

Choose a character and discuss his or her ambition.

Banquo is a confident character who is not driven by ambition or what other people think about him.

The manner in which Banquo acts when Macbeth is announced the thane of Cawdor illustrates how he reacts to success and ambition. For example, when Duncan names Macbeth thane for displaying such courage in battle, Banquo (who was an integral part of the victory) does not feel jilted or slighted when he only receives a “Thank You”. In Act I, Scene I Duncan seems to realize that he has slighted Banquo when he says:

Noble Banquo, That hast no less deserved, nor must be known
No less to have done so, let me enfold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

In essence, Duncan seems to be saying that Banquo deserves to be rewarded just as much as Macbeth, but yet still, he is not given a title. However, because of Banquo’s confident and secure nature, he graciously accepts the king’s praise and is not concerned about the title. Banquo’s response to Duncan is:

There if I grow
The harvest is your own

He is saying that if and when he becomes more successful that he will attribute this success to Duncan.

Clearly, this incident shows how Banquo does not need to receive awards or titles to feel validated. He defines his own success and seems just as happy with a “Thank You” as with a title.

How does this compare to your own life?

This loosely compares to my own life because I love to run, yet I have never come close to winning anything. For example, this past Thanksgiving, I competed in an 8K. When I got back to work and told my students that I had competed in a race over the weekend, they all wanted to know, “Where did you place?” I just laughed because I was nowhere near the front, and it never crossed my mind that I would ever win anything tangible. I was just so proud of myself for finishing the 8k, that it was one of the best Thanksgivings I ever had. I remember being at my mother’s house with my sore limbs holding my 7 month old niece and feeling extremely blessed and thankful. In this case any tangible reward that I received could not have come close to that feeling of soreness, thankfulness and blessedness. That was the real reward!