

Macbeth

A Scottish general and the thane of Glamis. ("Thane" is a Scottish title of nobility, and Glamis is a village in eastern Scotland.) Macbeth is led to wicked thoughts by the prophecies of three witches, especially after their prophecy that he will be made thane of Cawdor comes true. Macbeth is a brave soldier and a powerful man, but he is not virtuous. He is easily tempted into murder to fulfill his ambitions to the throne, and once he commits his first crime and is crowned king of Scotland, he embarks on further atrocities with increasing ease. Macbeth cannot maintain his power because his increasingly brutal actions make him hated as a tyrant. Unlike Shakespeare's other great villains, such as Iago in Othello and Richard III in Richard III, who revel in their villainy, Macbeth is never comfortable in his role as a criminal. He shows at the beginning of the play that he knows right from wrong, and chooses to do wrong without being able to justify it to himself. Ultimately, he is unable to bear the psychic consequences of his atrocities.

Lady Macbeth

Macbeth's wife, a deeply ambitious woman who lusts for power and position. Early in the play she seems to be the stronger and more ruthless of the two, as she urges her husband to kill Duncan and seize the crown. After the bloodshed begins, however, Lady Macbeth falls victim to guilt and madness to an even greater degree than her husband. Her conscience affects her to such an extent that she eventually commits suicide. At the beginning of the play, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth apparently feel quite passionately for one another, and Lady Macbeth exploits her sexual hold over Macbeth as a means to persuade him to commit murder. However, their shared alienation from the world, occasioned by their partnership in crime, does not bring them closer together, but instead seems to numb their feelings for one another.

The Three Witches

Three mysterious hags who plot mischief against Macbeth using charms, spells, and prophecies. Their predictions prompt him to murder Duncan, to order the deaths of Banquo and his son, and to blindly believe in his own immortality. The way the play leaves the witches' true nature unclear really makes us wonder whether they make their own prophecies come true, or where they get their knowledge from. In some ways they resemble the mythological Fates, who impersonally weave the threads of human destiny. They clearly take a perverse delight in using their knowledge of the future to toy with and destroy human beings.

Banquo

The brave, noble general whose children, according to the witches' prophecy, will inherit the Scottish throne. Like Macbeth, Banquo thinks ambitious thoughts, but he does not translate those thoughts into action. In a sense, Banquo's character stands as a rebuke to Macbeth, since he represents the path Macbeth chose not to take: a path in which ambition need not lead to betrayal and murder. Appropriately, then, it is Banquo's ghost that haunts Macbeth. In addition, not only Duncan's ghost but also the ghost of Banquo, the ghost also reminds Macbeth that he did not emulate Banquo's reaction to the witches' prophecy.

King Duncan

The good king of Scotland whom Macbeth, ambitious for the crown, murders. Duncan is the model of a virtuous, benevolent ruler. His death symbolizes the destruction of an order in Scotland that can be restored only when Duncan's line, in the person of Malcolm, once more occupies the throne.

Macduff

A Scottish nobleman hostile to Macbeth's kingship from the start. He eventually becomes a leader of the crusade to unseat Macbeth. The crusade's mission is to place the rightful king, Malcolm, on the throne, but Macduff also desires vengeance for Macbeth's murder of Macduff's wife and young son.

Malcolm

The son of Duncan, whose restoration to the throne signals Scotland's return to order following Macbeth's reign of terror. Malcolm becomes a serious challenge to Macbeth with Macduff's aid (and the support of England). Prior to this, he appears weak and uncertain of his own power, as when he and Donalbain flee Scotland after their father's murder.

Hecate

The goddess of witchcraft, who helps the three witches work their mischief on Macbeth.

Fleance

Banquo's son, who survives Macbeth's attempt to murder him. At the end of the play, Fleance's whereabouts are unknown. Presumably, he may come to rule Scotland, fulfilling the witches' prophecy that Banquo's sons will sit on the Scottish throne.

Lennox

A Scottish nobleman.

Ross

A Scottish nobleman.

The Murderers

A group of ruffians conscripted by Macbeth to murder Banquo, Fleance (whom they fail to kill), and Macduff's wife and children.

Porter

The drunken doorman of Macbeth's castle.

Lady Macduff

Macduff's wife. The scene in her castle provides our only glimpse of family life other than that of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. She and her home serve as a contrast to Lady Macbeth and the hellish world of Inverness.

Donalbain

Duncan's son and Malcolm's younger brother.

Act 1, Scene 1

Thunder and lightning. Enter three **WITCHES**

FIRST WITCH

When shall we three meet again?
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH

When the hurly-burly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

THIRD WITCH

5 That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH

Where the place?

SECOND WITCH

Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH

There to meet with Macbeth.

FIRST WITCH

I come, Graymalkin!

SECOND WITCH

10 Paddock calls.

THIRD WITCH

Anon.

ALL

Fair is foul, and foul is fair
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

Exeunt

Thunder and lightning. Three **WITCHES** enter

FIRST WITCH

When should the three of us meet again? Will it be in thunder, lightning, or rain?

SECOND WITCH

We'll meet when the noise of the battle is over, when one side has won and the other side has lost.

THIRD WITCH

That will happen before sunset.

FIRST WITCH

Where should we meet?

SECOND WITCH

Let's do it in the open field.

THIRD WITCH

We'll meet Macbeth there.

The **WITCHES** hear the calls of their spirit friends or "familiar," which look like animals—one is a cat and one is a toad.

FIRST WITCH

(calling to her cat) I'm coming, Graymalkin!

SECOND WITCH

My toad, Paddock, calls me.

THIRD WITCH

(to her spirit) I'll be right here!

ALL

Fair is foul, and foul is fair. Let's fly away through the fog and filthy air.

They exit.

Act 1, Scene 2

Alarum within. Enter **KING DUNCAN**, **MALCOLM**, **DONALBAIN**, **LENNOX**, with attendants, meeting a bleeding **CAPTAIN**

DUNCAN

What bloody man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.

MALCOLM

This is the sergeant
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought
'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!
5 Say to the king the knowledge of the broil
As thou didst leave it.

CAPTAIN

Doubtful it stood,
As two spent swimmers that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald—
10 Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him—from the Western Isles
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied,
And fortune, on his damnèd quarrel smiling,
15 Showed like a rebel's whore. But all's too weak,
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining fortune, with his brandished steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valor's minion carved out his passage
20 Till he faced the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseamed him from the navel to th' chops,
And fixed his head upon our battlements.

DUNCAN

O valiant cousin! Worthy gentleman!

CAPTAIN

25 As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seemed to come
Discomfort swells. Mark, King of Scotland, mark:
No sooner justice had, with valor armed,

Sounds of a trumpet and soldiers fighting offstage. **KING DUNCAN** enters with his sons **MALCOLM** and **DONALBAIN**, **LENNOX**, and a number of attendants. They meet a wounded and bloody **CAPTAIN**.

DUNCAN

Who is this bloody man? Judging from his appearance, I bet he can tell us the latest news about the revolt.

MALCOLM

This is the brave sergeant who fought to keep me from being captured. Hail, brave friend! Tell the king what was happening in the battle when you left it.

CAPTAIN

For a while you couldn't tell who would win. The armies were like two exhausted swimmers clinging to each other and struggling in the water, unable to move. The villainous rebel Macdonwald was supported by foot soldiers and horsemen from Ireland and the Hebrides, and Lady Luck was with him, smiling cruelly at his enemies as if she were his whore. But Luck and Macdonwald together weren't strong enough. Brave Macbeth, laughing at Luck, chopped his way through to Macdonwald, who didn't even have time to say good-bye or shake hands before Macbeth split him open from his navel to his jawbone and stuck his head on our castle walls.

DUNCAN

My brave relative! What a worthy man!

CAPTAIN

But in the same way that violent storms always come just as spring appears, our success against Macdonwald created new problems for us. Listen to this, King: as soon as we sent those Irish soldiers running for cover, the Norwegian king saw his chance to attack us with fresh troops and shiny weapons.

30 Compelled these skipping kerns to trust their heels,
But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,
With furbished arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.

DUNCAN

Dismayed not this our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

CAPTAIN

35 Yes, as sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.
If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks,
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe.
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
40 Or memorize another Golgotha,
I cannot tell—
But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

DUNCAN

So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;
They smack of honor both. Go get him surgeons.

Exit **CAPTAIN** with attendants

Enter **ROSS** and **ANGUS**

45 Who comes here?

MALCOLM

The worthy thane of Ross.

LENNOX

What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look
That seems to speak things strange.

ROSS

God save the king.

DUNCAN

Whence cam'st thou, worthy thane?

ROSS

From Fife, great king,
Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
And fan our people cold.

50 Norway himself, with terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor,
The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict,
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapped in proof,
55 Confronted him with self-comparisons,
Point against point, rebellious arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish spirit; and to conclude,
The victory fell on us.

DUNCAN

Great happiness!

ROSS

That now
Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition.
60 Nor would we deign him burial of his men
Till he disbursed at Saint Colme's Inch
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

DUNCAN

No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death,
65 And with his former title greet Macbeth.

ROSS

I'll see it done.

DUNCAN

What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.
Exeunt

DUNCAN

Didn't this frighten our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

CAPTAIN

The new challenge scared them about as much as sparrows frighten eagles, or rabbits frighten a lion. To tell you the truth, they fought the new enemy with twice as much force as before; they were like cannons loaded with double ammunition. Maybe they wanted to take a bath in their enemies' blood, or make that battlefield as infamous as Golgotha, where Christ was crucified, I don't know. But I feel weak. My wounds must be tended to.

DUNCAN

Your words, like your wounds, bring you honor. Take him to the surgeons.

The **CAPTAIN** exits, helped by attendants.

ROSS and **ANGUS** enter.

Who is this?

MALCOLM

The worthy Thane of Ross.

LENNOX

His eyes seem frantic! He looks like someone with a strange tale to tell.

ROSS

God save the king!

DUNCAN

Where have you come from, worthy thane?

ROSS

Great king, I've come from Fife, where the Norwegian flag flies, mocking our country and frightening our people. Leading an enormous army and assisted by that disloyal traitor, the thane of Cawdor, the king of Norway began a bloody battle. But outfitted in his battle-weathered armor, Macbeth met the Norwegian attacks shot for shot, as if he were the goddess of war's husband. Finally he broke the enemy's spirit, and we were victorious.

DUNCAN

Great happiness!

ROSS

So now Sweno, the Norwegian king, wants a treaty. We told him we wouldn't even let him bury his men until he retreated to Saint Colme's Inch and paid us ten thousand dollars.

DUNCAN

The thane of Cawdor will never again betray me. Go announce that he will be executed, and tell Macbeth that Cawdor's titles will be given to him.

ROSS

I'll get it done right away.

DUNCAN

The thane of Cawdor has lost what the noble Macbeth has won.
They all exit.

Act 1, Scene 3

Thunder. Enter the three **WITCHES**

FIRST WITCH

Where hast thou been, sister?

SECOND WITCH

Killing swine.

THIRD WITCH

Thunder. The three **WITCHES** enter.

FIRST WITCH

Where have you been, sister?

SECOND WITCH

Killing pigs.

THIRD WITCH

Sister, where thou?

FIRST WITCH

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
5 And munched, and munched, and munched. "Give me,"
quoth I.
"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed runnion cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' *Tiger*;
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And like a rat without a tail,
10 I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

SECOND WITCH

I'll give thee a wind.

FIRST WITCH

Thou 'rt kind.

THIRD WITCH

And I another.

FIRST WITCH

I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow,
15 All the quarters that they know
I' th' shipman's card.
I'll drain him dry as hay.
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his penthouse lid.
20 He shall live a man forbid.
Weary sev'nights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak and pine.
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tossed.
25 Look what I have.

SECOND WITCH

Show me, show me.

FIRST WITCH

Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wrecked as homeward he did come.

Drum within

THIRD WITCH

30 A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

ALL

(dancing together in a circle) The weird sisters, hand in
hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about,
35 Thrice to thine and thrice to mine
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! The charm's wound up.

Enter **MACBETH** and **BANQUO**

MACBETH

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO

How far is 't called to Forres?—What are these
40 So withered and so wild in their attire,
That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' Earth,
And yet are on 't?—Live you? Or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
45 Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

MACBETH

Speak, if you can: what are you?

FIRST WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH

50 All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH

All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

BANQUO

Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? *(to the WITCHES)* I' th' name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed

And you, sister?

FIRST WITCH

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap and munched away at them. "Give me one," I said. "Get away from me, witch!" the fat woman cried. Her husband has sailed off to Aleppo as master of a ship called the *Tiger*. I'll sail there in a kitchen strainer, turn myself into a tailless rat, and do things to him—

SECOND WITCH

I'll give you some wind to sail there.

FIRST WITCH

How nice of you!

THIRD WITCH

And I will give you some more.

FIRST WITCH

I already have control of all the other winds, along with the ports from which they blow and every direction on the sailor's compass in which they can go. I'll drain the life out of him. He won't catch a wink of sleep, either at night or during the day. He will live as a cursed man. For eighty-one weeks he will waste away in agony.

Although I can't make his ship disappear, I can still make his journey miserable. Look what I have here.

SECOND WITCH

Show me, show me.

FIRST WITCH

Here I have the thumb of a pilot who was drowned while trying to return home.

A drum sounds offstage.

THIRD WITCH

A drum, a drum! Macbeth has come.

ALL

(dancing together in a circle) We weird sisters, hand in hand, swift travelers over the sea and land, dance around and around like so. Three times to yours, and three times to mine, and three times again, to add up to nine. Enough! The charm is ready.

MACBETH and **BANQUO** enter.

MACBETH

(to BANQUO) I have never seen a day that was so good and bad at the same time.

BANQUO

How far is it supposed to be to Forres? *(he sees the WITCHES)* What are these creatures? They're so withered-looking and crazily dressed. They don't look like they belong on this planet, but I see them standing here on Earth. *(to the WITCHES)* Are you alive? Can you answer questions? You seem to understand me, because each of you has put a gruesome finger to her skinny lips. You look like women, but your beards keep me from believing that you really are.

MACBETH

Speak, if you can. What kind of creatures are you?

FIRST WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! Hail to you, thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! Hail to you, thane of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH

All hail, Macbeth, the future king!

BANQUO

My dear Macbeth, why do you look so startled and afraid of these nice things they're saying? *(to the WITCHES)* Tell me honestly, are you illusions, or are you really what you seem to be? You've greeted my noble friend with honors and talk

55 Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal. **To me you speak not.**
If you can look into the seeds of time
60 **And say which grain will grow and which will not,**
Speak, then, to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favors nor your hate.

FIRST WITCH

Hail!

SECOND WITCH

Hail!

THIRD WITCH

65 Hail!

FIRST WITCH

Lesser than Macbeth and greater.

SECOND WITCH

Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH

Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.

So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

FIRST WITCH

70 Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

MACBETH

Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more.

By Sinel's death I know I am thane of Glamis.

But how of Cawdor? The thane of Cawdor lives,

A prosperous gentleman, and to be king

75 Stands not within the prospect of belief,

No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence

You owe this strange intelligence, or why

Upon this blasted heath you stop our way

With such prophetic greeting. Speak, I charge you.

WITCHES vanish

BANQUO

80 The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,

And these are of them. Whither are they vanished?

MACBETH

Into the air, and what seemed corporal

Melted, as breath into the wind. Would they had stayed.

BANQUO

Were such things here as we do speak about?

85 Or have we eaten on the insane root

That takes the reason prisoner?

MACBETH

Your children shall be kings.

BANQUO

You shall be king.

MACBETH

And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

BANQUO

To the selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

Enter **ROSS** and **ANGUS**

ROSS

90 The king hath happily received, Macbeth,

The news of thy success, and when he reads

Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,

His wonders and his praises do contend

Which should be thine or his. Silenced with that,

95 In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,

He finds thee in the stout Norwegian ranks,

Nothing afraid of what thyself didst make,

Strange images of death. As thick as tale

Can post with post, and every one did bear

100 Thy praises in his kingdom's great defense,

And poured them down before him.

ANGUS

We are sent

To give thee from our royal master thanks,

Only to herald thee into his sight,

Not pay thee.

ROSS

105 And, for an earnest of a greater honor,

of a future so glorious that you've made him speechless. But you don't say anything to me. If you can see the future and say how things will turn out, tell me. I don't want your favors and I'm not afraid of your hatred.

FIRST WITCH

Hail!

SECOND WITCH

Hail!

THIRD WITCH

Hail!

FIRST WITCH

You are lesser than Macbeth but also greater.

SECOND WITCH

You are not as happy as Macbeth, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH

Your descendants will be kings, even though you will not be one. So all hail,

Macbeth and Banquo!

FIRST WITCH

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

MACBETH

Wait! You only told me part of what I want to know. Stay and tell me more. I

already know I am the thane of Glamis because I inherited the position when my

father, Sinel, died. But how can you call me the thane of Cawdor? The thane of

Cawdor is alive, and he's a rich and powerful man. And for me to be the king is

completely impossible, just as it's impossible for me to be thane of Cawdor. Tell

me where you learned these strange things, and why you stop us at this desolate

place with this prophetic greeting? Speak, I command you.

The **WITCHES** vanish.

BANQUO

The earth has bubbles, just like the water, and these creatures must have come

from a bubble in the earth. Where did they disappear to?

MACBETH

Into thin air. Their bodies melted like breath in the wind. I wish they had stayed!

BANQUO

Were these things we're talking about really here? Or are we both on drugs?

MACBETH

Your children will be kings.

BANQUO

You will be the king.

MACBETH

And thane of Cawdor too. Isn't that what they said?

BANQUO

That's exactly what they said. Who's this?

ROSS and **ANGUS** enter

ROSS

The king was happy to hear of your success, Macbeth. Whenever he hears the

story of your exploits in the fight against the rebels, he becomes so amazed it

makes him speechless. He was also shocked to learn that on the same day you

fought the rebels you also fought against the army of Norway, and that you

weren't the least bit afraid of death, even as you killed everyone around you.

Messenger after messenger delivered news of your bravery to the king with

praise for how you defended his country.

ANGUS

The king sent us to give you his thanks and to bring you to him. Your real reward

won't come from us.

ROSS

And to give you a taste of what's in store for you, he told me to call you the thane

He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor:
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane,
For it is thine.

BANQUO

What, can the devil speak true?

MACBETH

110 The thane of Cawdor lives. Why do you dress me
In borrowed robes?

ANGUS

Who was the thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgment bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
115 He labored in his country's wrack, I know not;
But treasons capital, confessed and proved,
Have overthrown him.

MACBETH

(*aside*) Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!

The greatest is behind. (*to ROSS and ANGUS*) Thanks for your pains.
120 (*aside to BANQUO*) Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?

BANQUO

That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange.
125 And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's
In deepest consequence.
(*to ROSS and ANGUS*) Cousins, a word, I pray you.

BANQUO, ROSS, and ANGUS move to one side

MACBETH

130 (*aside*) Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme. (*to ROSS and ANGUS*) I thank you, gentlemen.
(*aside*) This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,
135 Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor.
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
140 Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.

My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man
That function is smothered in surmise,
145 And nothing is but what is not.

BANQUO

Look how our partner's rapt.

MACBETH

(*aside*) If chance will have me king, why, chance may
crown me
Without my stir.

BANQUO

150 New honors come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mold
But with the aid of use.

MACBETH

(*aside*) Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

BANQUO

Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

MACBETH

155 Give me your favor. My dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are registered where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.
(*aside to BANQUO*) Think upon what hath chanced, and, at more time,
160 The interim having weighed it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

BANQUO

Very gladly.

of Cawdor. So hail, thane of Cawdor! That title belongs to you now.

BANQUO

(*shocked*) Can the devil tell the truth?

MACBETH

The thane of Cawdor is still alive. Why are you putting his clothes on me?

ANGUS

The man who was the thane of Cawdor is still alive, but he's been sentenced to death, and he deserves to die. I don't know whether he fought on Norway's side, or if he secretly aided the rebels, or if he fought with both of our enemies. But his treason, which has been proven, and to which he's confessed, means he's finished.

MACBETH

(*to himself*) It's just like they said—now I'm the thane of Glamis and the thane of Cawdor. And the best part of what they predicted is still to come. (*to ROSS and ANGUS*) Thank you for the news. (*speaking so that only BANQUO can hear*) Aren't you beginning to hope your children will be kings? After all, the witches who said I was thane of Cawdor promised them nothing less.

BANQUO

If you trust what they say, you might be on your way to becoming king, as well as thane of Cawdor. But this whole thing is strange. The agents of evil often tell us part of the truth in order to lead us to our destruction. They earn our trust by telling us the truth about little things, but then they betray us when it will damage us the most. (*to ROSS and ANGUS*) Gentlemen, I'd like to have a word with you, please.

ROSS, ANGUS, and BANQUO move to one side.

MACBETH

(*to himself*) So far the witches have told me two things that came true, so it seems like this will culminate in my becoming king. (*to ROSS and ANGUS*) Thank you, gentlemen. (*to himself*) This supernatural temptation doesn't seem like it can be a bad thing, but it can't be good either. If it's a bad thing, why was I promised a promotion that turned out to be true? Now I'm the thane of Cawdor, just like they said I would be. But if this is a good thing, why do I find myself thinking about murdering King Duncan, a thought so horrifying that it makes my hair stand on end and my heart pound inside my chest? The dangers that actually threaten me here and now frighten me less than the horrible things I'm imagining.

Even though it's just a fantasy so far, the mere thought of committing murder shakes me up so much that I hardly know who I am anymore. My ability to act is stifled by my thoughts and speculations, and the only things that matter to me are things that don't really exist.

BANQUO

Look at Macbeth—he's in a daze.

MACBETH

(*to himself*) If fate wants me to be king, perhaps fate will just make it happen and I won't have to do anything.

BANQUO

(*to ROSS and ANGUS*) Macbeth is not used to his new titles. They're like new clothes: they don't fit until you break them in over time.

MACBETH

(*to himself*) One way or another, what's going to happen is going to happen.

BANQUO

Good Macbeth, we're ready when you are.

MACBETH

I beg your pardon; I was distracted. Kind gentlemen, I won't forget the trouble you've taken for me whenever I think of this day. Let's go to the king. (*speaking so that only BANQUO can hear*) Think about what happened today, and when we've both had time to consider things, let's talk.

BANQUO

Absolutely.

MACBETH

Till then, enough. (to ROSS and ANGUS) Come, friends.

Exeunt

MACBETH

Until then, we've said enough. (to ROSS and ANGUS) Let's go, my friends.

They all exit.

Act 1, Scene 4

Flourish. Enter **KING DUNCAN, LENNOX, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN,** and attendants

DUNCAN

Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not Those in commission yet returned?

MALCOLM

My liege,

They are not yet come back. But I have spoke With one that saw him die, who did report

5 That very frankly he confessed his treasons, Implored your highness' pardon, and set forth

A deep repentance. Nothing in his life Became him like the leaving it. He died

As one that had been studied in his death

10 To throw away the dearest thing he owed

As 'twere a careless trifle.

DUNCAN

There's no art

To find the mind's construction in the face.

He was a gentleman on whom I built

An absolute trust.

Enter **MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS,** and **ANGUS**

15 (to MACBETH) O worthiest cousin,

The sin of my ingratitude even now

Was heavy on me. Thou art so far before

That swiftest wing of recompense is slow

To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,

20 That the proportion both of thanks and payment

Might have been mine! Only I have left to say,

More is thy due than more than all can pay.

MACBETH

The service and the loyalty I owe

In doing it pays itself. Your highness' part

25 Is to receive our duties, and our duties

Are to your throne and state children and servants,

Which do but what they should, by doing everything

Safe toward your love and honor.

DUNCAN

Welcome hither.

I have begun to plant thee, and will labor

30 To make thee full of growing. (to BANQUO) Noble Banquo,

That hast no less deserved, nor must be known

No less to have done so, let me infold thee

And hold thee to my heart.

BANQUO

There, if I grow,

The harvest is your own.

DUNCAN

My plenteous joys,

35 Wanton in fullness, seek to hide themselves

In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,

And you whose places are the nearest, know

We will establish our estate upon

Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter

40 The prince of Cumberland; which honor must

Not unaccompanied invest him only,

But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine

On all deservers. (to MACBETH) From hence to Inverness,

And bind us further to you.

MACBETH

45 The rest is labor which is not used for you:

I'll be myself the harbinger and make joyful

The hearing of my wife with your approach.

So humbly take my leave.

DUNCAN

My worthy Cawdor!

MACBETH

A trumpet fanfare sounds. **KING DUNCAN, LENNOX, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN,** and their attendants enter.

DUNCAN

Has the former thane of Cawdor been executed yet? Haven't the people in charge of that come back?

MALCOLM

My king, they haven't come back yet. But I spoke with someone who saw Cawdor

die, and he said that Cawdor openly confessed his treasons, begged your

highness's forgiveness, and repented deeply. He never did anything in his whole

life that looked as good as the way he died. He died like someone who had

practiced how to toss away his most cherished possession as if it were a

worthless a piece of garbage.

DUNCAN

There's no way to read a man's mind by looking at his face. I trusted Cawdor completely.

MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, and **ANGUS** enter.

(to MACBETH) My worthiest kinsman! Just this moment I was feeling guilty for not

having thanked you enough. You have done so much for me so fast that it has

been impossible to reward you properly. If you deserved less, then perhaps my

payment would have matched your deeds! All I can say is that I owe you more

than I can ever repay.

MACBETH

The opportunity to serve you is its own reward. Your only duty, your highness, is to

accept what we owe you. Our duty to you and your state is like the duty of children

to their father or servants to their master. By doing everything we can to protect

you, we're only doing what we should.

DUNCAN

You are welcome here. By making you thane of Cawdor, I have planted the seeds

of a great career for you, and I will make sure they grow. (to BANQUO) Noble

Banquo, you deserve no less than Macbeth, and everyone should know it. Let me

bring you close to me and give you the benefit of my love and good will.

BANQUO

Then if I accomplish anything great, it will be a credit to you.

DUNCAN

My joy is so overwhelming it brings tears to my eyes. My sons, relatives, lords,

and all those closest to me, I want you to witness that I will bestow my kingdom on

my eldest son, Malcolm. Today I name him the prince of Cumberland. But

Malcolm isn't going to be alone in receiving honors—titles of nobility will shine like

stars on all of you who deserve them. (to MACBETH) And now, let's go to your

castle at Inverness, where I will become even more obliged to you because of

your hospitality.

MACBETH

I'm not happy unless I can be working for you. I will go ahead and bring my wife

the good news that you are coming. With that, I'll be off.

DUNCAN

My worthy Cawdor!

MACBETH

50 *(aside)* The prince of Cumberland! That is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires.
The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be
55 Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

Exit

DUNCAN

True, worthy Banquo. He is full so valiant,
And in his commendations I am fed;
It is a banquet to me.—Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome:
60 It is a peerless kinsman.

Flourish. Exeunt

Act 1, Scene 5

Enter **LADY MACBETH**, alone, with a letter

LADY MACBETH

(reading) "They met me in the day of success, and I have learned by the
perfectest report they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I
burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air,
into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it came
missives from the king, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor,' by which
title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the
coming on of time with 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good
to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou might'st not
lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is
promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell."

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness
5 To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'd'st have, great Glamis,
10 That which cries, "Thus thou must do," if thou have it,
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear
And chastise with the valor of my tongue
15 All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

Enter **SERVANT**

What is your tidings?

SERVANT

The king comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Thou'rt mad to say it.
20 Is not thy master with him, who, were 't so,
Would have informed for preparation?

SERVANT

So please you, it is true: our thane is coming.
One of my fellows had the speed of him,
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
25 Than would make up his message.

LADY MACBETH

Give him tending.
He brings great news.

Exit **SERVANT**

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
30 Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
35 That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,

(to himself) Malcolm is now the prince of Cumberland! To become king myself, I'm
either going to have to step over him or give up, because he's in my way. Stars,
hide your light so no one can see the terrible desires within me. I won't let my eye
look at what my hand is doing, but in the end I'm still going to do that thing I'd be
horrified to see.

MACBETH exits.

DUNCAN

(to BANQUO, in the middle of a conversation we haven't heard) You're right,
Banquo. Macbeth is every bit as valiant as you say, and I am satisfied with these
praises of him. Let's follow after him, now that he has gone ahead to prepare our
welcome. He is a man without equal.

Trumpet fanfare. They exit.

LADY MACBETH enters, reading a letter.

LADY MACBETH

"The witches met me on the day of my victory in battle, and I have since learned
that they have supernatural knowledge. When I tried desperately to question them
further, they vanished into thin air. While I stood spellbound, messengers from the
king arrived and greeted me as the thane of Cawdor, which is precisely how the
weird sisters had saluted me before calling me 'the future king!' I thought I should
tell you this news, my dearest partner in greatness, so that you could rejoice along
with me about the greatness that is promised to us. Keep it secret, and farewell."

(she looks up from the letter) You are thane of Glamis and Cawdor, and you're
going to be king, just like you were promised. But I worry about whether or not you
have what it takes to seize the crown. You are too full of the milk of human
kindness to strike aggressively at your first opportunity. You want to be powerful,
and you don't lack ambition, but you don't have the mean streak that these things
call for. The things you want to do, you want to do like a good man. You don't want
to cheat, yet you want what doesn't belong to you. There's something you want,
but you're afraid to do what you need to do to get it. You want it to be done for
you. Hurry home so I can persuade you and talk you out of whatever's keeping
you from going after the crown. After all, fate and witchcraft both seem to want you
to be king.

A **SERVANT** enters.

What news do you bring?

SERVANT

The king is coming here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

You must be crazy to say that! Isn't Macbeth with the king, and wouldn't Macbeth
have told me in advance so I could prepare, if the king were really coming?

SERVANT

I'm sorry, but it's the truth. Macbeth is coming. He sent a messenger ahead of him
who arrived here so out of breath that he could barely speak his message.

LADY MACBETH

Take good care of him. He brings great news.

The **SERVANT** exits.

So the messenger is short of breath, like a hoarse raven, as he announces
Duncan's entrance into my fortress, where he will die. Come, you spirits that assist
murderous thoughts, make me less like a woman and more like a man, and fill me
from head to toe with deadly cruelty! Thicken my blood and clog up my veins so I
won't feel remorse, so that no human compassion can stop my evil plan or prevent
me from accomplishing it! Come to my female breast and turn my mother's milk
into poisonous acid, you murdering demons, wherever you hide, invisible and
waiting to do evil! Come, thick night, and cover the world in the darkest smoke of
hell, so that my sharp knife can't see the wound it cuts open, and so heaven can't
peep through the darkness and cry, "No! Stop!"

Wherever in your sightless substances
40 You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunkest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry "Hold, hold!"

Enter **MACBETH**

45 Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor,
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter,
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

MACBETH

My dearest love,

50 Duncan comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

And when goes hence?

MACBETH

Tomorrow, as he purposes.

LADY MACBETH

O, never

Shall sun that morrow see!

Your face, my thane, is as a book where men

May read strange matters. To beguile the time,

Look like the time. Bear welcome in your eye,

55 Your hand, your tongue. Look like th' innocent flower,

But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming

Must be provided for; and you shall put

This night's great business into my dispatch,

60 Which shall to all our nights and days to come

Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

MACBETH

We will speak further.

LADY MACBETH

Only look up clear.

To alter favor ever is to fear.

65 Leave all the rest to me.

Exeunt

Act 1, Scene 6

hautboys and torches. Enter **KING DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS,** and attendants

DUNCAN

This castle hath a pleasant seat. The air

Nimble and sweetly recommends itself

Unto our gentle senses.

BANQUO

This guest of summer,

The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,

5 By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath

Smells woingly here. No jutty, frieze,

Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird

Hath made his pendant bed and procreant cradle.

Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed,

10 The air is delicate.

Enter **LADY MACBETH**

DUNCAN

See, see, our honored hostess!

The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,

Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you

How you shall bid God 'ild us for your pains,

And thank us for your trouble.

LADY MACBETH

All our service,

15 In every point twice done and then done double,

Were poor and single business to contend

Against those honors deep and broad wherewith

Your majesty loads our house. For those of old,

And the late dignities heaped up to them,

20 We rest your hermits.

MACBETH enters.

Great thane of Glamis! Worthy thane of Cawdor! You'll soon be greater than both those titles, once you become king! Your letter has transported me from the present moment, when who knows what will happen, and has made me feel like the future is already here.

MACBETH

My dearest love, Duncan is coming here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

And when is he leaving?

MACBETH

He plans to leave tomorrow.

LADY MACBETH

That day will never come. Your face betrays strange feelings, my lord, and people will be able to read it like a book. In order to deceive them, you must appear the way they expect you to look. Greet the king with a welcoming expression in your eyes, your hands, and your words. You should look like an innocent flower, but be like the snake that hides underneath the flower. The king is coming, and he's got to be taken care of. Let me handle tonight's preparations, because tonight will change every night and day for the rest of our lives.

MACBETH

We will speak about this further.

LADY MACBETH

You should project a peaceful mood, because if you look troubled, you will arouse suspicion. Leave all the rest to me.

They exit.

The stage is lit by torches. Hautboys play. **DUNCAN** enters, together with **MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS,** and their attendants.

DUNCAN

This castle is in a pleasant place. The air is sweet and appeals to my refined senses.

BANQUO

The fact that this summer bird, the house martin, builds his nests here proves how inviting the breezes are. There isn't a single protrusion in the castle walls where these birds haven't built their hanging nests to sleep and breed. I've noticed that they always like to settle and mate where the air is the nicest.

LADY MACBETH enters.

DUNCAN

Look, here comes our honored hostess! Sometimes the love my subjects bring me is inconvenient, but I still accept it as love. In doing so, I'm teaching you to thank me for the inconvenience I'm causing you by being here, because it comes from my love to you.

LADY MACBETH

Everything we're doing for you, even if it were doubled and then doubled again, is nothing compared to the honors you have brought to our family. We gladly welcome you as our guests, with gratitude for both the honors you've given us before and the new honors you've just given us.

DUNCAN

Where's the thane of Cawdor?

We coursed him at the heels and had a purpose
To be his purveyor; but he rides well,
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath hold him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,

25 We are your guest tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Your servants ever

Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs in compt,
To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.

DUNCAN

Give me your hand.

Conduct me to mine host. We love him highly
And shall continue our graces towards him.

30 By your leave, hostess.

Exeunt

DUNCAN

Where is Macbeth, the thane of Cawdor? We followed closely after him. I hoped to arrive here before him, but he rides swiftly. And his great love, which is as sharp as his spur, helped him beat us here. Fair and noble hostess, we are your guests tonight.

LADY MACBETH

We are your servants, your highness, and as always our house and everything in it is at your disposal, for after all, we keep it in your trust and we're glad to give you back what's yours.

DUNCAN

Give me your hand. Bring me to my host, Macbeth. I love him dearly, and I shall continue to favor him. Whenever you're ready, hostess.

They all exit.

Act 1, Scene 7

Hautboys. Torches. Enter a sewer and divers servants with dishes and service over the stage. Then enter **MACBETH**

MACBETH

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly. If the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
5 Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here, that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
10 To plague th' inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips. **He's here in double trust:**

First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
20 The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked newborn babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
25 That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on th' other.

Enter **LADY MACBETH**

How now! What news?

LADY MACBETH

He has almost supped. Why have you left the chamber?

MACBETH

30 Hath he asked for me?

LADY MACBETH

Know you not he has?

MACBETH

We will proceed no further in this business.
He hath honored me of late, and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
35 Not cast aside so soon.

LADY MACBETH

Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afraid
40 To be the same in thine own act and valor

Hautboys play. The stage is lit by torches. A butler enters, and various servants carry utensils and dishes of food across the stage. Then **MACBETH** enters.

MACBETH

If this business would really be finished when I did the deed, then it would be best to get it over with quickly. If the assassination of the king could work like a net, sweeping up everything and preventing any consequences, then the murder would be the be-all and end-all of the whole affair, and I would gladly put my soul and the afterlife at risk to do it. But for crimes like these there are still punishments in this world. By committing violent crimes we only teach other people to commit violence, and the violence of our students will come back to plague us teachers. Justice, being equal to everyone, forces us to drink from the poisoned cup that we serve to others. The king trusts me in two ways. First of all, I am his kinsman and his subject, so I should always try to protect him. Second, I am his host, so I should be closing the door in his murderer's face, not trying to murder him myself. Besides, Duncan has been such a humble leader, so free of corruption that his virtuous legacy will speak for him when he dies, as if angels were playing trumpets against the injustice of his murder. Pity, like an innocent newborn baby, will ride the wind with winged angels on invisible horses through the air to spread news of the horrible deed to everyone everywhere. People will shed a flood of tears that will drown the wind like a horrible downpour of rain. I can't spur myself to action. The only thing motivating me is ambition, which makes people rush ahead of themselves toward disaster.

LADY MACBETH enters.

What news do you have?

LADY MACBETH

He has almost finished dinner. Why did you leave the dining room?

MACBETH

Has he asked for me?

LADY MACBETH

Don't you know he has?

MACBETH

We can't go on with this plan. The king has just honored me, and I have earned the good opinion of all sorts of people. I want to enjoy these honors while the feeling is fresh and not throw them away so soon.

LADY MACBETH

Were you drunk when you seemed so hopeful before? Have you gone to sleep and woken up green and pale in fear of this idea? From now on this is what I'll think of your love. Are you afraid to act the way you desire? Will you take the crown you want so badly, or will you live as a coward, always saying "I can't" after you say "I want to"? You're like the poor cat in the old story.

As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would,"
45 Like the poor cat i' th' adage?

MACBETH

Prithee, peace:

I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH

What beast was 't, then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
50 And to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
55 How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

MACBETH

If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH

We fail?
60 But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince
65 That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep
Their drenchèd natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
70 The unguarded Duncan? What not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?

MACBETH

Bring forth men-children only,
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
75 When we have marked with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,
That they have done 't?

LADY MACBETH

Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamor roar
Upon his death?

MACBETH

I am settled, and bend up
80 Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show.
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

Exeunt

MACBETH

Please, stop! I dare to do only what is proper for a man to do. He who dares to do more is not a man at all.

LADY MACBETH

If you weren't a man, then what kind of animal were you when you first told me you wanted to do this? When you dared to do it, that's when you were a man. And if you go one step further by doing what you dared to do before, you'll be that much more the man. The time and place weren't right before, but you would have gone ahead with the murder anyhow. Now the time and place are just right, but they're almost too good for you. I have suckled a baby, and I know how sweet it is to love the baby at my breast. But even as the baby was smiling up at me, I would have plucked my nipple out of its mouth and smashed its brains out against a wall if I had sworn to do that the same way you have sworn to do this.

MACBETH

But if we fail—

LADY MACBETH

We, fail? If you get your courage up, we can't fail. When Duncan is asleep—the day's hard journey has definitely made him tired—I'll get his two servants so drunk that their memory will go up in smoke through the chimneys of their brains. When they lie asleep like pigs, so drunk they'll be dead to the world, what won't you and I be able to do to the unguarded Duncan? And whatever we do, we can lay all the blame on the drunken servants.

MACBETH

May you only give birth to male children, because your fearless spirit should create nothing that isn't masculine. Once we have covered the two servants with blood, and used their daggers to kill, won't people believe that they were the culprits?

LADY MACBETH

Who could think it happened any other way? We'll be grieving loudly when we hear that Duncan has died.

MACBETH

Now I'm decided, and I will exert every muscle in my body to commit this crime. Go now, and pretend to be a friendly hostess. Hide with a false pleasant face what you know in your false, evil heart.

They exit.

Act 2, Scene 1

Enter **BANQUO**, and **FLEANCE**, with a torch before him

BANQUO

How goes the night, boy?

FLEANCE

The moon is down. I have not heard the clock.

BANQUO

And she goes down at twelve.

FLEANCE

I take't 'tis later, sir.

BANQUO

Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heaven;

5 Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose.

Enter **MACBETH** and a **SERVANT** with a torch

Give me my sword. **Who's there?**

MACBETH

10 A friend.

BANQUO

What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed.

He hath been in unusual pleasure, and

Sent forth great largess to your offices.

This diamond he greets your wife withal,

15 By the name of most kind hostess, and shut up

In measureless content.

MACBETH

Being unprepared,

Our will became the servant to defect,

Which else should free have wrought.

BANQUO

All's well.

I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:

20 To you they have showed some truth.

MACBETH

I think not of them.

Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,

We would spend it in some words upon that business,

If you would grant the time.

BANQUO

At your kind'st leisure.

MACBETH

If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,

25 It shall make honor for you.

BANQUO

So I lose none

In seeking to augment it, but still keep

My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,

I shall be counselled.

MACBETH

Good repose the while!

BANQUO

30 Thanks, sir: the like to you!

Exeunt **BANQUO** and **FLEANCE**

MACBETH

(to the **SERVANT**) Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,

She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

Exit **SERVANT**

Is this a dagger which I see before me,

The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.

35 I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible

To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but

A dagger of the mind, a false creation,

Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain?

40 I see thee yet, in form as palpable

As this which now I draw.

BANQUO enters with **FLEANCE**, who lights the way with a torch.

BANQUO

How's the night going, boy?

FLEANCE

The moon has set. The clock hasn't struck yet.

BANQUO

The moon sets at twelve, right?

FLEANCE

I think it's later than that, sir.

BANQUO

Here, take my sword. The heavens are being stingy with their light. Take this, too. I'm tired and feeling heavy, but I can't sleep. Merciful powers, keep away the nightmares that plague me when I rest!

MACBETH enters with a **SERVANT**, who carries a torch.

Give me my sword. **Who's there?**

MACBETH

A friend.

BANQUO

You're not asleep yet, sir? The king's in bed. He's been in an unusually good mood and has granted many gifts to your household and servants. This diamond is a present from him to your wife for her boundless hospitality. (*he hands MACBETH a diamond*)

MACBETH

Because we were unprepared for the king's visit, we weren't able to entertain him as well as we would have wanted to.

BANQUO

Everything's OK. I had a dream last night about the three witches. At least part of what they said about you was true.

MACBETH

I don't think about them now. But when we have an hour to spare we can talk more about it, if you're willing.

BANQUO

Whenever you like.

MACBETH

If you stick with me, when the time comes, there will be something in it for you.

BANQUO

I'll do whatever you say, as long as I can do it with a clear conscience.

MACBETH

Rest easy in the meantime.

BANQUO

Thank you, sir. You do the same.

BANQUO and **FLEANCE** exit.

MACBETH

(to the **SERVANT**) Go and tell your mistress to strike the bell when my drink is ready. Get yourself to bed.

The **SERVANT** exits.

Is this a dagger I see in front of me, with its handle pointing toward my hand? (*to the dagger*) Come, let me hold you. (*he grabs at the air in front of him without touching anything*) I don't have you but I can still see you. Fateful apparition, isn't it possible to touch you as well as see you? Or are you nothing more than a dagger created by the mind, a hallucination from my fevered brain? I can still see you, and you look as real as this other dagger that I'm pulling out now. (*he draws a dagger*) You're leading me toward the place I was going already, and I was planning to use a weapon just like you. My eyesight must either be the one sense that's not working, or else it's the only one that's working right. I can still see you,

Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses,
45 Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still,
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing.
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
50 Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and withered murder,
Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
55 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,
And take the present horror from the time,
60 Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives.
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

A bell rings

I go, and it is done. The bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

Exit

Act 2, Scene 2

Enter **LADY MACBETH**

LADY MACBETH

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold.
What hath quenched them hath given me fire.

Hark! Peace! It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it.

5 The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores. I have drugged their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

MACBETH

(*within*) Who's there? What, ho!

LADY MACBETH

Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,

10 And 'tis not done. Th' attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done 't.

Enter **MACBETH**, with bloody daggers

My husband!

MACBETH

I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

LADY MACBETH

15 I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

MACBETH

When?

Original Text

LADY MACBETH

Now.

MACBETH

As I descended?

LADY MACBETH

Ay.

MACBETH

Hark! Who lies i' th' second chamber?

LADY MACBETH

Donalbain.

MACBETH

20 (*looking at his hands*) This is a sorry sight.

LADY MACBETH

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

and I see blood splotches on your blade and handle that weren't there before. (*to himself*) There's no dagger here. It's the murder I'm about to do that's making me think I see one. Now half the world is asleep and being deceived by evil nightmares. Witches are offering sacrifices to their goddess Hecate. Old man murder, having been roused by the howls of his wolf, walks silently to his destination, moving like Tarquin, as quiet as a ghost. (*speaking to the ground*) Hard ground, don't listen to the direction of my steps. I don't want you to echo back where I am and break the terrible stillness of this moment, a silence that is so appropriate for what I'm about to do. While I stay here talking, Duncan lives. The more I talk, the more my courage cools.

A bell rings.

I'm going now. The murder is as good as done. The bell is telling me to do it. Don't listen to the bell, Duncan, because it summons you either to heaven or to hell.

MACBETH exits.

LADY MACBETH enters.

LADY MACBETH

The alcohol that got the servants drunk has made me bold. The same liquor that quenched their thirst has fired me up. Listen! Quiet! That was the owl that shrieked, with a scary "good night" like the bells they ring before they execute people. Macbeth must be killing the king right now. The doors to Duncan's chamber are open, and the drunk servants make a mockery of their jobs by snoring instead of protecting the king. I put so many drugs in their drinks that you can't tell if they're alive or dead.

MACBETH

(*from offstage*) Who's there? What is it?

LADY MACBETH

Oh no, I'm afraid the servants woke up, and the murder didn't happen. For us to attempt murder and not succeed would ruin us. (*She hears a noise.*) Listen to that! I put the servants' daggers where Macbeth would find them. He couldn't have missed them. If Duncan hadn't reminded me of my father when I saw him sleeping, I would have killed him myself.

MACBETH enters carrying bloody daggers.

My husband!

MACBETH

I have done the deed. Did you hear a noise?

LADY MACBETH

I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry. Didn't you say something?

MACBETH

When?

Modern Text

LADY MACBETH

Just now.

MACBETH

As I came down?

LADY MACBETH

Yes.

MACBETH

Listen! Who's sleeping in the second chamber?

LADY MACBETH

Donalbain.

MACBETH

(*looking at his bloody hands*) This is a sorry sight.

LADY MACBETH

That's a stupid thing to say.

MACBETH

There's one did laugh in 's sleep, and one cried. "Murder!"
That they did wake each other. I stood and heard them.
But they did say their prayers, and addressed them
25 Again to sleep.

LADY MACBETH

There are two lodged together.

MACBETH

One cried, "God bless us!" and "Amen" the other,
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.
List'ning their fear I could not say "Amen,"
When they did say "God bless us!"

LADY MACBETH

30 Consider it not so deeply.

MACBETH

But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?
I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat.

LADY MACBETH

These deeds must not be thought
After these ways. So, it will make us mad.

MACBETH

35 Methought I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep"—the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the raveled sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
40 Chief nourisher in life's feast.

LADY MACBETH

What do you mean?

MACBETH

Still it cried, "Sleep no more!" to all the house.
"Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more."

LADY MACBETH

Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
45 You do unbend your noble strength to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there. Go carry them and smear
50 The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH

I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on 't again I dare not.

LADY MACBETH

Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures. 'Tis the eye of childhood
55 That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.

Exit

Knock within

MACBETH

Whence is that knocking?
How is 't with me when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? Ha! They pluck out mine eyes.
60 Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Enter **LADY MACBETH**

LADY MACBETH

My hands are of your color, but I shame
65 To wear a heart so white.

Knock within

I hear a knocking

At the south entry. Retire we to our chamber.
A little water clears us of this deed.
How easy is it, then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended.

MACBETH

One of the servants laughed in his sleep, and one cried, "Murder!" and they woke
each other up. I stood and listened to them, but then they said their prayers and
went back to sleep.

LADY MACBETH

Malcolm and Donalbain are asleep in the same room.

MACBETH

One servant cried, "God bless us!" and the other replied, "Amen," as if they had
seen my bloody hands. Listening to their frightened voices, I couldn't reply "Amen"
when they said "God bless us!"

LADY MACBETH

Don't think about it so much.

MACBETH

But why couldn't I say "Amen"? I desperately needed God's blessing, but the word
"Amen" stuck in my throat.

LADY MACBETH

We can't think that way about what we did. If we do, it'll drive us crazy.

MACBETH

I thought I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more! Macbeth is murdering sleep."
Innocent sleep. Sleep that soothes away all our worries. Sleep that puts each day
to rest. Sleep that relieves the weary laborer and heals hurt minds. Sleep, the
main course in life's feast, and the most nourishing.

LADY MACBETH

What are you talking about?

MACBETH

The voice kept crying, "Sleep no more!" to everyone in the house. "Macbeth has
murdered sleep, and therefore Macbeth will sleep no more."

LADY MACBETH

Who said that? Why, my worthy lord, you let yourself become weak when you
think about things in this cowardly way. Go get some water and wash this bloody
evidence from your hands. Why did you carry these daggers out of the room?
They have to stay there. Go take them back and smear the sleeping guards with
the blood.

MACBETH

I can't go back. I'm afraid even to think about what I've done. I can't stand to look
at it again.

LADY MACBETH

Coward! Give me the daggers. Dead and sleeping people can't hurt you any more
than pictures can. Only children are afraid of scary pictures. If Duncan bleeds I'll
paint the servants' faces with his blood. We must make it seem like they're guilty.

LADY MACBETH exits.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

MACBETH

Where is that knocking coming from? What's happening to me, that I'm frightened
of every noise? (*looking at his hands*) Whose hands are these? Ha! They're
plucking out my eyes. Will all the water in the ocean wash this blood from my
hands? No, instead my hands will stain the seas scarlet, turning the green waters
red.

LADY MACBETH enters.

LADY MACBETH

My hands are as red as yours, but I would be ashamed if my heart were as pale
and weak.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

I hear someone knocking at the south entry. Let's go back to our bedroom. A little
water will wash away the evidence of our guilt. It's so simple! You've lost your
resolve.

Knock within

70 Hark! More knocking.
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

MACBETH

To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.

Knock within

75 Wake Duncan with thy knocking. I would thou couldst.
Exeunt

Act 2, Scene 3

Enter a **PORTER**. Knocking within

PORTER

Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate,
he should have old turning the key.

Knock within

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' th' name of Beelzebub? Here's a
farmer that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty. Come in time,
have napkins enough about you, here you'll sweat for 't.

Knock within

Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's name? Faith, here's an
equivocator that could swear in both the scales against either scale, who
committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to
heaven. O, come in, equivocator.

Knock within

5 Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come
hither for stealing out of a French hose. Come in, tailor. Here you may
roast your goose.

Knock within

Knock, knock! Never at quiet. What are you? But this place is too cold
for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further. I had thought to have let in some of
all professions that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire.

Knock within

Anon, anon! I pray you, remember the porter.

Opens the gate

Enter **MACDUFF** and **LENNOX**

MACDUFF

Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,
That you do lie so late?

PORTER

10 'Faith sir, we were carousing till the second cock. And drink, sir, is a
great provoker of three things.

MACDUFF

What three things does drink especially provoke?

PORTER

Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and urine. Lechery, sir, it provokes and
unprovokes. It provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance.
Therefore, much drink may be said to be an equivocator with lechery. It
makes him, and it mars him; it sets him on, and it takes him off; it
persuades him, and disheartens him; makes him stand to and not stand
to; in conclusion, equivocates him in a sleep, and, giving him the lie,
leaves him.

MACDUFF

I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

PORTER

That it did, sir, i' th' very throat on me; but I requited him for his lie, and, I
think, being too strong for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet
I made a shift to cast him.

MACDUFF

15 Is thy master stirring?

Enter **MACBETH**

Our knocking has awaked him. Here he comes.

LENNOX

Good morrow, noble sir.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Listen! There's more knocking. Put on your nightgown, in case someone comes
and sees that we're awake. Snap out of your daze.

MACBETH

Rather than have to think about my crime, I'd prefer to be completely unconscious.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Wake Duncan with your knocking. I wish you could!

They exit.

A sound of knocking from offstage. A **PORTER**, who is obviously drunk, enters.

PORTER

This is a lot of knocking! Come to think of it, if a man were in charge of opening
the gates of hell to let people in, he would have to turn the key a lot.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Knock, knock, knock! (*pretending he's the gatekeeper in hell*) Who's there, in the
devil's name? Maybe it's a farmer who killed himself because grain was cheap.
(*talking to the imaginary farmer*) You're here just in time! I hope you brought
some handkerchiefs; you're going to sweat a lot here.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name? Maybe it's some slick, two-
faced con man who lied under oath. But he found out that you can't lie to God,
and now he's going to hell for perjury. Come on in, con man.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Maybe it's an English tailor who liked to skimp
on the fabric for people's clothes. But now that tight pants are in fashion he can't
get away with it. Come on in, tailor. You can heat your iron up in here.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Knock, knock! Never a moment of peace! Who are you? Ah, this place is too cold
to be hell. I won't pretend to be the devil's porter anymore. I was going to let
someone from every profession into hell.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

I'm coming, I'm coming! Please, don't forget to leave me a tip.

The **PORTER** opens the gate.

MACDUFF and **LENNOX** enter.

MACDUFF

Did you go to bed so late, my friend, that you're having a hard time getting up
now?

PORTER

That's right sir, we were drinking until 3 A.M., and drink, sir, makes a man do
three things.

MACDUFF

What three things does drink make a man do?

PORTER

Drinking turns your nose red, it puts you to sleep, and it makes you urinate. Lust it
turns on but also turns off. What I mean is, drinking stimulates desire but hinders
performance. Therefore, too much drink is like a con artist when it comes to your
sex drive. It sets you up for a fall. It gets you up but it keeps you from getting off.
It persuades you and discourages you. It gives you an erection but doesn't let you
keep it, if you see what I'm saying. It makes you dream about erotic experiences,
but then it leaves you asleep and needing to pee.

MACDUFF

I believe drink did all of this to you last night.

PORTER

It did, sir. It got me right in the throat. But I got even with drink. I was too strong
for it. Although it weakened my legs and made me unsteady, I managed to vomit
it out and laid it flat on the ground.

MACDUFF

Is your master awake?

MACBETH enters.

Our knocking woke him up. Here he comes.

LENNOX

Good morning, noble sir.

MACBETH
Good morrow, both.

MACDUFF
Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

MACBETH
Not yet.

MACDUFF
He did command me to call timely on him.
20 I have almost slipped the hour.

MACBETH
I'll bring you to him.

MACDUFF
I know this is a joyful trouble to you,
But yet 'tis one.

MACBETH
The labor we delight in physics pain.
This is the door.

MACDUFF
25 I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my limited service.
Exit **MACDUFF**

LENNOX
Goes the king hence today?

MACBETH
He does. He did appoint so.

LENNOX
The night has been unruly. Where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down and, as they say,
30 Lamentings heard i' th' air, strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confused events
New hatched to the woeful time. The obscure bird
Clamored the livelong night. Some say the Earth
35 Was feverous and did shake.

MACBETH
'Twas a rough night.

LENNOX
My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.
Enter **MACDUFF**

MACDUFF
O horror, horror, horror!
Tongue nor heart cannot conceive nor name thee!

MACBETH & LENNOX
What's the matter?

MACDUFF
40 Confusion now hath made his masterpiece.
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' th' building!

MACBETH
What is 't you say? "The life"?

LENNOX
Mean you his majesty?

MACDUFF
45 Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon. Do not bid me speak.
See, and then speak yourselves.
Exeunt **MACBETH** and **LENNOX**

Awake, awake!
Ring the alarum bell. Murder and treason!

50 Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! Awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself! Up, up, and see
The great doom's image! Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
55 To countenance this horror! Ring the bell

Bell rings. Enter **LADY MACBETH**

LADY MACBETH
What's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? Speak, speak!

MACBETH
Good morning to both of you.

MACDUFF
Is the king awake, worthy thane?

MACBETH
Not yet.

MACDUFF
He commanded me to wake him up early. I've almost missed the time he requested.

MACBETH
I'll bring you to him.

MACDUFF
I know the burden of hosting him is both an honor and a trouble, but that doesn't mean it's not a trouble just the same.

MACBETH
The work we enjoy is not really work. This is the door.

MACDUFF
I'll wake him, because that's my job.

MACDUFF exits.

LENNOX
Is the king leaving here today?

MACBETH
He is. He told us to arrange it.

LENNOX
The night has been chaotic. The wind blew down through the chimneys where we were sleeping. People are saying they heard cries of grief in the air, strange screams of death, and terrible voices predicting catastrophes that will usher in a woeful new age. The owl made noise all night. Some people say that the earth shook as if it had a fever.

MACBETH
It was a rough night.

LENNOX
I'm too young to remember anything like it.

MACDUFF enters, upset.

MACDUFF
Oh, horror, horror, horror! This is beyond words and beyond belief!

MACBETH & LENNOX
What's the matter?

MACDUFF
The worst thing imaginable has happened. A murderer has broken into God's temple and stolen the life out of it.

MACBETH
What are you talking about? "The life"?

LENNOX
Do you mean the king?

MACDUFF
Go into the bedroom and see for yourself. What's in there will make you freeze with horror. Don't ask me to talk about it. Go look and then do the talking yourselves.

MACBETH and **LENNOX** exit.

Wake up, wake up! Ring the alarm bell. Murder and treason! Banquo and Donalbain, Malcolm! Wake up! Shake off sleep, which looks like death, and look at death itself! Get up, get up, and look at this image of doomsday! Malcolm! Banquo! Get up from your beds as if you were rising out of your own graves, and walk like ghosts to come witness this horror. Ring the bell.

A bell rings. **LADY MACBETH** enters.

LADY MACBETH
What's going on? Why is that terrifying trumpet calling together everyone who's sleeping in the house? Speak up and tell me!

MACDUFF
 O gentle lady,
 'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
 60 The repetition, in a woman's ear,
 Would murder as it fell.

Enter **BANQUO**

O Banquo, Banquo,
 Our royal master's murdered!

LADY MACBETH
 Woe, alas!
 What, in our house?

BANQUO
 65 Too cruel any where.
 Dear Duff, I pritheee, contradict thyself,
 And say it is not so.

Enter **MACBETH**, **LENNOX**, and **ROSS**

MACBETH
 Had I but died an hour before this chance,
 I had lived a blessed time, for from this instant
 70 There's nothing serious in mortality.
 All is but toys. Renown and grace is dead.
 The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
 Is left this vault to brag of.

Enter **MALCOLM** and **DONALBAIN**

DONALBAIN
 What is amiss?

MACBETH
 75 You are, and do not know 't.
 The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
 Is stopped; the very source of it is stopped.

MACDUFF
 Your royal father's murdered.

MALCOLM
 Oh, by whom?

LENNOX
 80 Those of his chamber, as it seemed, had done 't.
 Their hands and faces were all badged with blood.
 So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
 Upon their pillows. They stared, and were distracted.
 No man's life was to be trusted with them.

MACBETH
 85 Oh, yet I do repent me of my fury,
 That I did kill them.

MACDUFF
 Wherefore did you so?

MACBETH
 Who can be wise, amazed, temp'rate, and furious,
 Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man.
 Th' expedition of my violent love
 90 Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,
 His silver skin laced with his golden blood,
 And his gashed stabs looked like a breach in nature
 For ruin's wasteful entrance; there, the murderers,
 Steeped in the colors of their trade, their daggers
 95 Unmannerly breeched with gore. Who could refrain,
 That had a heart to love, and in that heart
 Courage to make 's love known?

LADY MACBETH
 Help me hence, ho!

MACDUFF
 Look to the lady.

MALCOLM
 100 *(aside to DONALBAIN)* Why do we hold our tongues,
 That most may claim this argument for ours?

DONALBAIN
(aside to MALCOLM) What should be spoken here, where our fate,
 Hid in an auger-hole, may rush and seize us?
 Let's away. Our tears are not yet brewed.

MALCOLM
 105 *(aside to DONALBAIN)* Nor our strong sorrow
 Upon the foot of motion.

BANQUO
 Look to the lady.

MACDUFF
 Oh gentle lady, my news isn't fit for your ears. If I repeated it to you, it would kill you as soon as you heard it.

BANQUO enters.

Oh Banquo, Banquo, the king has been murdered!

LADY MACBETH
 How horrible! What, in our own house?

BANQUO
 It would be a terrible event no matter where it happened. Dear Macduff, I beg you, tell us you were lying and say it isn't so.

MACBETH and **LENNOX** reenter, with **ROSS**.

MACBETH
 If I had only died an hour before this event I could say I had lived a blessed life. Because from this moment on, there is nothing worth living for. Everything is a sick joke. The graceful and renowned king is dead. The wine of life has been poured out, and only the dregs remain.

MALCOLM and **DONALBAIN** enter.

DONALBAIN
 What's wrong?

MACBETH
 You are, but you don't know it yet. The source from which your royal blood comes has been stopped.

MACDUFF
 Your royal father is murdered.

MALCOLM
 Who did it?

LENNOX
 It seems that the guards who were supposed to be protecting his chamber did it. Their hands and faces were all covered with blood. So were their daggers, which we found on their pillows, unwiped. They stared at us in confusion. No one's life should have been entrusted to them.

MACBETH
 And yet I still regret the anger that drove me to kill them.

MACDUFF
 What did you do that for?

MACBETH
 Is it possible to be wise, bewildered, calm, furious, loyal, and neutral all at once? Nobody can do that. The violent rage inspired by my love for Duncan caused me to act before I could think rationally and tell myself to pause. There was Duncan, his white skin all splattered with his precious blood. The gashes where the knives had cut him looked like wounds to nature itself. Then right next to him I saw the murderers, dripping with blood, their daggers rudely covered in gore. Who could have restrained himself, who loved Duncan and had the courage to act on it?

LADY MACBETH
 Help me out of here, quickly!

MACDUFF
 Take care of the lady.

MALCOLM
(speaking so that only DONALBAIN can hear) Why are we keeping quiet? The two of us have the most to say in this matter.

DONALBAIN
(speaking so that only MALCOLM can hear) What are we going to say here, where danger may be waiting to strike at us from anywhere? Let's get out of here. We haven't even begun to weep yet—but there will be time for that later.

MALCOLM
(speaking so that only DONALBAIN can hear) And the time hasn't come yet for us to turn our deep grief into action.

BANQUO
 Take care of the lady.

Exit **LADY MACBETH**, attended

And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet
And question this most bloody piece of work,
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us.
110 In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the undivulged pretense I fight
Of treasonous malice.

MACDUFF

And so do I.

ALL

So all.

MACBETH

Let's briefly put on manly readiness,

115 And meet i' th' hall together.

ALL

Well contented.

Exeunt all but **MALCOLM** and **DONALBAIN**

MALCOLM

What will you do? Let's not consort with them.
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office
Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.

DONALBAIN

To Ireland, I. Our separated fortune
120 Shall keep us both the safer. Where we are,
There's daggers in men's smiles. The near in blood,
The nearer bloody.

MALCOLM

This murderous shaft that's shot
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way
125 Is to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse,
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,
But shift away. There's warrant in that theft
Which steals itself when there's no mercy left.

Exeunt

LADY MACBETH is carried out.

When we're properly dressed for the cold, let's meet and discuss this bloody crime to see if we can figure anything out. Right now we're shaken up by fears and doubts. I'm putting myself in God's hands, and with his help I plan to fight against the secret plot that caused this treasonous murder.

MACDUFF

So will I.

ALL

So will we all.

MACBETH

Let's get dressed quickly and then meet in the hall.

ALL

Agreed.

Everyone exits except **MALCOLM** and **DONALBAIN**.

MALCOLM

What are you going to do? Let's not stay here with them. It's easy for a liar to pretend to feel sorrow when he actually feels none. I'm going to England.

DONALBAIN

I'll go to Ireland. We'll both be safer if we go separate ways. Wherever we go, men will smile at us while hiding daggers. Our closest relatives are the ones most likely to murder us.

MALCOLM

We haven't yet encountered that danger, and the best thing to do is avoid it entirely. With that in mind, let's get on our horses. We'd better not worry about saying polite good-byes; we should just get away quickly. There's good reason to escape when there's no mercy to be found anymore.

They exit.

Act 2, Scene 4

Enter **ROSS** with an **OLD MAN**

OLD MAN

Threescore and ten I can remember well,
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange, but this sore night
Hath trifled former knowings.

ROSS

Ha, good father,
5 Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threatens his bloody stage. By th' clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.
Is 't night's predominance or the day's shame
That darkness does the face of Earth entomb
10 When living light should kiss it?

OLD MAN

'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon, tow'ring in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.

ROSS

And Duncan's horses—a thing most strange and certain—
15 Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would
Make war with mankind.

OLD MAN

'Tis said they eat each other.

ROSS

They did so, to th' amazement of mine eyes
20 That looked upon 't. Here comes the good Macduff.

Enter **MACDUFF**

How goes the world, sir, now?

MACDUFF

ROSS and an **OLD MAN** enter.

OLD MAN

I can remember the past seventy years pretty well, and in all that time I have seen dreadful hours and strange things. But last night's horrors make everything that came before seem like a joke.

ROSS

Ah yes, old man. You can see the skies. They look like they're upset about what mankind has been doing, and they're threatening the Earth with storms. The clock says it's daytime, but dark night is strangling the sun. Is it because night is so strong, or because day is so weak, that darkness covers the earth when it's supposed to be light?

OLD MAN

It's unnatural, just like the murder that has been committed. Last Tuesday a falcon was circling high in the sky, and it was caught and killed by an ordinary owl that usually goes after mice.

ROSS

And something else strange happened. Duncan's horses, which are beautiful and swift and the best of their breed, suddenly turned wild and broke out of their stalls. Refusing to be obedient as usual, they acted like they were at war with mankind.

OLD MAN

They say the horses ate each other.

ROSS

I saw it with my own eyes. It was an amazing sight. Here comes the good Macduff.

MACDUFF enters.

How are things going now?

MACDUFF

Why, see you not?

ROSS

Is 't known who did this more than bloody deed?

MACDUFF

Those that Macbeth hath slain.

ROSS

Alas, the day!

What good could they pretend?

MACDUFF

They were suborned.

25

Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

ROSS

'Gainst nature still!

Thriftless ambition, that will raven up

30

Thine own lives' means! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

MACDUFF

He is already named and gone to Scone

To be invested.

ROSS

Where is Duncan's body?

MACDUFF

35

Carried to Colmekill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.

ROSS

Will you to Scone?

MACDUFF

No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

ROSS

Well, I will thither.

MACDUFF

40

Well, may you see things well done there. Adieu,
Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

ROSS

Farewell, father.

OLD MAN

God's benison go with you and with those

That would make good of bad and friends of foes.

Exeunt

Can't you see for yourself?

ROSS

Does anyone know who committed this horrible crime?

MACDUFF

The servants Macbeth killed.

ROSS

It's too bad he killed them. What good would it have done those men to kill
Duncan?

MACDUFF

They were paid to betray their master. Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two
sons, have run away and fled, which makes them the prime suspects.

ROSS

Everything about this is unnatural! What a stupid ambition, causing a son to kill the
father who supports him. Then it looks like Macbeth will become king.

MACDUFF

He has already been named king and has left for Scone to be crowned.

ROSS

Where is Duncan's body?

MACDUFF

It was carried to Colmekill to be placed in the tomb of his ancestors, where their
bones are kept safe.

ROSS

Are you going to Scone?

MACDUFF

No, cousin, I'm going to Fife.

ROSS

Well, I'll go to Scone.

MACDUFF

I hope things go well there. Good-bye! And let's hope things don't get worse.

ROSS

Farewell, old man.

OLD MAN

May God's blessing go with you and with all who turn bad into good, and enemies
into friends!

They all exit.

Act 3, Scene 1

Enter **BANQUO**

BANQUO

Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and I fear
Thou played'st most foully for 't. Yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
5 But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them—
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine—
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well,
10 And set me up in hope? But hush, no more.

Sennet sounded. Enter **MACBETH**, as king, **LADY MACBETH**, as queen, **LENNOX**, **ROSS**, **LORDS**, **LADIES**, and attendants

MACBETH

Here's our chief guest.

LADY MACBETH

If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all-things unbecoming.

MACBETH

15 Tonight we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.

BANQUO

Let your highness
Command upon me, to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
Forever knit.

MACBETH

20 Ride you this afternoon?

BANQUO

Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH

We should have else desired your good advice—
Which still hath been both grave and prosperous—
In this day's council, but we'll take tomorrow.
25 Is 't far you ride?

BANQUO

As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twill this and supper. Go not my horse the better,
I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain.

MACBETH

Fail not our feast.

BANQUO

30 My lord, I will not.

MACBETH

We hear our bloody cousins are bestowed
In England and in Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention. But of that tomorrow,
35 When therewithal we shall have cause of state
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse. Adieu,
Till your return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

BANQUO

Ay, my good lord. Our time does call upon 's.

MACBETH

I wish your horses swift and sure of foot,
And so I do commend you to their backs.
40 Farewell.

Exit **BANQUO**

Let every man be master of his time
Till seven at night. To make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
45 Till suppertime alone. While then, God be with you!
Exeunt all except **MACBETH** and a **SERVANT**
Sirrah, a word with you. Attend those men
Our pleasure?

BANQUO enters.

BANQUO

Now you have it all: you're the king, the thane of Cawdor, and the thane of Glamis, just like the weird women promised you. And I suspect you cheated to win these titles. But it was also prophesied that the crown would not go to your descendants, and that my sons and grandsons would be kings instead. If the witches tell the truth—which they did about you—maybe what they said about me will come true too. But shhh! I'll shut up now.

A trumpet plays. **MACBETH** enters dressed as king, and **LADY MACBETH** enters dressed as queen, together with **LENNOX**, **ROSS**, **LORDS**, **LADIES**, and their attendants

MACBETH

(*indicating BANQUO*) Here's our most important guest.

LADY MACBETH

If we forgot him, our big celebration wouldn't be complete, and that wouldn't be any good.

MACBETH

(*to BANQUO*) Tonight we're having a ceremonial banquet, and I want you to be there.

BANQUO

Whatever your highness commands me to do, it is always my duty to do it.

MACBETH

Are you going riding this afternoon?

BANQUO

Yes, my good lord.

MACBETH

We would have liked to have heard your good advice, which has always been serious and helpful, at the council today, but we'll wait until tomorrow. Are you riding far?

BANQUO

I'm going far enough that I'll be riding from now until dinner. Unless my horse goes faster than expected, I will be back an hour or two after sunset.

MACBETH

Don't miss our feast.

BANQUO

My lord, I won't miss it.

MACBETH

We hear that the princes, those murderers, have hidden in England and Ireland. They haven't confessed to cruelly murdering their own father, and they've been making up strange lies to tell their hosts. But we can talk more about that tomorrow, when we'll discuss matters of state that concern us both. Hurry up and get to your horse. Good-bye, until you return tonight. Is Fleance going with you?

BANQUO

Yes, my good lord. It's time we hit the road.

MACBETH

I hope your horses are fast and surefooted. And with that, I send you to them.
Farewell.

BANQUO exits.

Everybody may do as they please until seven o'clock tonight. In order to make your company even more enjoyable, I'm going to keep to myself until suppertime. Until then, God be with you!

Everyone exits except **MACBETH** and a **SERVANT**

(*to the SERVANT*) You there, let me have a word with you. Are those men waiting for me?

SERVANT

They are, my lord, without the palace gate.

MACBETH

Bring them before us.

Exit **SERVANT**

50 To be thus is nothing,
But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be feared. 'Tis much he dares,
And to that dauntless temper of his mind
55 He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear, and under him
My genius is rebuked, as it is said
Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters
60 When first they put the name of king upon me
And bade them speak to him. Then, prophetlike,
They hailed him father to a line of kings.
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown
And put a barren scepter in my grip,
65 Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered;
Put rancors in the vessel of my peace
70 Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come fate into the list,
And champion me to th' utterance. Who's there?

Enter **SERVANT** and two **MURDERERS**

75 Now go to the door and stay there till we call.

Exit **SERVANT**

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

FIRST MURDERER

It was, so please your highness.

MACBETH

Well then, now

Have you considered of my speeches? Know
That it was he, in the times past, which held you
80 So under fortune, which you thought had been
Our innocent self. This I made good to you
In our last conference, passed in probation with you,
How you were borne in hand, how crossed, the instruments,
Who wrought with them, and all things else that might
85 To half a soul and to a notion crazed
Say, "Thus did Banquo."

FIRST MURDERER

You made it known to us.

MACBETH

I did so, and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting. Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature
90 That you can let this go? Are you so gospelled
To pray for this good man and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bowed you to the grave
And beggared yours forever?

FIRST MURDERER

We are men, my liege.

MACBETH

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,
95 As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are cleft
All by the name of dogs. The valued file
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
100 According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed, whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike. And so of men.
Now, if you have a station in the file,
105 Not i' th' worst rank of manhood, say 't,
And I will put that business in your bosoms,
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,

SERVANT

They're waiting outside the palace gate, my lord.

MACBETH

Bring them to me.

The **SERVANT** exits.

To be the king is nothing if I'm not safe as the king. I'm very afraid of Banquo. There's something noble about him that makes me fear him. He's willing to take risks, and his mind never stops working. He has the wisdom to act bravely but also safely. I'm not afraid of anyone but him. Around him, my guardian angel is frightened, just as Mark Antony's angel supposedly feared Octavius Caesar. Banquo chided the witches when they first called me king, asking them to tell him his own future. Then, like prophets, they named him the father to a line of kings. They gave me a crown and a scepter that I can't pass on. Someone outside my family will take these things away from me, since no son of mine will take my place as king. If this is true, then I've tortured my conscience and murdered the gracious Duncan for Banquo's sons. I've ruined my own peace for their benefit. I've handed over my everlasting soul to the devil so that they could be kings. Banquo's sons, kings! Instead of watching that happen, I will challenge fate to battle and fight to the death. Who's there!

The **SERVANT** comes back in with two **MURDERERS**

Now go to the door and stay there until I call for you.

The **SERVANT** exits.

Wasn't it just yesterday that we spoke to each other?

FIRST MURDERER

It was yesterday, your highness.

MACBETH

Well, did you think about what I said? You should know that it was Banquo who made your lives hell for so long, which you always thought was my fault. But I was innocent. I showed you the proof at our last meeting. I explained how you were deceived, how you were thwarted, the things that were used against you, who was working against you, and a lot of other things that would convince even a half-wit or a crazy person to say, "Banquo did it!"

FIRST MURDERER

You explained it all.

MACBETH

I did that and more, which brings me to the point of this second meeting. Are you so patient and forgiving that you're going to let him off the hook? Are you so pious that you would pray for this man and his children, a man who has pushed you toward an early grave and put your family in poverty forever?

FIRST MURDERER

We are men, my lord.

MACBETH

Yes, you're part of the species called men. Just as hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, mutts, shaggy lapdogs, swimming dogs, and wolf-dog crossbreeds are all dogs. But if you list the different kinds of dogs according to their qualities, you can distinguish which breeds are fast or slow, which ones are clever, which ones are watchdogs, and which ones hunters. You can classify each dog according to the natural gifts that separate it from all other dogs. It's the same with men. Now, if you occupy some place in the list of men that isn't down at the very bottom, tell me. Because if that's the case, I will tell you a plan that will get rid of your enemy and bring you closer to me. As long as Banquo lives, I am sick. I'll be healthy when he is dead.

110 Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

SECOND MURDERER

I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Have so incensed that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.

FIRST MURDERER

115 And I another
So weary with disasters, tugged with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it or be rid on 't.

MACBETH

Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.

BOTH MURDERERS

True, my lord.

MACBETH

120 So is he mine; and in such bloody distance
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life. And though I could
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
125 Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
Who I myself struck down. And thence it is,
That I to your assistance do make love,
Masking the business from the common eye
For sundry weighty reasons.

SECOND MURDERER

130 We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.

FIRST MURDERER

Though our lives—

MACBETH

Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most
I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' th' time,
135 The moment on 't; for 't must be done tonight,
And something from the palace; always thought
That I require a clearness. And with him—
To leave no rubs nor botches in the work—
Fleance, his son, that keeps him company,
Whose absence is no less material to me
140 Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart.
I'll come to you anon.

BOTH MURDERERS

We are resolved, my lord.

MACBETH

145 I'll call upon you straight. Abide within.

Exeunt **MURDERERS**

It is concluded. Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out tonight.

Exit

Act 3, Scene 2

Enter **LADY MACBETH** and a **SERVANT**

LADY MACBETH

Is Banquo gone from court?

SERVANT

Ay, madam, but returns again tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Say to the king I would attend his leisure
For a few words.

SERVANT

5 Madam, I will.

Exit **SERVANT**

LADY MACBETH

Naught's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content.

SECOND MURDERER

My lord, I've been so kicked around by the world, and I'm so angry, that I don't even care what I do.

FIRST MURDERER

I'm the same. I'm so sick of bad luck and trouble that I'd risk my life on any bet, as long as it would either fix my life or end it once and for all.

MACBETH

You both know Banquo was your enemy.

BOTH MURDERERS

It's true, my lord.

MACBETH

He's my enemy too, and I hate him so much that every minute he's alive it eats away at my heart. Since I'm king, I could simply use my power to get rid of him. But I can't do that, because he and I have friends in common whom I need, so I have to be able to moan and cry over his death in public even though I'll be the one who had him killed. That's why I need your help right now. I have to hide my real plans from the public eye for many important reasons.

SECOND MURDERER

We'll do what you want us to, my lord.

FIRST MURDERER

Though our lives—

MACBETH

(interrupts him) I can see the determination in your eyes. Within the next hour I'll tell you where to go and exactly when to strike. It must be done tonight, away from the palace. Always remember that I must be free from suspicion. For the plan to work perfectly, you must kill both Banquo and his son, Fleance, who keeps him company. Getting rid of Fleance is as important to me as knocking off Banquo. Each of you should make up your own mind about whether you're going to do this. I'll come to you soon.

BOTH MURDERERS

We have decided, my lord. We're in.

MACBETH

I'll call for you soon. Stay inside.

The **MURDERERS** exit.

The deal is closed. Banquo, if your soul is going to make it to heaven, tonight's the night.

He exits.

LADY MACBETH and a **SERVANT** enter.

LADY MACBETH

Has Banquo left the court?

SERVANT

Yes, madam, but he'll be back tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Go tell the king I want to talk to him for a few minutes.

SERVANT

No problem, madam.

The **SERVANT** exits.

LADY MACBETH

If you get what you want and you're still not happy, you've spent everything and gained nothing. It's better to be the person who gets murdered than to be the killer

'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

Enter **MACBETH**

10 How now, my lord! Why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making,
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without all remedy
Should be without regard. What's done is done.

MACBETH

15 We have scorched the snake, not killed it.
She'll close and be herself whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
20 In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly. Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave.
25 After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.
Treason has done his worst; nor steel nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
Can touch him further.

LADY MACBETH

30 Come on, gentle my lord,
Sleek o'er your rugged looks. Be bright and jovial
Among your guests tonight.

MACBETH

35 So shall I, love,
And so, I pray, be you. Let your remembrance
Apply to Banquo; present him eminence,
Both with eye and tongue: unsafe the while that we
Must lave our honors in these flattering streams,
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

LADY MACBETH

You must leave this.

MACBETH

Oh, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

LADY MACBETH

40 But in them nature's copy's not eterne.

MACBETH

45 There's comfort yet; they are assailable.
Then be thou jocund. Ere the bat hath flown
His cloistered flight, ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

LADY MACBETH

What's to be done?

MACBETH

50 Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale. Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to th' rooky wood.
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse;
55 Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
Thou marvel'st at my words: but hold thee still.
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.
So, prithee, go with me.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 3

Enter three **MURDERERS**

FIRST MURDERER

But who did bid thee join with us?

THIRD MURDERER

and be tormented with anxiety.

MACBETH enters.

What's going on, my lord? Why are you keeping to yourself, with only your sad thoughts to keep you company? Those thoughts should have died when you killed the men you're thinking about. If you can't fix it, you shouldn't give it a second thought. What's done is done.

MACBETH

We have slashed the snake but not killed it. It will heal and be as good as new, and we'll be threatened by its fangs once again. But the universe can fall apart, and heaven and earth crumble, before I'll eat my meals in fear and spend my nights tossing and turning with these nightmares I've been having. I'd rather be dead than endure this endless mental torture and harrowing sleep deprivation. We killed those men and sent them to rest in peace so that we could gain our own peace. Duncan lies in his grave, through with life's troubles, and he's sleeping well. We have already done the worst we can do to him with our treason. After that, nothing can hurt him further—not weapons, poison, rebellion, invasion, or anything else.

LADY MACBETH

Come on, relax, dear. Put on a happy face and look cheerful and agreeable for your guests tonight.

MACBETH

That's exactly what I'll do, my love, and I hope you'll do the same. Give Banquo your special attention. Talk to him and look at him in a way that will make him feel important. We're in a dangerous situation, where we have to flatter him and hide our true feelings.

LADY MACBETH

You have to stop talking like this.

MACBETH

Argh! I feel like my mind is full of scorpions, my dear wife. You know that Banquo and his son Fleance are still alive.

LADY MACBETH

But they can't live forever.

MACBETH

That's comforting. They can be killed, it's true. So be cheerful. Before the bat flies through the castle, and before the dung beetle makes his little humming noise to tell us it's nighttime, a dreadful deed will be done.

LADY MACBETH

What are you going to do?

MACBETH

It's better you don't know about it until after it's done, when you can applaud it. *(to the night)* Come, night, and blindfold the kindhearted day. Use your bloody and invisible hand to tear up Banquo's lease on life, which keeps me in fear. *(to himself)* The sky's getting dark, and the crow is returning home to the woods. The gentle creatures of the day are falling asleep, while night's predators are waking up to look for their prey. *(to LADY MACBETH)* You seem surprised at my words, but don't question me yet. Bad deeds force you to commit more bad deeds. So please, come with me.

They exit.

The two **MURDERERS** enter with a third **MURDERER**.

FIRST MURDERER

But who told you to come here and join us?

THIRD MURDERER

Macbeth.

SECOND MURDERER

He needs not our mistrust, since he delivers
Our offices and what we have to do
5 To the direction just.

FIRST MURDERER

Then stand with us.
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day.
Now spurs the lated traveler apace
To gain the timely inn, and near approaches
10 The subject of our watch.

THIRD MURDERER

Hark, I hear horses.

BANQUO

(*within*) Give us a light there, ho!

SECOND MURDERER

Then 'tis he: the rest
That are within the note of expectation
Already are i' th' court.

FIRST MURDERER

His horses go about.

THIRD MURDERER

Almost a mile; but he does usually—
So all men do—from hence to the palace gate
15 Make it their walk.

Enter **BANQUO** and **FLEANCE** with a torch

SECOND MURDERER

A light, a light!

THIRD MURDERER

'Tis he.

FIRST MURDERER

Stand to 't.

BANQUO

It will be rain tonight.

FIRST MURDERER

Let it come down.

The **MURDERERS** attack **BANQUO**

BANQUO

O treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!
20 Thou may 'st revenge—O slave!

BANQUO dies. Exit **FLEANCE**

THIRD MURDERER

Who did strike out the light?

FIRST MURDERER

Was 't not the way?

THIRD MURDERER

There's but one down. The son is fled.

SECOND MURDERER

We have lost best half of our affair.

FIRST MURDERER

Well, let's away and say how much is done.

Exeunt

Macbeth.

SECOND MURDERER

We can trust this guy. He was given exactly the same orders we were.

FIRST MURDERER

Then stay with us. There's still a bit of daylight in the sky. Now all the late
travellers are hurrying to reach their inns. Banquo is almost here.

THIRD MURDERER

Listen! I hear horses.

BANQUO

(*from offstage*) Hey, give us some light here!

SECOND MURDERER

That must be him. The rest of the king's guests are already inside.

FIRST MURDERER

You can hear his horses moving around as the servants take them to the stables.

THIRD MURDERER

It's almost a mile to the palace gate, but Banquo, like everybody else, usually
walks from here to the palace.

BANQUO and **FLEANCE** enter with a torch.

SECOND MURDERER

Here comes a light! Here comes a light!

THIRD MURDERER

That's him.

FIRST MURDERER

Prepare yourselves.

BANQUO

It will rain tonight.

FIRST MURDERER

Then let the rain come down.

The **MURDERERS** attack **BANQUO**.

BANQUO

Oh, this is treachery! Get out of here, good Fleance, run, run, run! Someday you
can get revenge.—Oh, you bastard!

BANQUO dies. **FLEANCE** escapes.

THIRD MURDERER

Who put out the light?

FIRST MURDERER

Wasn't that the best thing to do?

THIRD MURDERER

There's only one body here. The son ran away.

SECOND MURDERER

We failed in half of our mission.

FIRST MURDERER

Well, let's get out of here and tell Macbeth what we did accomplish.

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 4

Banquet prepared. Enter **MACBETH**, **LADY MACBETH**, **ROSS**,
LENNOX, **LORDS**, and attendants.

MACBETH

You know your own degrees; sit down. At first
And last, the hearty welcome.

The **LORDS** sit

LORDS

Thanks to your majesty.

MACBETH

Ourselves will mingle with society
And play the humble host.

5 Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time
We will require her welcome.

The stage is set for a banquet. **MACBETH** enters with **LADY MACBETH**, **ROSS**,
LENNOX, **LORDS**, and their attendants.

MACBETH

You know your own ranks, so you know where to sit. Sit down. From the highest
to the lowest of you, I bid you a hearty welcome.

The **LORDS** sit down.

LORDS

Thanks to your majesty.

MACBETH

I will walk around and mingle with all of you, playing the humble host. My wife will
stay in her royal chair, but at the appropriate time I will have her welcome you all.

LADY MACBETH

Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends,
For my heart speaks they are welcome.

Enter **FIRST MURDERER** at the door

MACBETH

10 See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.
Both sides are even. Here I'll sit i' th' midst.
Be large in mirth. Anon we'll drink a measure
The table round.

(*aside to FIRST MURDERER*) There's blood upon thy face.

FIRST MURDERER

'Tis Banquo's then.

MACBETH

15 'Tis better thee without than he within.
Is he dispatched?

FIRST MURDERER

My lord, his throat is cut. That I did for him.

MACBETH

20 Thou art the best o' th' cutthroats:
Yet he's good that did the like for Fleance.
If thou didst it, thou art the nonpareil.

FIRST MURDERER

Most royal sir, Fleance is 'scaped.

MACBETH

25 Then comes my fit again. I had else been perfect,
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad and general as the casing air.
But now I am cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears.—But Banquo's safe?

FIRST MURDERER

Ay, my good lord. Safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenchèd gashes on his head,
The least a death to nature.

MACBETH

30 Thanks for that.
There the grown serpent lies. The worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed;
No teeth for th' present. Get thee gone. Tomorrow
We'll hear ourselves again.

Exit **FIRST MURDERER**

LADY MACBETH

35 My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer. The feast is sold
That is not often vouchèd, while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome. To feed were best at home;
From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.

MACBETH

40 Sweet remembrancer!
Now, good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!

LENNOX

May 't please your highness sit.

Enter the **GHOST OF BANQUO**, and sits in **MACBETH**'s place

MACBETH

45 Here had we now our country's honor roofed,
Were the graced person of our Banquo present,
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance.

ROSS

His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please 't your highness
To grace us with your royal company?

MACBETH

The table's full.

LENNOX

Here is a place reserved, sir.

50 **MACBETH**

Where?

LENNOX

Here, my good lord. What is 't that moves your highness?

LADY MACBETH

Say welcome to all of our friends for me, sir, for in my heart they are all welcome.

The **FIRST MURDERER** appears at the door.

MACBETH

And they respond to you with their hearts as well. The table is full on both sides. I will sit here in the middle. Be free and happy. Soon we will toast around the table.

(*approaching the door and speaking to the MURDERER*) There's blood on your face.

FIRST MURDERER

Then it must be Banquo's.

MACBETH

I'd rather see his blood splattered on your face than flowing through his veins. Did you finish him off?

FIRST MURDERER

My lord, his throat is cut. I did that to him.

MACBETH

You are the best of the cutthroats. But whoever did the same to Fleance must also be good. If you cut both their throats, then you are the absolute best.

FIRST MURDERER

Most royal sir, Fleance has escaped.

MACBETH

Now I'm scared again. Otherwise I would have been perfect, as solid as a piece of marble, as firm as a rock, as free as the air itself. But now I'm all tangled up with doubts and fears. But Banquo's been taken care of?

FIRST MURDERER

Yes, my good lord. He's lying dead in a ditch, with twenty deep gashes in his head, any one of which would have been enough to kill him.

MACBETH

Thanks for that. The adult snake lies in the ditch. The young snake that escaped will in time become poisonous and threatening, but for now he has no fangs. Get out of here. I'll talk to you again tomorrow.

The **FIRST MURDERER** exits.

LADY MACBETH

My royal lord, you're not entertaining the guests. If you don't make your guests know they're welcome, they'll feel like they're paying for their meal. When you just want to eat, it's better to do that at home. When you're eating out with people, you need to have a little more ceremony. Otherwise dinner parties would be boring.

MACBETH

It's nice of you to remind me. (*raising a glass to toast his guests*) Since good digestion requires a good appetite, and good health requires both of those, here's to good appetites, good digestion, and good health!

LENNOX

Why don't you have a seat, your highness?

The **GHOST OF BANQUO** enters and sits in **MACBETH**'s place.

MACBETH

We would have all the nobility of Scotland gathered under one roof, if only Banquo were here. I hope it turns out that he's late out of rudeness, and not because something bad has happened to him.

ROSS

His absence means he's broken his promise, sir. If it pleases you, your highness, why don't you sit with us and grace us with your royal company?

MACBETH

The table's full.

LENNOX

Here's an empty seat, sir.

MACBETH

Where?

LENNOX

(*pointing to where the GHOST sits*) Here, my good lord. What's wrong, your

MACBETH

Which of you have done this?

LORDS

What, my good lord?

MACBETH

(to GHOST) Thou canst not say I did it. Never shake Thy gory locks at me.

ROSS

55 Gentlemen, rise. His highness is not well.

LADY MACBETH

Sit, worthy friends. My lord is often thus And hath been from his youth. Pray you, keep seat. The fit is momentary; upon a thought He will again be well. If much you note him, You shall offend him and extend his passion.

60 Feed and regard him not. (aside to MACBETH) Are you a man?

MACBETH

Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that Which might appall the devil.

LADY MACBETH

O proper stuff! This is the very painting of your fear.

65 This is the air-drawn dagger which you said Led you to Duncan. Oh, these flaws and starts, Impostors to true fear, would well become A woman's story at a winter's fire, Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!

70 Why do you make such faces? When all's done, You look but on a stool.

MACBETH

Prithee, see there! Behold! Look! Lo! How say you? Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too. If charnel houses and our graves must send Those that we bury back, our monuments

75 Shall be the maws of kites.

Exit GHOST

LADY MACBETH
What, quite unmanned in folly?

MACBETH

If I stand here, I saw him.

LADY MACBETH

Fie, for shame!

MACBETH

Blood hath been shed ere now, i' th' olden time, Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal; Ay, and since too, murders have been performed Too terrible for the ear. The time has been That, when the brains were out, the man would die, And there an end. But now they rise again With twenty mortal murders on their crowns And push us from our stools. This is more strange Than such a murder is.

80
85 **LADY MACBETH**
My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.

MACBETH

I do forget.
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends. I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing To those that know me. Come, love and health to all. Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine. Fill full.

90 Enter the **GHOST OF BANQUO**

I drink to the general joy o' th' whole table, And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss; Would he were here! To all and him we thirst, And all to all.

95 **LORDS**
Our duties, and the pledge.

They drink

MACBETH

(seeing the GHOST) Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee. Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold.

highness?

MACBETH

(seeing the GHOST) Which one of you did this?

LORDS

What, my good lord?

MACBETH

(to the GHOST) You can't say I did it. Don't shake your bloody head at me.

ROSS

Gentlemen, stand up. His highness is not well.

LADY MACBETH

Sit down, worthy friends. My husband is often like this, and he has been since he was a child. Please stay seated. This is just a brief fit. In a moment he'll be well again. If you pay too much attention to him you'll make him angry, and that will make his convulsions go on longer. Eat your dinner and pay no attention to him. (speaking so that only MACBETH can hear) Are you a man?

MACBETH

Yes, and a brave one, who dares to look at something that would frighten the devil.

LADY MACBETH

Oh, that's nonsense! This is just another one of the hallucinations you always get when you're afraid. This is like that floating dagger you said was leading you toward Duncan. These outbursts of yours don't even look like real fear. They're more like how you would act if you were a woman telling a scary story by the fireside in front of her grandmother. Shame on you! Why are you making these faces? When the vision passes, you'll see that you're just looking at a stool.

MACBETH

Please, just look over there. Look! Look! See! (to the GHOST) What do you have to say? What do I care? If you can nod, then speak too. If the dead are going to return from their graves, then there's nothing to stop the birds from eating the bodies. So there's no point in our burying people.

The **GHOST** vanishes.

LADY MACBETH

What, has your foolishness paralyzed you completely?

MACBETH

As sure as I'm standing here, I saw him.

LADY MACBETH

Nonsense!

MACBETH

In ancient times, before there were laws to make the land safe and peaceful, a lot of blood was spilled. Yes, and since then murders have been committed that are too awful to talk about. It used to be that when you knocked a man's brains out he would just die, and that would be it. But now they rise from the dead with twenty fatal head wounds and push us off our stools. This haunting business is even stranger than murder.

LADY MACBETH

My worthy lord, your noble friends miss your company.

MACBETH

I forgot about them. (to the guests) Don't be alarmed on my account, my most worthy friends. I have a strange disorder, which no longer shocks those who know me well. (raising his glass to toast the company) Come, let's drink a toast: love and health to you all. Now I'll sit down. Give me some wine. Fill up my cup.

The **GHOST OF BANQUO** reappears in **MACBETH's** seat.

I drink to the happiness of everyone at the table, and to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss. I wish he were here! Let's drink to everyone here, and to Banquo. Now, everybody, drink

LORDS

Hear, hear.

They drink.

MACBETH

(to the GHOST) Go! And get out of my sight! Stay in your grave. There's no marrow in your bones, and your blood is cold. You're staring at me with eyes that

100 **Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with!**

LADY MACBETH
Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom. 'Tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

MACBETH
What man dare, I dare.
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The armed rhinoceros, or th' Hyrcan tiger;
105 Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble. Or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword.
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
110 The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence!

Exit **GHOST**

Why so, being gone,
I am a man again. Pray you sit still.

LADY MACBETH
You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting,
With most admired disorder.

MACBETH
Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanched with fear.

115 **ROSS**
What sights, my lord?

120 **LADY MACBETH**
I pray you, speak not. He grows worse and worse.
Question enrages him. At once, good night.
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

LENNOX
Good night, and better health
Attend his majesty!

LADY MACBETH
A kind good night to all!

125 Exeunt all but **MACBETH** and **LADY MACBETH**

MACBETH
It will have blood, they say. Blood will have blood.
Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak.
Augurs and understood relations have
By magot pies and coughs and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.—What is the night?

LADY MACBETH
Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

130 **MACBETH**
**How say'st thou that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?**

LADY MACBETH
Did you send to him, sir?

MACBETH
I hear it by the way; but I will send.
There's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will tomorrow—
135 And betimes I will—to the weird sisters.
More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good,

have no power to see.

LADY MACBETH
Good friends, think of this as nothing more than a strange habit. It's nothing else.
Too bad it's spoiling our pleasure tonight.

MACBETH
I am as brave as any other man. Come at me in the form of a rugged Russian
bear, an armor-plated rhinoceros, or a tiger from Iran. Take any shape other than
the one you have now and I will never tremble in fear. Or come back to life again
and challenge me to a duel in some deserted place. If I tremble then, you can call
me a little girl. Get out of here, you horrible ghost, you hallucination. Get out!

The **GHOST** vanishes.

Look, now that it's gone, I'm a man again. Please, remain seated.

LADY MACBETH
You have ruined our good cheer and disrupted the gathering by making a
spectacle of yourself.

MACBETH
(to the guests) Can things like this happen so suddenly without making us all
astonished? You make me feel like I don't know myself, when I see you looking at
these terrible things and keeping a straight face, while my face has gone white
with fear.

ROSS
What things, my lord?

LADY MACBETH
Please, don't speak to him. He's getting worse and worse. Talk makes him crazy.
Everybody, please leave right now. Don't bother exiting in the order of your rank,
but just leave right away.

LENNOX
Good night. I hope the king recovers soon!

LADY MACBETH
A kind good night to all!

Everyone leaves except **MACBETH** and **LADY MACBETH**.

MACBETH
There's an old saying: the dead will have their revenge. Gravestones have been
known to move, and trees to speak, to bring guilty men to justice. The craftiest
murderers have been exposed by the mystical signs made by crows and
magpies. How late at night is it?

LADY MACBETH
It's almost morning. You can't tell whether it's day or night.

MACBETH
What do you think about the fact that Macduff refuses to come to me when I
command him?

LADY MACBETH
Did you send for him, sir?

MACBETH
I've heard about this indirectly, but I will send for him. In every one of the lords'
households I have a servant paid to spy for me. Tomorrow, while it's still early, I
will go see the witches. They will tell me more, because I'm determined to know
the worst about what's going to happen. My own safety is the only important thing
now. I have walked so far into this river of blood that even if I stopped now, it
would be as hard to go back to being good as it is to keep killing people. I have

All causes shall give way. I am in blood
Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
Strange things I have in head, that will to hand,
Which must be acted ere they may be scanned.

140 **LADY MACBETH**
You lack the season of all natures, sleep.

MACBETH
Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use.
We are yet but young in deed.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 5

Thunder. Enter the three **WITCHES** meeting **HECATE**

FIRST WITCH

Why, how now, Hecate! You look angrily.

HECATE

5 Have I not reason, beldams as you are?
Saucy and overbold, how did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth
In riddles and affairs of death,
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,
Was never called to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art?
10 And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a wayward son,
Spiteful and wrathful, who, as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.
But make amends now. Get you gone,
15 And at the pit of Acheron
Meet me i' th' morning. Thither he
Will come to know his destiny.
Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms and everything beside.
20 I am for the air. This night I'll spend
Unto a dismal and a fatal end.
Great business must be wrought ere noon.
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vap'rous drop profound.
25 I'll catch it ere it come to ground.
And that distilled by magic sleights
Shall raise such artificial sprites
As by the strength of their illusion
Shall draw him on to his confusion.
30 He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear.
And you all know, security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

Music and a song within: 'Come away, come away,'

35 Hark! I am called. My little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud and stays for me.

Exit

FIRST WITCH

Come, let's make haste; she'll soon be back again.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 6

Enter **LENNOX** and another **LORD**

some schemes in my head that I'm planning to put into action. I have to do these things before I have a chance to think about them.

LADY MACBETH
You haven't slept.

MACBETH

Yes, let's go to sleep. My strange self-delusions just come from inexperience. We're still just beginners when it comes to crime.

They exit.

Thunder. The three **WITCHES** enter, meeting **HECATE**.

FIRST WITCH

What's wrong, Hecate? You look angry.

HECATE

Don't I have a reason to be angry, you disobedient hags? How dare you give Macbeth riddles and prophecies about his future without telling me? I am your boss and the source of your powers. I am the one who secretly decides what evil things happen, but you never called me to join in and show off my own powers. And what's worse, you've done all this for a man who behaves like a spoiled brat, angry and hateful. Like all spoiled sons, he chases after what he wants and doesn't care about you. But you can make it up to me. Go away now and in the morning meet me in the pit by the river in hell. Macbeth will go there to learn his destiny. You bring your cauldrons, your spells, your charms, and everything else. I'm about to fly away. I'll spend tonight working to make something horrible happen. I have a lot to do before noon. An important droplet is hanging from the corner of the moon. I'll catch it before it falls to the ground. When I work it over with magic spells, the drop will produce magical spirits that will trick Macbeth with illusions

He will be fooled into thinking he is greater than fate, he will mock death, and he will think he is above wisdom, grace, and fear. As you all know, overconfidence is man's greatest enemy.

Music plays offstage, and voices sing a song with the words "Come away, come away."

Listen! I'm being called. Look, my little spirit is sitting in a foggy cloud waiting for me.

HECATE exits.

FIRST WITCH

Come on, let's hurry. She'll be back again soon.

They all exit.

LENNOX and another **LORD** enter.

LENNOX

My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
 Which can interpret farther. Only I say
 Things have been strangely borne. The gracious Duncan
 Was pitied of Macbeth. Marry, he was dead.
 5 And the right-valiant Banquo walked too late,
 Whom, you may say, if 't please you, Fleance killed,
 For Fleance fled. Men must not walk too late.
 Who cannot want the thought how monstrous
 It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
 10 To kill their gracious father? Damnèd fact!
 How it did grieve Macbeth! Did he not straight
 In pious rage the two delinquents tear
 That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep?
 Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too,
 15 For 'twould have angered any heart alive
 To hear the men deny 't. So that, I say,
 He has borne all things well. And I do think
 That had he Duncan's sons under his key—
 As, an't please heaven, he shall not—they should find
 20 What 'twere to kill a father. **So should Fleance.**
But, peace! For from broad words, and 'cause he failed
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear
Macduff lives in disgrace. Sir, can you tell
 Where he bestows himself?

LORD

The son of Duncan—
 25 From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth—
 Lives in the English court and is received
 Of the most pious Edward with such grace
 That the malevolence of fortune nothing
 Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff
 30 Is gone to pray the holy king upon his aid
 To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward,
 That by the help of these—with Him above
 To ratify the work—we may again
 Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
 35 Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,
 Do faithful homage and receive free honors.
 All which we pine for now. And this report
 Hath so exasperated the king that he
 Prepares for some attempt of war.

LENNOX

40 Sent he to Macduff?

LORD

He did, and with an absolute "Sir, not I,"
The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who should say "You'll rue the time
That clogs me with this answer."

LENNOX

And that well might
 45 Advise him to a caution, t' hold what distance
 His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
 Fly to the court of England and unfold
 His message ere he come, that a swift blessing
 May soon return to this our suffering country
 50 Under a hand accursed!

LORD

I'll send my prayers with him.
 Exeunt

LENNOX

What I've already said shows you we think alike, so you can draw your own conclusions. All I'm saying is that strange things have been going on. Macbeth pitied Duncan—after Duncan was dead. And Banquo went out walking too late at night. If you like, we can say that Fleance must have killed him, because Fleance fled the scene of the crime. Clearly, men should not go out walking too late! And who can help thinking how monstrous it was for Malcolm and Donalbain to kill their gracious father? Such a heinous crime—how it saddened Macbeth! Wasn't it loyal of him to kill those two servants right away, while they were still drunk and asleep? That was the right thing to do, wasn't it? Yes, and it was the wise thing, too, because we all would have been outraged to hear those two deny their crime. Considering all this, I think Macbeth has handled things well. If he had Duncan's sons in prison—which I hope won't happen—they would find out how awful the punishment is for those who kill their fathers, and so would Fleance. But enough of that. I hear that Macduff is out of favor with the king because he speaks his mind too plainly, and because he failed to show up at Macbeth's feast. Can you tell me where he's hiding himself?

LORD

Duncan's son Malcolm, whose birthright and throne Macbeth has stolen, lives in the English court. There, the saintly King Edward treats Malcolm so well that despite Malcolm's misfortunes, he's not deprived of respect. Macduff went there to ask King Edward for help. He wants Edward to help him form an alliance with the people of Northumberland and their lord, Siward. Macduff hopes that with their help—and with the help of God above—he may once again put food on our tables, bring peace back to our nights, free our feasts and banquets from violent murders, allow us to pay proper homage to our king, and receive honors freely. Those are the things we pine for now. Macbeth has heard this news and he is so angry that he's preparing for war.

LENNOX

Did he tell Macduff to return to Scotland?

LORD

He did, but Macduff told the messenger, "No way." The messenger scowled and rudely turned his back on Macduff, as if to say, "You'll regret the day you gave me this answer."

LENNOX

That might well keep Macduff away from Scotland. Some holy angel should go to the court of England and give Macduff a message. He should return quickly to free our country, which is suffering under a tyrant!

LORD

I'll send my prayers with him.
 They exit.

Act 4, Scene 1

Original Text

A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron. Thunder. Enter the three **WITCHES**.

FIRST WITCH

Thrice the brinded cat hath mewed.

SECOND WITCH

Thrice, and once the hedge-pig whined.

THIRD WITCH

Harpier cries, "'Tis time, 'tis time."

FIRST WITCH

5 Round about the cauldron go,
In the poisoned entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Sweltered venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' th' charmèd pot.

ALL

10 Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

SECOND WITCH

15 Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake.
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

ALL

20 Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

THIRD WITCH

25 Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravined salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock diggèd i' th' dark,
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat and slips of yew
Slivered in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
30 Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-delivered by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab.
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

ALL

35 Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

SECOND WITCH

Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter **HECATE** and the other three **WITCHES**

HECATE

40 Oh well done! I commend your pains,
And every one shall share i' th' gains.
And now about the cauldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.

Music and a song: "Black spirits," &c. **HECATE** retires

SECOND WITCH

45 By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks.

Enter **MACBETH**

MACBETH

How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags?
What is 't you do?

ALL

A deed without a name.

Modern Text

A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron. Thunder. The three **WITCHES** enter.

FIRST WITCH

The tawny cat has meowed three times.

SECOND WITCH

Three times. And the hedgehog has whined once.

THIRD WITCH

My spirit friend, Harpier, is yelling, "It's time, it's time!"

FIRST WITCH

Dance around the cauldron and throw in the poisoned entrails. (*holding up a toad*) You'll go in first—a toad that sat under a cold rock for a month, oozing poison from its pores.

ALL

Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

SECOND WITCH

(*holding something up*) We'll boil you in the cauldron next—a slice of swamp snake. All the rest of you in too: a newt's eye, a frog's tongue, fur from a bat, a dog's tongue, the forked tongue of an adder, the stinger of a burrowing worm, a lizard's leg, an owl's wing. (*speaking to the ingredients*) Make a charm to cause powerful trouble, and boil and bubble like a broth of hell.

ALL

Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

THIRD WITCH

Here come some more ingredients: the scale of a dragon, a wolf's tooth, a witch's mummified flesh, the gullet and stomach of a ravenous shark, a root of hemlock that was dug up in the dark, a Jew's liver, a goat's bile, some twigs of yew that were broken off during a lunar eclipse, a Turk's nose, a Tartar's lips, the finger of a baby that was strangled as a prostitute gave birth to it in a ditch. (*to the ingredients*) Make this potion thick and gluey. (*to the other WITCHES*) Now let's add a tiger's entrails to the mix.

ALL

Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

SECOND WITCH

We'll cool the mixture with baboon blood. After that the charm is finished.

HECATE enters with three other **WITCHES**.

HECATE

Well done! I admire your efforts, and all of you will share the rewards. Now come sing around the cauldron like a ring of elves and fairies, enchanting everything you put in.

Music plays and the six **WITCHES** sing a song called "Black Spirits." **HECATE** leaves.

SECOND WITCH

I can tell that something wicked is coming by the tingling in my thumbs. Doors, open up for whoever is knocking!

MACBETH enters.

MACBETH

What's going on here, you secret, evil, midnight hags? What are you doing?

ALL

Something there isn't a word for.

MACBETH

50 I conjure you by that which you profess—
 Howe'er you come to know it—answer me.
 Though you untie the winds and let them fight
 Against the churches, though the yeasty waves
 Confound and swallow navigation up,
 55 Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down,
 Though castles topple on their warders' heads,
 Though palaces and pyramids do slope
 Their heads to their foundations, though the treasure
 Of nature's germens tumble all together,
 60 Even till destruction sicken, answer me
 To what I ask you.

FIRST WITCH

Speak.

SECOND WITCH

Demand.

THIRD WITCH

We'll answer.

FIRST WITCH

Say, if th' hadst rather hear it from our mouths,
 Or from our masters'.

MACBETH

Call 'em. Let me see 'em.

FIRST WITCH

65 Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
 Her nine farrow; grease that's sweaten
 From the murderer's gibbet throw
 Into the flame.

ALL

70 Come, high or low;
 Thysel'f and office deftly show!

Thunder. **FIRST APPARITION** : an armed head

MACBETH

Tell me, thou unknown power—

FIRST WITCH

He knows thy thought.
 Hear his speech but say thou nought.

FIRST APPARITION

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! Beware Macduff.
 Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me. Enough.

Descends

MACBETH

75 Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks.
 Thou hast harped my fear aright. But one word more—

FIRST WITCH

He will not be commanded. Here's another
 More potent than the first.

Thunder. **SECOND APPARITION** : a bloody child

SECOND APPARITION

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!—

MACBETH

80 Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

SECOND APPARITION

Be bloody, bold, and resolute. Laugh to scorn
 The power of man, for none of woman born
 Shall harm Macbeth.

Descends

MACBETH

85 Then live, Macduff. What need I fear of thee?
 But yet I'll make assurance double sure,
 And take a bond of fate. Thou shalt not live,
 That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
 And sleep in spite of thunder.

Thunder. **THIRD APPARITION** : a child crowned, with a tree in his hand

90 What is this
 That rises like the issue of a king,
 And wears upon his baby-brow the round
 And top of sovereignty?

ALL**MACBETH**

I don't know how you know the things you do, but I insist that you answer my questions. I command you in the name of whatever dark powers you serve. I don't care if you unleash violent winds that tear down churches, make the foamy waves overwhelm ships and send sailors to their deaths, flatten crops and trees, make castles fall down on their inhabitants' heads, make palaces and pyramids collapse, and mix up everything in nature. Tell me what I want to know.

FIRST WITCH

Speak.

SECOND WITCH

Demand.

THIRD WITCH

We'll answer.

FIRST WITCH

Would you rather hear these things from our mouths or from our master's?

MACBETH

Call them. Let me see them.

FIRST WITCH

Pour in the blood of a sow who has eaten her nine offspring. Take the sweat of a murderer on the gallows and throw it into the flame.

ALL

Come, high or low spirits. Show yourself and what you do.

Thunder. The **FIRST APPARITION** appears, looking like a head with an armored helmet.

MACBETH

Tell me, you unknown power—

FIRST WITCH

He can read your thoughts. Listen, but don't speak.

FIRST APPARITION

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! Beware Macduff. Beware the thane of Fife. Let me go. Enough.

The **FIRST APPARITION** descends.

MACBETH

Whatever you are, thanks for your advice. You have guessed exactly what I feared. But one word more—

FIRST WITCH

He will not be commanded by you. Here's another, stronger than the first.

Thunder. The **SECOND APPARITION** appears, looking like a bloody child.

SECOND APPARITION

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

MACBETH

If I had three ears I'd listen with all three.

SECOND APPARITION

Be violent, bold, and firm. Laugh at the power of other men, because nobody born from a woman will ever harm Macbeth.

The **SECOND APPARITION** descends.

MACBETH

Then I don't need to kill Macduff. I have no reason to fear him. But even so, I'll make doubly sure. I'll guarantee my own fate by having you killed, Macduff. That way I can conquer my own fear and sleep easy at night.

Thunder. The **THIRD APPARITION** appears, in the form of a child with a crown on his head and a tree in his hand.

What is this spirit that looks like the son of a king and wears a crown on his young head?

ALL

Listen but speak not to 't.

THIRD APPARITION

95 Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are.
Macbeth shall never vanquished be until
Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill
Shall come against him.

Descends

MACBETH

That will never be.
100 Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earthbound root? Sweet bodements! Good!
Rebellious dead, rise never till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
105 Throbs to know one thing. Tell me, if your art
Can tell so much: shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?

ALL

Seek to know no more.

MACBETH

110 I will be satisfied. Deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know.
Why sinks that cauldron? And what noise is this?

Hautboys

FIRST WITCH

Show.

SECOND WITCH

Show.

THIRD WITCH

Show.

ALL

115 Show his eyes and grieve his heart.
Come like shadows; so depart!

A show of eight kings, the last with a glass in his hand, followed by

BANQUO

MACBETH

120 Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo. Down!
Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs. And thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.
A third is like the former.—Filthy hags!
Why do you show me this? A fourth? Start, eyes!
What, will the line stretch out to th' crack of doom?
Another yet? A seventh? I'll see no more.
125 And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
Which shows me many more, and some I see
That twofold balls and treble scepters carry.
Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true;
For the blood-boltered Banquo smiles upon me
And points at them for his.

Apparitions vanish

What, is this so?

FIRST WITCH

130 Ay, sir, all this is so. But why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,
And show the best of our delights.
I'll charm th' air to give a sound,
135 While you perform your antic round.
That this great king may kindly say,
Our duties did his welcome pay.

Music. The **WITCHES** dance and then vanish

MACBETH

140 Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious hour
Stand aye accursèd in the calendar!
Come in, without there.

Enter **LENNOX**

LENNOX

What's your grace's will?

MACBETH

Saw you the weird sisters?

LENNOX

Listen but don't speak to it.

THIRD APPARITION

Be brave like the lion and proud. Don't even worry about who hates you, who resents you, and who conspires against you. Macbeth will never be defeated until Birnam Wood marches to fight you at Dunsinane Hill.

The **THIRD APPARITION** descends.

MACBETH

That will never happen. Who can command the forest and make the trees pull their roots out of the earth? These were sweet omens! Good! My murders will never come back to threaten me until the forest of Birnam gets up and moves, and I will be king for my entire natural life. But my heart is still throbbing to know one thing. Tell me, if your dark powers can see this far: will Banquo's sons ever reign in this kingdom?

ALL

Don't try to find out more.

MACBETH

I demand to be satisfied. If you refuse, let an eternal curse fall on you. Let me know. Why is that cauldron sinking? And what is that music?

Hautboys play music for a ceremonial procession.

FIRST WITCH

Show.

SECOND WITCH

Show.

THIRD WITCH

Show.

ALL

Show him and make him grieve. Come like shadows and depart in the same way!

Eight kings march across the stage, the last one with a mirror in his hand, followed by the **GHOST OF BANQUO**.

MACBETH

You look too much like the ghost of Banquo. Go away! (*to the first*) Your crown hurts my eyes. (*to the second*) Your blond hair, which looks like another crown underneath the one you're wearing, looks just like the first king's hair. Now I see a third king who looks just like the second. Filthy hags! Why are you showing me this? A fourth! My eyes are bulging out of their sockets! Will this line stretch on forever? Another one! And a seventh! I don't want to see any more. And yet an eighth appears, holding a mirror in which I see many more men. And some are carrying double balls and triple scepters, meaning they're kings of more than one country! Horrible sight! Now I see it is true, they are Banquo's descendants. Banquo, with his blood-clotted hair, is smiling at me and pointing to them as his.

The spirits of the kings and the **GHOST OF BANQUO** vanish.

What? Is this true?

FIRST WITCH

Yes, this is true, but why do you stand there so dumbfounded? Come, sisters, let's cheer him up and show him our talents. I will charm the air to produce music while you all dance around like crazy, so this king will say we did our duty and entertained him.

Music plays. The **WITCHES** dance and then vanish.

MACBETH

Where are they? Gone? Let this evil hour be marked forever in the calendar as cursed. (*calls to someone offstage*) You outside, come in!

LENNOX enters.

LENNOX

What does your grace want?

MACBETH

Did you see the weird sisters?

LENNOX

No, my lord.

MACBETH

Came they not by you?

LENNOX

No, indeed, my lord.

MACBETH

Infected be the air whereon they ride,
And damned all those that trust them! I did hear
145 The galloping of horse. Who was 't came by?

LENNOX

'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
Macduff is fled to England.

MACBETH

Fled to England?

LENNOX

Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH

150 Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits.
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it. From this moment
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
155 To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:
The castle of Macduff I will surprise,
Seize upon Fife, give to th' edge o' th' sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool.
160 This deed I'll do before this purpose cool.
But no more sights!—Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are.

Exeunt

Act 4, Scene 2

Enter **LADY MACDUFF**, her **SON**, and **ROSS**

LADY MACDUFF

What had he done to make him fly the land?

ROSS

You must have patience, madam.

LADY MACDUFF

He had none.

His flight was madness. When our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors.

ROSS

You know not

5 Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

LADY MACDUFF

Wisdom! To leave his wife, to leave his babes,
His mansion and his titles in a place
From whence himself does fly? He loves us not;
He wants the natural touch. For the poor wren,
10 The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
All is the fear and nothing is the love,
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.

ROSS

My dearest coz,

15 I pray you school yourself. But for your husband,
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' th' season. I dare not speak much further;
But cruel are the times when we are traitors
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumor
20 From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way and none. I take my leave of you.
Shall not be long but I'll be here again.
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
25 To what they were before.—My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you.

LADY MACDUFF

Fathered he is, and yet he's fatherless.

ROSS

No, my lord.

MACBETH

Didn't they pass by you?

LENNOX

No, indeed, my lord.

MACBETH

The air on which they ride is infected. Damn all those who trust them! I heard the
galloping of horses. Who was it that came here?

LENNOX

Two or three men, my lord, who brought the message
that Macduff has fled to England.

MACBETH

Fled to England?

LENNOX

Yes, my good lord.

MACBETH

Time, you thwart my dreadful plans. Unless a person does something the second
he thinks of it, he'll never get a chance to do it. From now on, as soon as I decide
to do something I'm going to act immediately. In fact, I'll start following up my
thoughts with actions right now. I'll raid Macduff's castle, seize the town of Fife,
and kill his wife, his children, and anyone else unfortunate enough to stand in line
for his inheritance. No more foolish talk. I will do this deed before I lose my sense
of purpose. But no more spooky visions!—Where are the messengers? Come,
bring me to them.

They exit.

LADY MACDUFF, her **SON**, and **ROSS** enter.

LADY MACDUFF

What did he do that made him flee this land?

ROSS

You have to be patient, madam.

LADY MACDUFF

He had no patience. He was crazy to run away. Even if you're not a traitor, you're
going to look like one if you run away.

ROSS

You don't know whether it was wisdom or fear that made him flee.

LADY MACDUFF

How could it be wisdom! To leave his wife, his children, his house, and his titles in
a place so unsafe that he himself flees it! He doesn't love us. He lacks the natural
instinct to protect his family. Even the fragile wren, the smallest of birds, will fight
against the owl when it threatens her young ones in the nest. His running away
has everything to do with fear and nothing to do with love. And since it's so
unreasonable for him to run away, it has nothing to do with wisdom either.

ROSS

My dearest relative, I'm begging you, pull yourself together. As for your husband,
he is noble, wise, and judicious, and he understands what the times require. It's
not safe for me to say much more than this, but times are bad when people get
denounced as traitors and don't even know why. In times like these, we believe
frightening rumors but we don't even know what we're afraid of. It's like being
tossed around on the ocean in every direction, and finally getting nowhere. I'll say
good-bye now. It won't be long before I'm back. When things are at their worst
they have to stop, or else improve to the way things were before. My young
cousin, I put my blessing upon you.

LADY MACDUFF

He has a father, and yet he is fatherless.

ROSS

I am so much a fool, should I stay longer
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort.
30 I take my leave at once.
Exit
LADY MACDUFF
Sirrah, your father's dead.
And what will you do now? How will you live?
SON
As birds do, Mother.
LADY MACDUFF
What, with worms and flies?
SON
With what I get, I mean, and so do they.
LADY MACDUFF
35 Poor bird! Thou 'dst never fear the net nor lime,
The pitfall nor the gin.
SON
Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not set for.
My father is not dead, for all your saying.
LADY MACDUFF
Yes, he is dead. How wilt thou do for a father?
SON
40 Nay, how will you do for a husband?
LADY MACDUFF
Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.
SON
Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.
LADY MACDUFF
Thou speak'st with all thy wit; and yet, i' faith,
With wit enough for thee.
SON
45 Was my father a traitor, Mother?
LADY MACDUFF
Ay, that he was.
SON
What is a traitor?
LADY MACDUFF
Why, one that swears and lies.
SON
And be all traitors that do so?
LADY MACDUFF
50 Every one that does so is a traitor and must be hanged.
SON
And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?
LADY MACDUFF
Every one.
SON
Who must hang them?
LADY MACDUFF
Why, the honest men.
SON
55 Then the liars and swearers are fools, for there are liars and swearers
enough to beat the honest men and hang up them.
LADY MACDUFF
Now, God help thee, poor monkey! But how wilt thou do for a father?
SON
If he were dead, you'd weep for him. If you would not, it were a good
sign that I should quickly have a new father.
LADY MACDUFF
Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!
Enter a **MESSENGER**
MESSENGER
60 Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honor I am perfect.
I doubt some danger does approach you nearly.
If you will take a homely man's advice,
Be not found here. Hence with your little ones.
To fright you thus methinks I am too savage;
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,

I have to go. If I stay longer, I'll embarrass you and disgrace myself by crying. I'm
leaving now.
ROSS exits.
LADY MACDUFF
Young man, your father's dead. What are you going to do now? How are you
going to live?
SON
I will live the way birds do, Mother.
LADY MACDUFF
What? Are you going to start eating worms and flies?
SON
I mean I will live on whatever I get, like birds do.
LADY MACDUFF
You'd be a pitiful bird. You wouldn't know enough to be afraid of traps.
SON
Why should I be afraid of them, Mother? If I'm a pitiful bird, like you say, hunters
won't want me. No matter what you say, my father is not dead.
LADY MACDUFF
Yes, he is dead. What are you going to do for a father?
SON
Maybe you should ask, what will you do for a husband?
LADY MACDUFF
Oh, I can buy twenty husbands at any market.
SON
If so, you'd be buying them to sell again.
LADY MACDUFF
You talk like a child, but you're very smart anyway.
SON
Was my father a traitor, Mother?
LADY MACDUFF
Yes, he was.
SON
What is a traitor?
LADY MACDUFF
Someone who makes a promise and breaks it.
SON
And is everyone who swears and lies a traitor?
LADY MACDUFF
Everyone who does so is a traitor and should be hanged.
SON
And should everyone who makes promises and breaks them be hanged?
LADY MACDUFF
Everyone.
SON
Who should hang them?
LADY MACDUFF
The honest men.
SON
Then the liars are fools, for there are enough liars in the world to beat up the
honest men and hang them.
LADY MACDUFF
(*laughing*) Heaven help you for saying that, boy! (*sad again*) But what will you do
without a father?
SON
If he were dead, you'd be weeping for him. If you aren't weeping, it's a good sign
that I'll soon have a new father.
LADY MACDUFF
Silly babbler, how you talk!
A **MESSENGER** enters.
MESSENGER
Bless you, fair lady! You don't know me, but I know you're an important person.
I'm afraid something dangerous is coming toward you. If you'll take a simple man's
advice, don't be here when it arrives. Go away and take your children. I feel bad
for scaring you like this, but it would be much worse for me to let you come to
harm. And harm is getting close! Heaven keep you safe!

65 Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!
I dare abide no longer.

Exit

LADY MACDUFF

Whither should I fly?

I have done no harm. But I remember now
70 I am in this earthly world, where to do harm
Is often laudable, to do good sometime
Accounted dangerous folly. Why then, alas,
Do I put up that womanly defense,
To say I have done no harm?

Enter **MURDERERS**

What are these faces?

FIRST MURDERER

75 Where is your husband?

LADY MACDUFF

I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou mayst find him.

FIRST MURDERER

He's a traitor.

SON

Thou liest, thou shag-haired villain!

FIRST MURDERER

(*Stabbing him*) What, you egg?
Young fry of treachery!

SON

80 He has killed me, mother.
Run away, I pray you!

He dies. Exit **LADY MACDUFF**, crying "Murder!" followed by
MURDERERS

Act 4, Scene 3

Enter **MALCOLM** and **MACDUFF**

MALCOLM

Let us seek out some desolate shade and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.

MACDUFF

Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword and, like good men,
Bestride our downfall'n birthdom. Each new morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
5 Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland and yelled out
Like syllable of dolor.

MALCOLM

What I believe I'll wail;
What know believe, and what I can redress,
10 As I shall find the time to friend, I will.
What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,
Was once thought honest. You have loved him well.
He hath not touched you yet. I am young, but something
15 You may deserve of him through me, and wisdom
To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb
T' appease an angry god.

MACDUFF

I am not treacherous.

MALCOLM

But Macbeth is.
20 A good and virtuous nature may recoil
In an imperial charge. But I shall crave your pardon.
That which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose.
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell.
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
25 Yet grace must still look so.

MACDUFF

I have lost my hopes.

MALCOLM

Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.
Why in that rawness left you wife and child,
Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,

The **MESSENGER** exits.

LADY MACDUFF

Where should I go? I haven't done anything wrong. But I have to remember that
I'm here on Earth, where doing evil is often praised, and doing good is sometimes
a stupid and dangerous mistake. So then why should I offer this womanish
defense that I'm innocent?

The **MURDERERS** enter.

Who are these men?

FIRST MURDERER

Where is your husband?

LADY MACDUFF

I hope he's not anywhere so disreputable that thugs like you can find him.

FIRST MURDERER

He's a traitor.

SON

You're lying, you shaggy-haired villain!

FIRST MURDERER

What's that, you runt? (*stabbing him*) Young son of a traitor!

SON

He has killed me, Mother. Run away, I beg you!

The **SON** dies. **LADY MACDUFF** exits, crying "Murder!" The **MURDERERS** exit,
following her.

MALCOLM and **MACDUFF** enter.

MALCOLM

Let's seek out some shady place where we can sit down alone and cry our hearts
out.

MACDUFF

Instead of crying, let's keep hold of our swords and defend our fallen homeland
like honorable men. Each day new widows howl, new orphans cry, and new
sorrows slap heaven in the face, until it sounds like heaven itself feels Scotland's
anguish and screams in pain.

MALCOLM

I will avenge whatever I believe is wrong. And I'll believe whatever I'm sure is true.
And I'll put right whatever I can when the time comes. What you just said may
perhaps be true. This tyrant, whose mere name is so awful it hurts us to say it,
was once considered an honest man. You were one of his favorites. He hasn't
done anything to harm you yet. I'm inexperienced, but maybe you're planning to
win Macbeth's favor by betraying me to him. It would be smart to offer someone
poor and innocent like me as a sacrificial lamb to satisfy an angry god like
Macbeth.

MACDUFF

I am not treacherous.

MALCOLM

But Macbeth is. Even someone with a good and virtuous nature might give way to
a royal command. But I beg your pardon. My fears can't actually make you evil.
Angels are still bright even though Lucifer, the brightest angel, fell from heaven.
Even though everything evil wants to look good, good still has to look good too.

MACDUFF

I have lost my hope of convincing you to fight against Macbeth.

MALCOLM

Maybe you lost your hopes about me where I found my doubts about you. Why
did you leave your wife and child vulnerable—the most precious things in your life,
those strong bonds of love? How could you leave them behind? But I beg you,

30 Without leave-taking? I pray you,
Let not my jealousies be your dishonors,
But mine own safeties. You may be rightly just,
Whatever I shall think.

MACDUFF

Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee. Wear thou thy wrongs;
35 The title is affeered.—Fare thee well, lord.
I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp,
And the rich East to boot.

MALCOLM

Be not offended.
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
40 I think our country sinks beneath the yoke.
It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds. I think withal
There would be hands uplifted in my right;
And here from gracious England have I offer
45 Of goodly thousands. But, for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before,
More suffer, and more sundry ways than ever,
50 By him that shall succeed.

MACDUFF

What should he be?

MALCOLM

It is myself I mean, in whom I know
All the particulars of vice so grafted
That, when they shall be opened, black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
55 Esteem him as a lamb, being compared
With my confineless harms.

MACDUFF

Not in the legions
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damned
In evils to top Macbeth.

MALCOLM

I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
60 Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name. But there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness. Your wives, your daughters,
Your matrons, and your maids could not fill up
The cistern of my lust, and my desire
65 All continent impediments would o'rbear
That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth
Than such an one to reign.

MACDUFF

Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny. It hath been
The untimely emptying of the happy throne
70 And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
To take upon you what is yours. You may
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty
And yet seem cold; the time you may so hoodwink.
We have willing dames enough. There cannot be
75 That vulture in you to devour so many
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
Finding it so inclined.

MALCOLM

With this there grows
In my most ill-composed affection such
80 A stanchless avarice that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,
Desire his jewels and this other's house.
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more, that I should forge
85 Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.

MACDUFF

This avarice
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been

don't interpret my suspicions as slander against you. You must understand that I want to protect myself. You may really be honest, no matter what I think.

MACDUFF

Bleed, bleed, poor country! Great tyrant, go ahead and build yourself up, because good people are afraid to stand up to you. Enjoy everything you stole, because your title is safe! Farewell, lord. I wouldn't be the villain you think I am even if I were offered all of Macbeth's kingdom and the riches of the East too.

MALCOLM

Don't be offended. I don't completely distrust you. I do think Scotland is sinking under Macbeth's oppression. Our country weeps, it bleeds, and each day a fresh cut is added to her wounds. I also think there would be many people willing to fight for me. The English have promised me thousands of troops. But even so, when I have Macbeth's head under my foot, or stuck on the end of my sword, then my poor country will be plagued by worse evil than it was before. It will suffer worse and in more ways than ever under the reign of the king who follows Macbeth.

MACDUFF

Who are you talking about?

MALCOLM

I'm talking about myself. I know I have so many vices that when people see all of them exposed, evil Macbeth will seem as pure as snow in comparison, and poor Scotland will call him a sweet lamb when they compare him to me and my infinite evils.

MACDUFF

Even in hell you couldn't find a devil worse than Macbeth.

MALCOLM

I admit that he's murderous, lecherous, greedy, lying, deceitful, violent, malicious, and guilty of every sin that has a name. But there is no end, absolutely none, to my sexual desires. Your wives, your daughters, your old women, and your young maids together could not satisfy my lust. My desire would overpower all restraints and anyone who stood in my way. It would be better for Macbeth to rule than someone like me.

MACDUFF

Endless greed and lust in a man's nature is a kind of tyranny. It has caused the downfall of many kings. But don't be afraid to take the crown that belongs to you. You can find a way to satisfy your desires in secret, while still appearing virtuous. You can deceive everyone. There are more than enough willing women around. Your lust can't possibly be so strong that you'd use up all the women willing to give themselves to the king once they find out he wants them.

MALCOLM

Along with being full of lust, I'm also incredibly greedy. If I became king, I would steal the nobles' lands, taking jewels from one guy and houses from another. The more I had, the greedier I would grow, until I'd invent false quarrels with my good and loyal subjects, destroying them so I could get my hands on their wealth.

MACDUFF

The greed you're talking about is worse than lust because you won't outgrow it. Greed has been the downfall of many kings. But don't be afraid. Scotland has enough treasures to satisfy you out of your own royal coffers. These bad qualities

The sword of our slain kings. Yet do not fear;
90 Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will,
Of your mere own. All these are portable,
With other graces weighed.

MALCOLM

But I have none. The king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
95 Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them but abound
In the division of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
100 Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.

MACDUFF

O Scotland, Scotland!

MALCOLM

If such a one be fit to govern, speak.
I am as I have spoken.

MACDUFF

Fit to govern?

105 No, not to live.—O nation miserable,
With an untitled tyrant bloody-sceptered,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accursed,
110 And does blaspheme his breed?—Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king. The queen that bore thee,
 Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
 Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!
 These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
115 Have banished me from Scotland.—O my breast,
 Thy hope ends here!

MALCOLM

Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honor. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me
120 From overcredulous haste. But God above
Deal between thee and me, for even now
I put myself to thy direction and
Unspeak mine own detraction, here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For strangers to my nature. I am yet
125 Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
At no time broke my faith, would not betray
The devil to his fellow, and delight
No less in truth than life. My first false speaking
130 Was this upon myself. What I am truly,
Is thine and my poor country's to command.
Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,
Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
Already at a point, was setting forth.
Now we'll together, and the chance of goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel! Why are you silent?

MACDUFF

140 Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a **DOCTOR**

MALCOLM

Well, more anon.—Comes the king forth, I pray you?

DOCTOR

Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched souls
That stay his cure. Their malady convinces
145 The great assay of art, but at his touch—
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand—
They presently amend.

MALCOLM

I thank you, doctor.

Exit **DOCTOR**

MACDUFF

are bearable when balanced against your good sides.

MALCOLM

But I don't have any good sides. I don't have a trace of the qualities a king needs, such as justice, truth, moderation, stability, generosity, perseverance, mercy, humility, devotion, patience, courage, and bravery. Instead, I overflow with every variation of all the different vices. No, if I had power I would take world peace and throw it down to hell.

MACDUFF

Oh Scotland, Scotland!

MALCOLM

If someone like me is fit to be king, let me know. I really am exactly as I have described myself to you.

MACDUFF

(to MALCOLM) Fit to be king? You're not fit to live!—Oh miserable nation, ruled by a usurping, murderous tyrant, when will you see peaceful days again? The man who has a legal right to the throne is, by his own admission, a cursed man and a disgrace to the royal family.—Your royal father Duncan was a virtuous king. Your mother spent more time on her knees in prayer than she did standing up, and she lived a life of absolute piety. Good-bye. The evils you have described inside yourself have driven me out of Scotland forever. Oh my heart, your hope is dead!

MALCOLM

Macduff, this passionate outburst, which proves your integrity, has removed my doubts about you and made me realize that you really are trustworthy and honorable. That devil Macbeth has tried many times to trick me and lure me into his power, and prudence prevents me from believing people too quickly. But with God as my witness, I will let myself be guided by you, and I take back my confession. I take back all the bad things I said about myself, because none of those flaws are really part of my character. I'm still a virgin. I have never told a lie. I barely care about what I already own, let alone feel jealous of another's possessions. I have never broken a promise. I wouldn't betray the devil himself. I love truth as much as I love life. The lies I told about my character are actually the first false words I have ever spoken. The person who I really am is ready to serve you and our poor country. Indeed, before you arrived here, old Siward, with ten thousand soldiers already prepared for battle, was making his way here. Now we will fight Macbeth together, and may the chances of our success be as great as the justice of our cause! Why are you silent?

MACDUFF

It's hard to make sense of such different stories.

A **DOCTOR** enters.

MALCOLM

Well, we'll speak more soon. (to the **DOCTOR**) Is King Edward coming out?

DOCTOR

Yes, sir. A crowd of sick people is waiting for him to heal them. Their illness confounds the most advanced techniques of modern medicine, but when he touches them, they heal immediately because of the power granted to him by heaven.

MALCOLM

Thank you, doctor.

The **DOCTOR** exits.

MACDUFF

What's the disease he means?

MALCOLM

'Tis called the evil.

A most miraculous work in this good king,
Which often since my here-remain in England
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows, but strangely visited people,
150 All swoll'n and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers. And, 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves

155 The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace.

Enter **ROSS**

MACDUFF

See, who comes here?

MALCOLM

My countryman, but yet I know him not.

MACDUFF

My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.

MALCOLM

I know him now.—Good God, betimes remove

165 The means that makes us strangers!

ROSS

Sir, amen.

MACDUFF

Stands Scotland where it did?

ROSS

Alas, poor country!

Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot
Be called our mother, but our grave, where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;

170 Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air
Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy. The dead man's knell
Is there scarce asked for who, and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
175 Dying or ere they sicken.

MACDUFF

Oh, relation

Too nice and yet too true!

MALCOLM

What's the newest grief?

ROSS

That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker.
Each minute teems a new one.

MACDUFF

How does my wife?

ROSS

Why, well.

MACDUFF

And all my children?

ROSS

Well too.

MACDUFF

180 The tyrant has not battered at their peace?

ROSS

No, they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.

MACDUFF

Be not a niggard of your speech. How goes 't?

ROSS

When I came hither to transport the tidings,
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumor
185 Of many worthy fellows that were out;
Which was to my belief witnessed the rather
For that I saw the tyrant's power afoot.
Now is the time of help. Your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,

190 To doff their dire distresses.

MALCOLM

What disease is he talking about?

MALCOLM

It's called the evil. Edward's healing touch is a miracle that I have seen him perform many times during my stay in England. How he receives these gifts from heaven, only he can say. But he cures people with strange conditions—all swollen, plagued by ulcers, and pitiful to look at, patients who are beyond the help of surgery—by placing a gold coin around their necks and saying holy prayers over them. They say that he bequeaths this ability to heal to his royal descendants. Along with this strange power, he also has the gift of prophecy and various other abilities. All of these signs mark him as a man graced by God.

ROSS enters.

MACDUFF

Who's that coming over here?

MALCOLM

By his dress I can tell he's my countryman, but I don't recognize him.

MACDUFF

My noble kinsman, welcome.

MALCOLM

I recognize him now. May God alter the circumstances that keep us apart!

ROSS

Hello, sir.

MACDUFF

Is Scotland the same as when I left it?

ROSS

Alas, our poor country! It's too frightened to look at itself. Scotland is no longer the land where we were born; it's the land where we'll die. Where no one ever smiles except for the fool who knows nothing. Where sighs, groans, and shrieks rip through the air but no one notices. Where violent sorrow is a common emotion. When the funeral bells ring, people no longer ask who died. Good men die before the flowers in their caps wilt. They die before they even fall sick.

MACDUFF

Oh, your report is too poetic, but it sounds so true!

MALCOLM

What is the most recent news?

ROSS

Even news an hour old is old news. Every minute another awful thing happens.

MACDUFF

How is my wife?

ROSS

She's well.

MACDUFF

And all my children?

ROSS

They're well too.

MACDUFF

Macbeth hasn't attacked them?

ROSS

They were at peace when I left them.

MACDUFF

Don't be stingy with your words. What's the news?

ROSS

While I was coming here to tell you my sad news, I heard rumors that many good men are arming themselves to rebel against Macbeth. When I saw Macbeth's army on the move, I knew the rumors must be true. Now is the time when we need your help. Your presence in Scotland would inspire people to fight. Even the women would fight to rid themselves of Macbeth's oppression.

MALCOLM

Be 't their comfort
We are coming thither. Gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men;
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.

ROSS

Would I could answer

195 This comfort with the like. But I have words
That would be howled out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch them.

MACDUFF

What concern they?

The general cause, or is it a fee-grief
Due to some single breast?

ROSS

No mind that's honest

200 But in it shares some woe, though the main part
Pertains to you alone.

MACDUFF

If it be mine,

Keep it not from me. Quickly let me have it.

ROSS

Let not your ears despise my tongue forever,

205 Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
That ever yet they heard.

MACDUFF

Hum! I guess at it.

ROSS

Your castle is surprised, your wife and babes

Savagely slaughtered. To relate the manner,

Were, on the quarry of these murdered deer

210 To add the death of you.

MALCOLM

Merciful heaven!

What, man! Ne'er pull your hat upon your brows.

Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak

Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break.

MACDUFF

My children too?

ROSS

215 Wife, children, servants, all that could be found.

MACDUFF

And I must be from thence!

My wife killed too?

ROSS

I have said.

MALCOLM

Be comforted.

220 Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge,

To cure this deadly grief.

MACDUFF

He has no children. All my pretty ones?

Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?

What, all my pretty chickens and their dam

225 At one fell swoop?

MALCOLM

Dispute it like a man.

MACDUFF

I shall do so,

But I must also feel it as a man.

I cannot but remember such things were

230 That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,

And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,

They were all struck for thee! Naught that I am,

Not for their own demerits, but for mine,

Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now.

MALCOLM

235 Be this the whetstone of your sword. Let grief
Convert to anger. Blunt not the heart, enrage it.

MACDUFF

Oh, I could play the woman with mine eyes

And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens,

Cut short all intermission. Front to front

Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself.

Let them be comforted—I'm returning to Scotland. Gracious King Edward has
sent us noble Siward and ten thousand soldiers. There is no soldier more
experienced or successful than Siward in the entire Christian world.

ROSS

I wish I could repay this happy news with good news of my own. But I have some
news that should be howled in a barren desert where nobody can hear it.

MACDUFF

What is this news about? Does it affect all of us? Or just one of us?

ROSS

No decent man can keep from sharing in the sorrow, but my news affects you
alone.

MACDUFF

If it's for me, don't keep it from me. Let me have it now.

ROSS

I hope you won't hate me forever after I say these things, because I will soon fill
your ears with the most dreadful news you have ever heard.

MACDUFF

I think I can guess what you're about to say.

ROSS

Your castle was attacked. Your wife and children were savagely slaughtered. If I
told you how they were killed, it would cause you so much pain that it would kill
you too, and add your body to the pile of murdered corpses.

MALCOLM

Merciful heaven! (to MACDUFF) Come on, man, don't keep your grief hidden. Put
your sorrow into words. The grief you keep inside you will whisper in your heart
until it breaks.

MACDUFF

They killed my children too?

ROSS

They killed your wife, your children, your servants, anyone they could find.

MACDUFF

And I had to be away! My wife was killed too?

ROSS

I said she was.

MALCOLM

Take comfort. Let's cure this awful grief by taking revenge on Macbeth.

MACDUFF

He doesn't have children. All my pretty little children? Did you say all? Oh, that
bird from hell! All of them? What, all my children and their mother dead in one fell
swoop?

MALCOLM

Fight it like a man.

MACDUFF

I will. But I also have to feel it like a man. I can't help remembering the things that
were most precious to me. Did heaven watch the slaughter and not send down
any help? Sinful Macduff, they were killed because of you! As wicked as I am,
they were slaughtered because of me, not because of anything they did. May God
give their souls rest.

MALCOLM

Let this anger sharpen your sword. Transform your grief into anger. Don't block
the feelings in your heart; let them loose as rage.

MACDUFF

I could go on weeping like a woman and bragging about how I will avenge them!
But gentle heavens, don't keep me waiting. Bring me face to face with Macbeth,
that devil of Scotland. Put him within the reach of my sword, and if he escapes,
may heaven forgive him as well!

240 Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,
Heaven forgive him too.

MALCOLM

This tune goes manly.

245 Come, go we to the king. Our power is ready;
Our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may.
The night is long that never finds the day.

Exeunt

MALCOLM

Now you sound like a man. Come on, let's go see King Edward. The army is ready. All we have to do now is say goodbye to the king. Macbeth is ripe for the picking. We'll be acting as God's agents. Cheer up as much as you can. A new day will come at last.

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 1

Enter a DOCTOR of physic and a waiting-GENTLEWOMAN

DOCTOR

I have two nights watched with you but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walked?

GENTLEWOMAN

5 Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon 't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

DOCTOR

10 A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the line-effects of watching. In this slumbry agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say?

GENTLEWOMAN

That, sir, which I will not report after her.

DOCTOR

You may to me, and 'tis most meet you should.

GENTLEWOMAN

Neither to you nor any one, having no witness to confirm my speech.

Enter LADY MACBETH with a taper

Lo you, here she comes. This is her very guise; and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her, stand close.

DOCTOR

15 How came she by that light?

GENTLEWOMAN

Why, it stood by her. She has light by her continually. 'Tis her command.

DOCTOR

You see her eyes are open.

GENTLEWOMAN

Ay, but their sense is shut.

DOCTOR

What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

GENTLEWOMAN

20 It is an accustomed action with her to seem thus washing her hands. I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

LADY MACBETH

Yet here's a spot.

DOCTOR

Hark! She speaks. I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

LADY MACBETH

25 Out, damned spot! Out, I say!—One, two. Why, then, 'tis time to do 't. Hell is murky!—Fie, my lord, fie! A soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?—Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him.

DOCTOR

Do you mark that?

LADY MACBETH

30 The thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now?—What, will these hands ne'er be clean?—No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that. You mar all with this starting.

DOCTOR

Go to, go to. You have known what you should not.

Original Text

GENTLEWOMAN

She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that. Heaven knows what she has known.

LADY MACBETH

35 Here's the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, Oh, Oh!

DOCTOR

A DOCTOR and a waiting- GENTLEWOMAN enter.

DOCTOR

I've stayed up with you for two nights now, and I haven't seen any evidence of what you were talking about. When was the last time you saw her sleepwalking?

GENTLEWOMAN

Since Macbeth went to war, I have seen her rise from her bed, put on her nightgown, unlock her closet, take out some paper, fold it, write on it, read it, seal it up, and then return to bed, remaining asleep the entire time.

DOCTOR

It's unnatural to be asleep and act as if you're awake. When she is like this, besides walking and performing various activities, have you heard her say anything?

GENTLEWOMAN

She says something, sir, but I will not repeat it to you.

DOCTOR

You can tell me. You really should.

GENTLEWOMAN

I will not confess it to you nor to anyone else, because there was no one else to witness her speech.

LADY MACBETH enters, holding a candle.

Look, here she comes! This is exactly how she always looks, and—I swear it—she is fast asleep. Watch her. Keep hidden.

DOCTOR

How did she get that candle?

GENTLEWOMAN

It stands by her bedside. She always has to have a light next to her. Those are her orders.

DOCTOR

You see, her eyes are open.

GENTLEWOMAN

Yes, but they don't see anything.

DOCTOR

What's she doing now? Look how she rubs her hands.

GENTLEWOMAN

She often does that. She looks like she's washing her hands. I've seen her do that before for as long as fifteen minutes.

LADY MACBETH

There's still a spot here.

DOCTOR

Listen! She's talking. I'll write down what she says, so I'll remember it better.

LADY MACBETH

(*rubbing her hands*) Come out, damned spot! Out, I command you! One, two. OK, it's time to do it now.—Hell is murky!—Nonsense, my lord, nonsense! You are a soldier, and yet you are afraid? Why should we be scared, when no one can lay the guilt upon us?—But who would have thought the old man would have had so much blood in him?

DOCTOR

Did you hear that?

LADY MACBETH

The thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now?—What, will my hands never be clean?—No more of that, my lord, no more of that. You'll ruin everything by acting startled like this.

DOCTOR

Now look what you've done. You've heard something you shouldn't have.

Modern Text

GENTLEWOMAN

She said something she shouldn't have said, I'm sure of that. Heaven knows what secrets she's keeping.

LADY MACBETH

I still have the smell of blood on my hand. All the perfumes of Arabia couldn't make my little hand smell better. Oh, oh, oh!

DOCTOR

What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

GENTLEWOMAN

I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

DOCTOR

Well, well, well.

GENTLEWOMAN

Pray God it be, sir.

DOCTOR

40 This disease is beyond my practice. Yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

LADY MACBETH

Wash your hands. Put on your nightgown. Look not so pale.—I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on 's grave.

DOCTOR

Even so?

LADY MACBETH

45 To bed, to bed. There's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come.

Give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone.—To bed, to bed, to bed!

Exit

DOCTOR

Will she go now to bed?

GENTLEWOMAN

Directly.

DOCTOR

50 Foul whisp'rings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God forgive us all! Look after her,
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
55 And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night.
My mind she has mated, and amazed my sight.
I think, but dare not speak.

GENTLEWOMAN

Good night, good doctor.

Exeunt

What a heavy sigh! Her heart is carrying a heavy weight.

GENTLEWOMAN

I wouldn't want a heart like hers even if you made me queen.

DOCTOR

Well, well, well.

GENTLEWOMAN

I hope what she's saying is well, sir!

DOCTOR

This disease is beyond my medical skills. But I have known people who sleepwalked and weren't guilty of anything.

LADY MACBETH

Wash your hands. Put on your nightgown. Don't look so frightened. I tell you again, Banquo is buried. He cannot come out of his grave.

DOCTOR

Is this true?

LADY MACBETH

45 To bed, to bed! There's a knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed!

LADY MACBETH exits.

DOCTOR

Will she go to bed now?

GENTLEWOMAN

Yes, right away.

DOCTOR

Evil rumors are going around. Unnatural acts will cause supernatural things to happen. People with guilty and deranged minds will confess their secrets to their pillows as they sleep. This woman needs a priest more than a doctor. God forgive us all! (*to the waiting-* GENTLEWOMAN) Look after her. Remove anything she might hurt herself with. Watch her constantly. And now, good-night. She has bewildered my mind and amazed my eyes. I have an opinion, but I don't dare to say it out loud.

GENTLEWOMAN

Good night, good doctor.

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 2

Drum and colors. Enter **MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX,** and soldiers

MENTEITH

The English power is near, led on by Malcolm, His uncle Siward and the good Macduff.

Revenge burn in them, for their dear causes Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm

5 Excite the mortified man.

ANGUS

Near Birnam Wood

Shall we well meet them; that way are they coming.

CAITHNESS

Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?

LENNOX

For certain, sir, he is not. I have a file Of all the gentry. There is Siward's son,

10 And many unrough youths that even now Protest their first of manhood.

MENTEITH

What does the tyrant?

CAITHNESS

Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies.

Some say he's mad, others that lesser hate him Do call it valiant fury. But, for certain,

15 He cannot buckle his distempered cause Within the belt of rule.

ANGUS

Now does he feel

His secret murders sticking on his hands.

MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, and soldiers enter with a drummer and flag.

MENTEITH

The English army is near, led by Malcolm, his uncle Siward, and the good Macduff. They burn for revenge. The wrongs they have suffered would make dead men rise up and fight.

ANGUS

We'll meet them near Birnam Wood. They are coming that way.

CAITHNESS

Does anyone know if Donalbain is with his brother?

LENNOX

He is definitely not there, sir. I have a list of all the important men. Siward's son is there, as well as many boys too young to have beards who will become men by joining in this battle.

MENTEITH

What is the tyrant Macbeth doing?

CAITHNESS

He is fortifying his castle at Dunsinane with heavy defenses. Some say he's insane. Those who hate him less call it brave anger. One thing is certain: he's out of control.

ANGUS

Now Macbeth feels the blood of his murdered enemies sticking to his hands. Now, rebel armies punish him every minute for his treachery. The soldiers he

Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach.
Those he commands move only in command,
20 Nothing in love. Now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.

MENTEITH

Who then shall blame
His pestered senses to recoil and start,
When all that is within him does condemn
25 Itself for being there?

CAITHNESS

Well, march we on,
To give obedience where 'tis truly owed.
Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,
And with him pour we in our country's purge
Each drop of us.

LENNOX

Or so much as it needs,
30 To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.
Make we our march towards Birnam.
Exeunt, marching

Act 5, Scene 3

Enter **MACBETH**, **DOCTOR**, and attendants

MACBETH

Bring me no more reports. Let them fly all.
Till Birnam Wood remove to Dunsinane
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
5 All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:
"Fear not, Macbeth. No man that's born of woman
Shall e'er have power upon thee." Then fly, false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures.
The mind I sway by and the heart I bear
10 Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.

Enter a **SERVANT**

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!
Where got'st thou that goose look?

SERVANT

There is ten thousand—

MACBETH

Geese, villain?

SERVANT

15 Soldiers, sir.

MACBETH

Go, prick thy face and over-red thy fear,
Thou lily-livered boy. What soldiers, patch?
Death of thy soul! Those linen cheeks of thine
Are counselors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?

SERVANT

20 The English force, so please you.

MACBETH

Take thy face hence.

Exit **SERVANT**

Seyton!—I am sick at heart,
When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This push
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough. My way of life
25 Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have, but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honor, breath
30 Which the poor heart would fain deny and dare not.
Seyton!

Enter **SEYTON**

SEYTON

What's your gracious pleasure?

MACBETH

What news more?

SEYTON

commands are only following orders. They don't fight because they love Macbeth.
Now he seems too small to be a great king, like a midget trying to wear the robes
of a giant.

MENTEITH

Who can blame him for acting crazy, when inside he condemns himself for
everything he's done?

CAITHNESS

Well, let's keep marching and give our loyalty to someone who truly deserves it.
We're going to meet Malcolm, the doctor who will cure our sick country. We'll pour
out our own blood to help him.

LENNOX

However much blood we need to give to water the royal flower and drown the
weeds—to make Malcolm king and get rid of Macbeth. Let's proceed on our march
to Birnam.

They exit, marching.

MACBETH, a **DOCTOR**, and attendants enter.

MACBETH

Don't bring me any more reports. I don't care if all the thanes desert me. Until
Birnam Wood gets up and moves to Dunsinane, I won't be affected by fear.
What's the boy Malcolm? Wasn't he born from a woman? The spirits that know the
future have told me this: "Don't be afraid, Macbeth. No man born from a woman
will ever defeat you." So get out of here, disloyal thanes, and join the weak and
decadent English! My mind and courage will never falter with doubt or shake with
fear.

A **SERVANT** enters.

May the devil turn you black, you white-faced fool! Why do you look like a
frightened goose?

SERVANT

There are ten thousand—

MACBETH

Geese, you idiot?

SERVANT

Soldiers, sir.

MACBETH

Go pinch your cheeks and bring some color back into your face, you cowardly boy.
What soldiers, fool? Curse you! That pale face of yours will frighten the others as
well. What soldiers, milk-face?

SERVANT

The English army, sir.

MACBETH

Get out of my sight.

The **SERVANT** exits.

Seyton!—I'm sick at heart when I see—Seyton, come here!—This battle will either
secure my reign forever or else topple me from the throne. I have lived long
enough. The course of my life is beginning to wither and fall away, like a yellowing
leaf in autumn. The things that should go along with old age, like honor, love,
obedience, and loyal friends, I cannot hope to have. Instead, I have passionate but
quietly whispered curses, people who honor me with their words but not in their
hearts, and lingering life, which my heart would gladly end, though I can't bring
myself to do it. Seyton!

SEYTON enters.

SEYTON

What do you want?

MACBETH

Is there more news?

SEYTON

All is confirmed, my lord, which was reported.

MACBETH

I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hacked.
Give me my armor.

SEYTON

35 'Tis not needed yet.

MACBETH

I'll put it on.
Send out more horses. Skirr the country round.
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armor.
How does your patient, doctor?

DOCTOR

40 Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies
That keep her from her rest.

MACBETH

45 Cure her of that.
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?

DOCTOR

Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.

MACBETH

50 Throw physic to the dogs; I'll none of it.
Come, put mine armor on. Give me my staff.
Seyton, send out.—Doctor, the thanes fly from me.
Come, sir, dispatch.—If thou couldst, doctor, cast
The water of my land, find her disease,
And purge it to a sound and pristine health,
55 I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again.—Pull 't off, I say.—
What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of them?

DOCTOR

60 Ay, my good lord. Your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.

MACBETH

Bring it after me.
I will not be afraid of death and bane,
Till Birnam Forest come to Dunsinane.

DOCTOR

(aside) Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here.

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 4

Drum and colors. Enter **MALCOLM**, **SIWARD**, **MACDUFF**, Siward's
SON, **MENTEITH**, **CAITHNESS**, **ANGUS**, **LENNOX**, **ROSS**, and
SOLDIERS, marching

MALCOLM

Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.

MENTEITH

We doubt it nothing.

SIWARD

What wood is this before us?

MENTEITH

The wood of Birnam.

MALCOLM

5 Let every soldier hew him down a bough
And bear 't before him. Thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host and make discovery
Err in report of us.

SOLDIERS

It shall be done.

SIWARD

We learn no other but the confident tyrant

All the rumors have been confirmed.

MACBETH

I'll fight until they hack the flesh off my bones. Give me my armor.

SEYTON

You don't need it yet.

MACBETH

I'll put it on anyway. Send out more cavalry. Scour the whole country and hang anyone spreading fear. Give me my armor. (to the DOCTOR) How is my wife, doctor?

DOCTOR

She is not sick, my lord, but she is troubled with endless visions that keep her from sleeping.

MACBETH

Cure her of that. Can't you treat a diseased mind? Take away her memory of sorrow? Use some drug to erase the troubling thoughts from her brain and ease her heart?

DOCTOR

For that kind of relief, the patient must heal herself.

MACBETH

Medicine is for the dogs. I won't have anything to do with it. (to SEYTON) Come, put my armor on me. Give me my lance. Seyton, send out the soldiers. (to the DOCTOR) Doctor, the thanes are running away from me. (to SEYTON) Come on, sir, hurry. (to the DOCTOR) Can you figure out what's wrong with my country? If you can diagnose its disease by examining its urine, and bring it back to health, I will praise you to the ends of the Earth, where the sound will echo back so you can hear the applause again.—(to SEYTON) Pull it off, I tell you. (to the DOCTOR) What drug would purge the English from this country? Have you heard of any?

DOCTOR

Yes, my good lord. Your preparation for war sounds like something.

MACBETH

(to SEYTON) Bring the armor and follow me. I will not be afraid of death and destruction until Birnam forest picks itself up and moves to Dunsinane.

DOCTOR

(to himself) I wish I were far away from Dunsinane. You couldn't pay me to come back here.

They exit.

MALCOLM, old **SIWARD** and his **SON**, **MACDUFF**, **MENTEITH**, **CAITHNESS**, **ANGUS**, **LENNOX**, **ROSS**, and **SOLDIERS** enter marching, with a drummer and flag.

MALCOLM

Kinsmen, I hope the time is coming when people will be safe in their own bedrooms.

MENTEITH

We don't doubt it.

SIWARD

What's the name of this forest behind us?

MENTEITH

Birnam Wood.

MALCOLM

Tell every soldier to break off a branch and hold it in front of him. That way we can conceal how many of us there are, and Macbeth's spies will give him inaccurate reports.

SOLDIERS

We'll do it.

SIWARD

We have no news except that the overconfident Macbeth is still in Dunsinane and

Keeps still in Dunsinane and will endure
10 Our setting down before 't.

MALCOLM

'Tis his main hope:
For, where there is advantage to be given,
Both more and less have given him the revolt,
And none serve with him but constrained things
Whose hearts are absent too.

MACDUFF

Let our just censures
15 Attend the true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership.

SIWARD

The time approaches
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have and what we owe.
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
20 But certain issue strokes must arbitrate.
Towards which, advance the war.
Exeunt, marching

Act 5, Scene 5

Enter **MACBETH**, **SEYTON**, and **SOLDIERS**, with drum and colors

MACBETH

Hang out our banners on the outward walls.
The cry is still "They come!" Our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn. Here let them lie
Till famine and the ague eat them up.
5 Were they not forced with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home.

A cry within of women

What is that noise?

SEYTON

It is the cry of women, my good lord.

Exit

MACBETH

I have almost forgot the taste of fears.
10 The time has been my senses would have cooled
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
As life were in 't. I have supped full with horrors.
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts
15 Cannot once start me.

Enter **SEYTON**

Wherefore was that cry?

SEYTON

The queen, my lord, is dead.

MACBETH

She should have died hereafter.
There would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
20 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
25 And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Enter a **MESSENGER**

Thou comest to use
Thy tongue; thy story quickly.

MESSENGER

Gracious my lord,
30 I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do 't.

MACBETH

Well, say, sir.

MESSENGER

will allow us to lay siege to the castle.

MALCOLM

He wants us to lay siege. Wherever his soldiers have an opportunity to leave him,
they do, whatever rank they are. No one fights with him except men who are
forced to, and their hearts aren't in it.

MACDUFF

We shouldn't make any judgments until we achieve our goal. Let's go fight like
hardworking soldiers.

SIWARD

Soon we'll find out what's really ours and what isn't. It's easy for us to get our
hopes up just sitting around thinking about it, but the only way this is really going
to be settled is by violence. So let's move our armies forward.

They exit, marching.

MACBETH, **SEYTON**, and **SOLDIERS** enter with a drummer and flag.

MACBETH

Hang our flags on the outer walls. Everyone keeps yelling, "Here they come!" Our
castle is strong enough to laugh off their seige. They can sit out there until they die
of hunger and disease. If it weren't for the fact that so many of our soldiers
revolted and joined them, we could have met them out in front of the castle, man
to man, and beaten them back to England.

A sound of women crying offstage.

What's that noise?

SEYTON

It's women crying, my good lord.

SEYTON exits.

MACBETH

I've almost forgotten what fear feels like. There was a time when I would have
been terrified by a shriek in the night, and the hair on my skin would have stood up
when I heard a ghost story. But now I've had my fill of real horrors. Horrible things
are so familiar that they can't startle me.

SEYTON comes back in.

What was that cry for?

SEYTON

The queen is dead, my lord.

MACBETH

She would have died later anyway. That news was bound to come someday.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow. The days creep slowly along until the
end of time. And every day that's already happened has taken fools that much
closer to their deaths. Out, out, brief candle. Life is nothing more than an illusion.
It's like a poor actor who struts and worries for his hour on the stage and then is
never heard from again. Life is a story told by an idiot, full of noise and emotional
disturbance but devoid of meaning.

A **MESSENGER** enters.

You've come to tell me something. Tell me quickly.

MESSENGER

My gracious lord, I should tell you what I saw, but I don't know how to say it.

MACBETH

Just say it.

MESSENGER

As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I looked toward Birnam, and anon methought
The wood began to move.

MACBETH

Liar and slave!

MESSENGER

35 Let me endure your wrath, if 't be not so.
Within this three mile may you see it coming;
I say, a moving grove.

MACBETH

40 If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shall thou hang alive
Till famine cling thee. If thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pull in resolution and begin
To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth. "Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane"; and now a wood
45 Comes toward Dunsinane.—Arm, arm, and out!—
If this which he avouches does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.

I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,
And wish th' estate o' th' world were now undone.—
50 Ring the alarum-bell!—Blow, wind! Come, wrack!
At least we'll die with harness on our back.

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 6

Drum and colors. Enter **MALCOLM**, **SIWARD**, **MACDUFF**, and their
army, with boughs

MALCOLM

Now near enough. Your leafy screens throw down,
And show like those you are.—You, worthy uncle,
Shall, with my cousin, your right-noble son,
Lead our first battle. Worthy Macduff and we
5 Shall take upon 's what else remains to do,
According to our order.

SIWARD

Fare you well.
Do we but find the tyrant's power tonight,
Let us be beaten if we cannot fight.

MACDUFF

10 Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.
Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 7

Alarums. Enter **MACBETH**

MACBETH

They have tied me to a stake. I cannot fly,
But, bearlike, I must fight the course. What's he
That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter **YOUNG SIWARD**

YOUNG SIWARD

5 What is thy name?

MACBETH

Thou 'lt be afraid to hear it.

YOUNG SIWARD

No, though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
Than any is in hell.

MACBETH

My name's Macbeth.

YOUNG SIWARD

10 The devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.

MACBETH

No, nor more fearful.

As I was standing watch on the hill, I looked toward Birnam, and I thought I saw
the forest begin to move.

MACBETH

Liar and slave!

MESSENGER

Punish me if it's not true. Three miles from here you can see it coming, a moving
forest.

MACBETH

If you're lying, I'll hang you alive from the nearest tree until you die of hunger. If
what you say is true, you can do the same to me. (*to himself*) My confidence is
failing. I'm starting to doubt the lies the devil told me, which sounded like truth.
"Don't worry until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane." And now a wood is coming
to Dunsinane. Prepare for battle, and go! If what this messenger says is true, it's
no use running away or staying here. I'm starting to grow tired of living, and I'd like
to see the world plunged into chaos. Ring the alarms! Blow, wind! Come, ruin! At
least we'll die with our armor on.

They exit.

MALCOLM, old **SIWARD**, **MACDUFF**, and their army enter carrying branches,
with a drummer and flag.

MALCOLM

We're close enough now. Throw down these branches and show them who you
really are. Uncle Siward, you and your son will lead the first battle. Brave Macduff
and I will do the rest, according to our battle plan.

SIWARD

Good luck. If we meet Macbeth's army tonight, let us be beaten if we cannot fight.

MACDUFF

Blow all the trumpets. They loudly announce the news of blood and death.

They exit.

Trumpets and the noise of battle. **MACBETH** enters.

MACBETH

They have me tied to a stake. I can't run away. I have to stand and fight, like a
bear. Where's the man who wasn't born from a woman? He's the only one I'm
afraid of, nobody else.

YOUNG SIWARD enters.

YOUNG SIWARD

What's your name?

MACBETH

You'll be afraid to hear it.

YOUNG SIWARD

No I won't, even if you were one of the worst demons in hell.

MACBETH

My name's Macbeth.

YOUNG SIWARD

The devil himself couldn't say a name I hate more.

MACBETH

No, nor could the devil's name be more frightening.

YOUNG SIWARD

Thou liest, abhorred tyrant. With my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

They fight and **YOUNG SIWARD** is slain

MACBETH

Thou wast born of woman.

But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
15 Brandished by man that's of a woman born.

Exit

Alarums. Enter **MACDUFF**

MACDUFF

That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!

If thou beest slain, and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.

I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms
20 Are hired to bear their staves. Either thou, Macbeth,
Or else my sword with an unbattered edge
I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst be;
By this great clatter, one of the greatest note
Seems bruited. Let me find him, Fortune,
25 And more I beg not.

Exit. Alarums

Enter **MALCOLM** and **SIWARD**

SIWARD

This way, my lord. The castle's gently rendered.

The tyrant's people on both sides do fight,
The noble thanes do bravely in the war,
The day almost itself professes yours,

30 And little is to do.

MALCOLM

We have met with foes
That strike beside us.

SIWARD

Enter, sir, the castle.

Exeunt. Alarums

Act 5, Scene 8

Enter **MACBETH**

MACBETH

Why should I play the Roman fool and die
On mine own sword? Whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

Enter **MACDUFF**

MACDUFF

Turn, hellhound, turn!

MACBETH

Of all men else I have avoided thee.

5 But get thee back. My soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.

MACDUFF

I have no words.

My voice is in my sword. Thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out!

They fight

MACBETH

Thou lovest labor.

As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air
10 With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed.
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.

MACDUFF

Despair thy charm,

And let the angel whom thou still hast served

15 Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripped.

MACBETH

Accursèd be that tongue that tells me so,

For it hath cowed my better part of man!

And be these juggling fiends no more believed,

YOUNG SIWARD

You lie, you disgusting tyrant. I'll prove with my sword that I'm not scared of you.

They fight and **YOUNG SIWARD** is killed.

MACBETH

You were born from a woman. Swords don't frighten me. I laugh at any weapon
used by a man who was born from a woman.

MACBETH exits.

Trumpets and battle sounds. **MACDUFF** enters.

MACDUFF

The noise is coming from over there. Tyrant, show your face! If someone other
than me kills you, the ghosts of my wife and children will haunt me forever. I can't
be bothered to fight these lame soldiers who only fight for money. I'll either fight
you, Macbeth, or else I'll put down my sword unused. You must be over there. By
the great noise, it sounds like one of the highest-ranking men is being announced.
I hope I find him! I ask for nothing more than that.

MACDUFF exits. More battle noises.

MALCOLM and old **SIWARD** enter.

SIWARD

Come this way, my lord. The castle has been surrendered without a fight.
Macbeth's soldiers are fighting on both sides. Our noblemen are battling bravely.
The victory is almost yours, and it seems like there's not much left to do.

MALCOLM

Our enemies fight as if they're trying not to hurt us.

SIWARD

Sir, enter the castle.

They exit. Battle noises continue.

MACBETH enters.

MACBETH

Why should I commit suicide like one of the ancient Romans? As long as I see
enemies of mine alive, I would rather see my sword wound them than me.

MACDUFF enters.

MACDUFF

Turn around, you dog from hell, turn around!

MACBETH

You are the only man I have avoided. But go away now. I'm already guilty of killing
your whole family.

MACDUFF

I have nothing to say to you. My sword will talk for me. You are too evil for words!

They fight.

MACBETH

You're wasting your time trying to wound me. You might as well try to stab the air
with your sword. Go fight someone who can be harmed. I lead a charmed life,
which can't be ended by anyone born from a woman.

MACDUFF

You can forget about your charm. The evil spirit you serve can tell you that I was
not born. They cut me out of my mother's womb before she could bear me
naturally.

MACBETH

Curse you for telling me this. You've frightened away my courage. I don't believe
those evil creatures anymore. They tricked me with their wordgames, raising my
hopes and then destroying them. I won't fight you.

20 That palter with us in a double sense,
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope. I'll not fight with thee.

MACDUFF

Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' th' time.

25 We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted on a pole, and underwrit,
"Here may you see the tyrant."

MACBETH

I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
30 Though Birnam Wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last. Before my body
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff,
And damned be him that first cries, "Hold, enough!"

Exeunt, fighting. Alarums. They enter fighting, and **MACBETH** slain.
Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with drum and colors **MALCOLM**, **SIWARD**,
ROSS, **THANES**, and **SOLDIERS**

MALCOLM

35 I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

SIWARD

Some must go off. And yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

MALCOLM

Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

ROSS

40 Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt.
He only lived but till he was a man,
The which no sooner had his prowess confirmed
In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he died.

SIWARD

Then he is dead?

ROSS

45 Ay, and brought off the field. Your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

SIWARD

Had he his hurts before?

ROSS

Ay, on the front.

SIWARD

50 Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death.
And so, his knell is knolled.

MALCOLM

He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.

SIWARD

He's worth no more.
They say he parted well and paid his score.
And so, God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.

Enter **MACDUFF** with **MACBETH**'s head

MACDUFF

55 Hail, king! For so thou art. Behold where stands
The usurper's cursèd head. The time is free.
I see thee compassed with thy kingdom's pearl,
That speak my salutation in their minds,
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine.
Hail, King of Scotland!

ALL

60 Hail, King of Scotland!

Flourish

MALCOLM

We shall not spend a large expense of time
Before we reckon with your several loves,
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland

MACDUFF

Then surrender, coward, and we'll put you in a freakshow, just like they do with deformed animals. We'll put a picture of you on a sign, right above the words "Come see the tyrant!"

MACBETH

I'm not going to surrender and have to kiss the ground in front of Malcolm, or be taunted by the common people. Even though Birnam Wood really did come to Dunsinane, and I'm fighting a man not of woman born, I'll fight to the end. I'll put up my shield and battle you. Come on, let's go at it, Macduff, and damn the first man who cries, 'Stop! Enough!'

They exit fighting. Trumpets and battle noises. The trumpet of one army sounds a call to retreat. The other army's trumpet sounds a call of victory. The victorious army enters, led by **MALCOLM**, old **SIWARD**, **ROSS**, the other **THANES**, and soldiers, with a drummer and flag.

MALCOLM

I wish all of our friends could have survived this battle.

SIWARD

In every battle, some people will always be killed, but judging from the men I see around us, our great victory didn't cost us very much.

MALCOLM

Macduff is missing, and so is your noble son.

ROSS

My lord, your son has paid the soldier's price: death. He only lived long enough to become a man, and as soon as he proved that he was a man by fighting like one, he died.

SIWARD

So he's dead?

ROSS

Yes, and he's been carried off the field. Your grief should not be equal to his worth, because then your sorrow would never end.

SIWARD

Were his wounds on his front side?

ROSS

Yes, on his front.

SIWARD

Well then, he's God's soldier now! If I had as many sons as I have hairs on my head, I couldn't hope that any of them would die more honorably than he did. And that's all there is to it.

MALCOLM

He is worth more mourning than that, and I will mourn for him.

SIWARD

He is worth no more than that. They tell me he died well, and settled his scores. With that, I hope God is with him! Here comes better news.

MACDUFF enters, carrying **MACBETH**'s head.

MACDUFF

Hail, king! Because that's what you are now. Look, here I have Macbeth's cursed head. We are free from his tyranny. I see that you have the kingdom's noblemen around you, and they're thinking the same thing as me. I want them to join me in this loud cheer, Hail, King of Scotland!

ALL

Hail, King of Scotland!

Trumpets play.

MALCOLM

It won't be long before I reward each of you as he deserves. My thanes and kinsmen, I name you all earls, the first earls that Scotland has ever had. We have a lot to do at the dawn of this new era. We must call home all of our exiled friends who fled from the grip of Macbeth's tyranny, and we must bring to justice all the

65 In such an honor named. What's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time,
As calling home our exiled friends abroad
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny,
Producing forth the cruel ministers
70 Of this dead butcher and his fiendlike queen,
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands
Took off her life; this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace,
We will perform in measure, time, and place.
75 So, thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone.

Flourish. Exeunt

evil ministers of this dead butcher and his demon-like queen, who, rumor has it, committed suicide. This, and whatever else we are called to do by God, we will do at the right time and in the right place. So I thank you all, and I invite each and every one of you to come watch me be crowned king of Scotland at Scone.

Trumpets play. They all exit.