear And chastise with valor of my tongue All that impedes thee from the golden round

Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem

To have thee crowned withal."

Lady Macbeth believed that it was her duty to induce Macbeth to carry

out the necessary deed (Duncan's murder) to fulfil the prophecy. However,

if Lady Macbeth had not influenced him, it is doubtful that Macbeth would

have taken any action towards his Royal future.

This substantiates the idea that the strength of the witches' words lies in the power of suggestion. Although Lady Macbeth stated her belief in Fate, she felt compelled to help it along. During the banquet, Macbeth realized that the path of his life was coming to a "fork in the road", and

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