Choose an implausible or strikingly unrealistic incident or character in a work of

fiction or drama of recognized literary merit. Write an essay that explains how the

incident or character is related to the more realistic or plausible elements in the rest of

the work. Avoid plot summary.

In *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare there are many characters who define the story. Lady Macbeth is the most striking character, and the realistic element that she teaches is the struggle that we all face in dealing with our actions. The path that her and her husband take to achieve power leads them to cope in radically different ways.

In the beginning of the play Lady Macbeth is portrayed as being more ambitious and ruthless than her husband. Given the time period that Macbeth is set the qualities that she has would be called masculine qualities. In fact, she uses the idea of her being more of a man than her husband to encourage Macbeth to murder Duncan. This point is also highlighted in when Macbeth tells his wife that may she only have male children because of her profound strength and ambition.The more realistic element in this story is that throughout history violence has been associated with masculinity, and that women were perceived as not as capable of violence as men. Despite this perception Lady Macbeth’s reaction to her husband's guilt after killing Duncan is callous, and she tells her husband that water can wash away their evil deed. Her callousness shows that Macbeth is originally is the one who cannot cope with the consequences of the murder.

After Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are crowned King and Queen Lady Macbeth is happy, and feels no more need for bloodshed. However, her husband King Macbeth is consumed by the fear brought by the witches prophecy that his children will not inherit the throne. This fear leads him to hire killers to murder Banquo who is the only person who knows of the witches prophecies. Macbeth uses the same line of logic to that Lady Macbeth used to convince him to kill Duncan on the murders he hires. The roles are reversed in that when Macbeth tells his wife of his plan she pleads with him to not carry out the murder. She goes from being ruthless in her pursuit of power to feeling guilty for her actions. Lady Macbeth at the end of the play keeps seeing blood on her hands,and is consumed with the guilt of her actions. The guilt ultimately is what leads her to take her own life. Her extreme guilt is contrasted with that of Macbeth in that his last murder of Lady Macduff and her children is simply done for the sake of his own bloodlust not for political gain.

The reversal of the roles can be seen as a counter to the beginning in that yes women are capable of violence, but the underlying thought is that men are more able to deal with the consequences of their actions.

Throughout the play there are examples of the reversal of traditional gender roles, and debates about the definition of masculinity and femininity. Lady Macbeth originally contains what Shakespeare’s time would define as masculine qualities however, her inability to cope with her actions would be defined as a feminine quality. Her descent into madness is essentially saying that even though women are capable of violence doesn’t mean they have the ability to cope with the consequences. In short, regardless of whether you are a man or a women we all at times struggle to deal with the consequences of our actions.

[Rubric](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6fugCwVMgP_ZnNPQXlWUjZIV1E/view)