Is Lady Macbeth good or evil?

For many years, there has been much debate concerning the issue of Lady Macbeth being good or evil. It is a contentious argument that has sparked strong feelings from both sides. Some people argue that she is a kind-hearted wife, who only desires the best for her husband, whereas others think that she is a callous, power-hungry woman who drives her husband to becoming a serial killer. This essay will attempt to explore both points of view.

Some people think that Lady Macbeth is just another victim in William Shakespeare’s famous tragedy and is entirely blameless for the disastrous events that unfolded. This is because, like Macbeth, she is under the curse of the three witches (the real villains of the play) and is therefore controlled by them. Throughout the story, Lady Macbeth talks about destiny and fulfilling a prophecy, rather than making decisions for herself. Another reason Lady Macbeth is good, according to her supporters, is that she does not actually murder anyone, unlike Macbeth. The worst thing she does is provide a sleeping potion in a jug of wine for the king’s guards, which is hardly a serious crime. Instead of being a killer, she is simply being a dutiful wife and supporting her husband’s dearest wish to be King. Even when things are doomed for Macbeth, she is loyal to him right until the end. This is yet another example of her being honourable and true. In addition, if Lady Macbeth was completely evil, would she feel guilty about what she had done? At the end of the play, she kills herself, because she is so guilt-ridden, she is unable to live with herself. Are these the feelings and actions of someone who is completely wicked?

On the other hand, many people argue that Lady Macbeth is an evil character, who is completely in control of not only her own actions but also her husband’s. Their explanation for this is that Lady Macbeth never actually meets the witches, unlike Macbeth. In addition, although Lady Macbeth does not murder the king, it is her idea to kill him. To make matters worse, her idea is premeditated, because she has already poisoned the king’s guards when she tries to persuade her husband to kill him. Would Macbeth have actually gone through with his crimes, had she not been so forceful with her venomous powers of persuasion? Furthermore, she may not kill anyone, but she orchestrates the torture of the guards, so they implicate King Duncan’s sons in his murder. Surely torture is as terrible as murder! Some people believe that Lady Macbeth certainly is not a dutiful wife who wants the best for her husband, but instead is full of self-ambition. Had she wanted the best for him, would she have put him at risk of being accused of treason? According to her opponents, Lady Macbeth is anything but honourable and true, because she frequently lies to cover up her crimes. For example, she smears the guards’ faces with King Duncan’s blood to make them look blameable and she lies that her husband is telling jokes, when in reality he is going insane.

In conclusion, as you can see, there are strong arguments for both viewpoints and therefore no one can deny that Lady Macbeth is indeed a divisive character! Although she does not actually kill anyone, she is instrumental in many of the play’s deaths and is willing to go to great lengths to disguise her crimes. As a result, I think that Lady Macbeth is an evil character, who not only commits wicked deeds herself, but persuades others to do so as well.