

# Macbeth



## INTRO

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare's father was a glove-maker, and Shakespeare received no more than a grammar school education. He married Anne Hathaway in 1582, but left his family behind around 1590 and moved to London, where he became an actor and playwright. He was an immediate success: Shakespeare soon became the most popular playwright of the day as well as a part-owner of the Globe Theater. His theater troupe was adopted by King James as the King's Men in 1603. Shakespeare retired as a rich and prominent man to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1613, and died three years later.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

When Queen Elizabeth died in 1603, King James of Scotland became King of England. James almost immediately gave his patronage to Shakespeare's company, making them the King's Men. In many ways, *Macbeth* can be seen as a show of gratitude from Shakespeare to his new King and benefactor. For instance, King James actually traced his ancestry back to the real-life Banquo. Shakespeare's transformation of the Banquo in Holinshed's *Chronicles* who helped murder Duncan to the noble man in *Macbeth* who refused to help kill Duncan is therefore a kind of compliment given to King James' ancestor.

### RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Shakespeare's source for *Macbeth* was Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, though in writing *Macbeth* Shakespeare changed numerous details for dramatic and thematic reasons, and even for political reasons (see Related Historical Events). For instance, in Holinshed's version, Duncan was a weak and ineffectual King, and Banquo actually helped Macbeth commit the murder. Shakespeare's changes to the story emphasize Macbeth's fall from nobility to man ruled by ambition and destroyed by guilt.

### KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *The Tragedy of Macbeth*
- **When Written:** 1606
- **Where Written:** England
- **When Published:** 1623
- **Literary Period:** The Renaissance (1500 - 1660)
- **Genre:** Tragic drama
- **Setting:** Scotland and, briefly, England during the eleventh century

- **Climax:** Macbeth's murder of Duncan

### EXTRA CREDIT

**Shakespeare or Not?** There are some who believe Shakespeare wasn't educated enough to write the plays attributed to him. The most common anti-Shakespeare theory is that Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, wrote the plays and used Shakespeare as a front man because aristocrats were not supposed to write plays. Yet the evidence supporting Shakespeare's authorship far outweighs any evidence against. So until further notice, Shakespeare is still the most influential writer in the English language.



## PLOT SUMMARY

Norwegians, aided by Scottish rebels, have invaded Scotland. The Scots successfully defend their country and their beloved king, **Duncan**. One Scotsman in particular, **Macbeth**, Thane of Glamis, distinguishes himself in fighting off the invaders. After the battle, Macbeth and his friend **Banquo** come upon the **weird sisters**, three witches who prophesy that Macbeth will become Thane of Cawdor, and one day King. They further prophesy that Banquo's descendants will be kings. The men don't at first believe the witches, but then learn that the old Thane of Cawdor was actually a traitor helping the Norwegians, and that Duncan has rewarded Macbeth's bravery on the battlefield by making him Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth immediately fantasizes about murdering Duncan and becoming king, but pushes the thought away. Later that day, Duncan announces that his eldest son, **Malcolm**, will be heir to his throne. As Macbeth begins to succumb to his ambition, Duncan decides to spend the night in celebration at Macbeth's castle of Inverness.

**Lady Macbeth** receives a letter from her husband about the prophecy and Duncan's imminent arrival. She decides her husband is too kind to follow his ambitions, and vows to push him to murder Duncan and take the crown that very night. Macbeth at first resists his wife's plan, but his ambition and her constant questioning of his courage and manhood win him over. That night they murder Duncan and frame the men guarding Duncan's room. The next morning, **Macduff**, another Scottish thane, discovers Duncan dead and raises the alarm. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth pretend to be shocked and outraged. Macbeth murders the guardsmen of Duncan's room to keep them silent, but says he did it out of a furious rage that they killed the king. Duncan's sons think they may be the next target, and flee. Macbeth is made king, and because they ran, Duncan's sons become the prime suspects in their father's murder.

Because he knows the witches' prophecy, Banquo is suspicious of Macbeth. And because of the prophecy that Banquo's line will reign as kings, Macbeth sees Banquo as a threat. Macbeth gives a feast, inviting many thanes, including Banquo. Macbeth hires two **murderers** to kill Banquo and his son **Fleance** as they ride to attend the feast. The men kill Banquo, but Fleance escapes. At the feast, Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost, though no one else does. Macbeth's behavior and the death of Banquo make all the thanes suspicious. They begin to think of Macbeth as a tyrant. Macduff refuses to appear at the royal court at all, and goes to England to support Malcolm in his effort to raise an army against Macbeth.

Macbeth visits the three witches to learn more about his fate. They show him three apparitions who tell Macbeth to beware Macduff, but also that no "man born of woman" can defeat him and that he will rule until Birnam Wood marches to Dunsinane (a castle). Since all men are born of women and trees can't move, Macbeth takes this to mean he's invincible. Yet the witches also confirm the prophecy that Banquo's line will one day rule Scotland. To strengthen his hold on the crown, Macbeth sends men to Macduff's castle to murder Macduff's family. Meanwhile, in England, Macduff and Malcolm prepare to invade Scotland. When news comes to England of the murder of Macduff's family, Macduff, weeping, vows revenge.

While the English and Scottish under Malcolm march toward Dunsinane, Lady Macbeth begins sleepwalking and imagining blood on her hands that can't be washed off. Macbeth has become manic, cruel, and haughty—many of his men desert to Malcolm's side. In Birnam Wood, Malcolm and his generals devise a strategy to hide their numbers—they cut branches to hold up in front of them. As Macbeth prepares for the siege, Lady Macbeth dies, perhaps of suicide. Macbeth can barely feel anything anymore, and her death only makes him give a speech about the meaninglessness of life. Then Malcolm's forces appear looking like a forest marching toward the castle. Malcolm's forces quickly capture Dunsinane, but Macbeth himself fights on, mocking all who dare to face him as "men born of woman." But Macduff reveals that he was "untimely ripped" from his mother's womb (a caesarean section). Macduff kills Macbeth, and Malcolm is crowned as King of Scotland.

destroys himself. What's perhaps most interesting about Macbeth is that he senses the murder will lead to his own destruction even before he murders Duncan, yet his ambition is so great that he *still* goes through with it.

**Lady Macbeth** – Macbeth's wife. Unlike her husband, she has no reservations about murdering **Duncan** in order to make Macbeth King of Scotland. She believes that a true man takes what he wants, and whenever Macbeth objects to murdering Duncan on moral grounds, she questions his courage. Lady Macbeth assumes that she'll be able to murder Duncan and then quickly forget it once she's Queen of Scotland. But she discovers that guilt is not so easily avoided, and falls into madness and despair.

**Banquo** – A Scottish nobleman, general, and friend of **Macbeth**. He is also the father of **Fleance**. The weird sisters prophesies that while Banquo will never be King of Scotland, his descendants will one day sit on the throne. Banquo is as ambitious as Macbeth, but unlike Macbeth he resists putting his selfish ambition above his honor or the good of Scotland. Because he both knows the prophecy and is honorable, Banquo is both a threat to Macbeth and a living example of the noble path that Macbeth chose not to take. After Macbeth has Banquo murdered he is haunted by Banquo's ghost, which symbolizes Macbeth's terrible guilt at what he has become.

**Macduff** – A Scottish nobleman, and the Thane of Fife. His wife is **Lady Macduff**, and the two have babies and a **young son**. Macduff offers a contrast to **Macbeth**: a Scottish lord who, far from being ambitious, puts the welfare of Scotland even ahead of the welfare of his own family. Macduff suspects Macbeth from the beginning, and becomes one of the leaders of the rebellion. After Macbeth has Macduff's family murdered, Macduff's desire for vengeance becomes more personal and powerful.

**King Duncan** – The King of Scotland, and the father of **Malcolm** and **Donalbain**. **Macbeth** murders him to get the crown. Duncan is the model of a good, virtuous king who puts the welfare of the country above his own and seeks, like a gardener, to nurture and grow the kingdom that is his responsibility. Duncan is the living embodiment of the political and social order that Macbeth destroys.

**Malcolm** – The older of **King Duncan**'s two sons, and Duncan's designated heir to the throne of Scotland. Early in the play, Malcolm is a weak and inexperienced leader, and he actually flees Scotland in fear after his father is murdered. But Malcolm matures, and with the help of **Macduff** and an English army, Malcolm eventually overthrows **Macbeth** and retakes the throne, restoring the order that was destroyed when Duncan was murdered.

**Weird Sisters** – Three witches, whose prophecy helps push **Macbeth**'s ambition over the edge, and convinces him to murder **Duncan** in order to become King. The witches'



## CHARACTERS

**Macbeth** – **Lady Macbeth**'s husband and a Scottish nobleman, the Thane of Glamis. He is made Thane of Cawdor for his bravery in battle, and becomes King of Scotland by murdering the previous King, **Duncan**. As **Macbeth** opens, Macbeth is one of the great noblemen in Scotland: valiant, loyal, and honorable. He's also ambitious, and while this ambition helps to make him the great lord he is, once he hears the **weird sisters**' prophecy Macbeth becomes so consumed by his desire for power that he becomes a tyrannical and violent monster who ultimately

knowledge of future events clearly indicates that they have supernatural powers, and they also clearly enjoy using those powers to cause havoc and mayhem among mankind. But it is important to realize that the witches never compel anyone to do anything. Instead, they tell half-truths to lure men into giving into their own dark desires. It's left vague in **Macbeth** whether Macbeth would have become King of Scotland if he just sat back and did nothing. This vagueness seems to suggest that while the broad outlines of a person's fate might be predetermined, how the fate plays out is up to him.

**Fleance** – Banquo's teenage son. **Macbeth** sees him as a threat because of the weird sisters' prophecy that Banquo's descendants will one day rule Scotland.

**Lady Macduff** – The wife of **Macduff** and the mother of Macduff's children (and the only female character of note in the play besides **Lady Macbeth**). She questions her husband's decision to leave his family behind when he goes to England to help **Malcolm** save Scotland from **Macbeth**.

**Young Macduff** – Macduff's son, still a child.

**Lennox** – A Scottish nobleman.

**Ross** – A Scottish nobleman.

**Angus** – A Scottish nobleman.

**Donalbain** – King **Duncan**'s younger son and **Malcolm**'s brother.

**Murderers** – Men hired by **Macbeth** to kill **Banquo** and **Fleance**.

**Porter** – The guardian of the gate at **Macbeth**'s castle.

**Hecate** – The goddess of witchcraft.

**Gentlewoman** – **Lady Macbeth**'s attendant.

**Siward** – A warlike English lord.

**Young Siward** – **Siward**'s son.

**King Edward** – The King of England. He is so saintly his touch can cure the sick.

**Captain** – A captain in the Scottish Army.

**Seyton** – **Macbeth**'s servant.

**Old Man** – An elderly fellow who sees some strange things happen the night **Macbeth** murders **Duncan**.

**English Doctor** – An English doctor.

**Scottish Doctor** – The doctor **Macbeth** assigns to cure **Lady Macbeth** of her madness.

## 1 AMBITION

*Macbeth* is a play about ambition run amok. The **weird sisters'** prophecies spur both **Macbeth** and **Lady Macbeth** to try to fulfill their ambitions, but the witches never *make* Macbeth or his wife do anything. Macbeth and his wife act on their own to fulfill their deepest desires. Macbeth, a good general and, by all accounts before the action of the play, a good man, allows his ambition to overwhelm him and becomes a murdering, paranoid maniac. Lady Macbeth, once she begins to put into actions the once-hidden thoughts of her mind, is crushed by guilt.

Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth want to be great and powerful, and sacrifice their morals to achieve that goal. By contrasting these two characters with others in the play, such as **Banquo**, **Duncan**, and **Macduff**, who also want to be great leaders but refuse to allow ambition to come before honor, Macbeth shows how naked ambition, freed from any sort of moral or social conscience, ultimately takes over every other characteristic of a person. Unchecked ambition, *Macbeth* suggests, can never be fulfilled, and therefore quickly grows into a monster that will destroy anyone who gives into it.

## 2 FATE

From the moment the **weird sisters** tell **Macbeth** and **Banquo** their prophecies, both the characters and the audience are forced to wonder about fate. Is it real? Is action necessary to make it come to pass, or will the prophecy come true no matter what one does? Different characters answer these questions in different ways at different times, and the final answers are ambiguous—as fate always is.

Unlike Banquo, Macbeth acts: he kills **Duncan**. Macbeth tries to master fate, to make fate conform to exactly what he wants. But, of course, fate doesn't work that way. By trying to master fate once, Macbeth puts himself in the position of having to master fate always. At every instant, he has to struggle against those parts of the witches' prophecies that don't favor him. Ultimately, Macbeth becomes so obsessed with his fate that he becomes delusional: he becomes unable to see the half-truths behind the witches' prophecies. By trying to master fate, he brings himself to ruin.

## 3 VIOLENCE

To call *Macbeth* a violent play is an understatement. It begins in battle, contains the murder of men, women, and children, and ends not just with a climactic siege but the suicide of **Lady Macbeth** and the beheading of its main character, **Macbeth**. In the process of all this bloodshed, *Macbeth* makes an important point about the nature of violence: every violent act, even those done for selfless reasons, seems to lead inevitably to the next. The violence through which Macbeth takes the throne, as Macbeth himself realizes, opens the way for others to try to



## THEMES

In LitCharts each theme gets its own color and number. Our color-coded theme boxes make it easy to track where the themes occur throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, use the numbers instead.

take the throne for themselves through violence. So Macbeth must commit more violence, and more violence, until violence is all he has left. As Macbeth himself says after seeing Banquo's ghost, "blood will to blood." Violence leads to violence, a vicious cycle.

#### 4 NATURE AND THE UNNATURAL

In medieval times, it was believed that the health of a country was directly related to the goodness and moral legitimacy of its king. If the King was good and just, then the nation would have good harvests and good weather. If there was political order, then there would be natural order. *Macbeth* shows this connection between the political and natural world: when **Macbeth** disrupts the social and political order by murdering **Duncan** and usurping the throne, nature goes haywire. Incredible storms rage, the earth tremors, animals go insane and eat each other. The unnatural events of the physical world emphasize the horror of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's acts, and mirrors the warping of their souls by ambition.

Also note the way that different characters talk about nature in the play. Duncan and **Malcolm** use nature metaphors when they speak of kingship—they see themselves as gardeners and want to make their realm grow and flower. In contrast, Macbeth and **Lady Macbeth** either try to hide from nature (wishing the stars would disappear) or to use nature to hide their cruel designs (being the serpent hiding beneath the innocent flower). The implication is that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, once they've given themselves to the extreme selfishness of ambition, have themselves become unnatural.

#### 5 MANHOOD

Over and over again in *Macbeth*, characters discuss or debate about manhood: Lady Macbeth challenges Macbeth when he decides not to kill Duncan, Banquo refuses to join Macbeth in his plot, Lady Macduff questions Macduff's decision to go to England, and on and on.

Through these challenges, *Macbeth* questions and examines manhood itself. Does a true man take what he wants no matter what it is, as **Lady Macbeth** believes? Or does a real man have the strength to restrain his desires, as **Banquo** believes? All of *Macbeth* can be seen as a struggle to answer this question about the nature and responsibilities of manhood.

## VISIONS AND HALLUCINATIONS

A number of times in *Macbeth*, **Macbeth** sees or hears strange things: the floating dagger, the voice that says he's murdering sleep, and **Banquo's** ghost. As Macbeth himself wonders about the dagger, are these sights and sounds supernatural visions or figments of his guilty imagination? The play contains no definitive answer, which is itself a kind of answer: they're both. Macbeth is a man at war with himself, his innate honor battling his ambition. Just as nature goes haywire when the normal natural order is ruptured, Macbeth's own mind does the same when it is forced to fight against itself.

## BLOOD

Blood is always closely linked to violence, but over the course of *Macbeth* blood comes to symbolize something else: guilt. Death and killing happen in an instant, but blood remains, and stains. At the times when both **Macbeth** and **Lady Macbeth** feel most guilty, they despair that they will never be able to wash the blood—their guilt—from their hands.

## SLEEP

When he murders **Duncan**, **Macbeth** thinks he hears a voice say "Macbeth does murder sleep" (2.2.34). Sleep symbolizes innocence, purity, and peace of mind, and in killing Duncan Macbeth actually *does* murder sleep: **Lady Macbeth** begins to sleepwalk, and Macbeth is haunted by his nightmares.



## QUOTES

The color-coded and numbered boxes under each quote below make it easy to track the themes related to each quote. Each color and number corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

### ACT 1, SCENE 1 QUOTES

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

- Speaker: Weird Sisters
- Related themes: Nature and the Unnatural
- Theme Tracker code:



### ACT 1, SCENE 3 QUOTES

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.



## SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **red text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

- Speaker: Banquo
- Mentioned or related characters: Macbeth, Weird Sisters
- Related themes: Ambition, Fate, Violence, Manhood
- Theme Tracker code:

1 2 3 4 5

## ACT 1, SCENE 4 QUOTES

Stars, hide your fires!  
Let not light see my black and deep desires.

- Speaker: Macbeth
- Related themes: Ambition, Violence, Nature and the Unnatural, Manhood
- Theme Tracker code:

1 2 3 4 5

## ACT 1, SCENE 5 QUOTES

Look like the innocent flower,  
But be the serpent under it.

- Speaker: Lady Macbeth
- Mentioned or related characters: Macbeth
- Related themes: Violence, Nature and the Unnatural
- Theme Tracker code:

1 2 3 4 5

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,  
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.

- Speaker: Lady Macbeth
- Related themes: Ambition, Violence, Nature and the Unnatural
- Theme Tracker code:

1 2 3 4 5

## ACT 1, SCENE 7 QUOTES

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

- Speaker: Macbeth
- Related themes: Manhood
- Theme Tracker code:

1 2 3 4 5

I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself  
And falls on the other.

- Speaker: Macbeth
- Related themes: Ambition, Violence, Manhood
- Theme Tracker code:

1 2 3 4 5

Macbeth: If we should fail.  
Lady Macbeth: We fail?  
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,  
And we'll not fail.

- Speaker: Macbeth, Lady Macbeth
- Related themes: Ambition, Manhood
- Theme Tracker code:

1 2 3 4 5

## ACT 2, SCENE 1 QUOTES

Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee;  
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-oppressed brain?  
I see thee yet, in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw.

- Speaker: Macbeth
- Related themes: Violence, Nature and the Unnatural
- Theme Tracker code:

1 2 3 4 5

## ACT 2, SCENE 2 QUOTES

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

- Speaker: Macbeth
- Related themes: Violence, Nature and the Unnatural
- Theme Tracker code:



## ACT 3, SCENE 2 QUOTES

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

- Speaker: Lady Macbeth
- Related themes: Ambition, Violence, Nature and the Unnatural
- Theme Tracker code:



## ACT 3, SCENE 4 QUOTES

I am in blood  
 Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more,  
 Returning were as tedious as go o'er.

- Speaker: Macbeth
- Related themes: Violence
- Theme Tracker code:



## ACT 4, SCENE 1 QUOTES

By the pricking of my thumbs,  
 Something wicked this way comes.

- Speaker: Weird Sisters
- Mentioned or related characters: Macbeth
- Related themes: Ambition, Violence, Nature and the Unnatural
- Theme Tracker code:



## ACT 5, SCENE 1 QUOTES

Out, damned spot! out, I say!

- Speaker: Lady Macbeth
- Related themes: Violence, Nature and the Unnatural
- Theme Tracker code:



## ACT 5, SCENE 5 QUOTES

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow  
 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,  
 And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
 Signifying nothing.

- Speaker: Macbeth
- Related themes: Ambition, Violence, Nature and the Unnatural, Manhood
- Theme Tracker code:



## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded and numbered boxes under each row of Summary and Analysis below make it easy to track the themes throughout the work. Each color and number corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

### ACT 1, SCENE 1

As a storm rages, **three witches** appear, speaking in rhyming, paradoxical couplets: "when the battle's lost and won" (1.1.4); "fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1.10). They agree to meet again on the heath (plain) when the battle now raging ends. There they'll meet **Macbeth**.

*The witches' rhyming speech makes them seem inhuman, ominous, and paranormal, which, in fact, they are.*



## ACT 1, SCENE 2

At a military camp, **King Duncan** of Scotland, his sons **Malcolm** and **Donalbain**, and the Thane of **Lennox** wait for news of the war. A **captain** enters, covered in so much **blood** he is almost unrecognizable. The captain tells them of the state of the battle against the invading Norwegians and the Scottish rebels Macdonald and the Thane of Cawdor. Two Scottish nobleman have been especially brave, **Macbeth** (the Thane of Glamis) and **Banquo**. Macbeth killed Macdonald ("unseemed him from the nave to th' chops" (1.2.22)).

*The blood covering the captain makes him an unrecognizable monster, just as Macbeth, who in this scene is described as a noble hero who is brave and loyal to his king, will be transformed into a monster as he becomes "covered" with the metaphorical blood of those he kills to achieve his ambitions.*



The Thane of **Ross** arrives, and describes how **Macbeth** defeated Sweno, the Norwegian King, who now begs for a truce. **Duncan** proclaims that the traitorous Thane of Cawdor shall be put to death, and that **Macbeth** shall be made Thane of Cawdor.

*Duncan rewards and trusts his subjects. This is the opposite of personal ambition. Ironically, though, he replaces one traitor with a much worse traitor.*



## ACT 1, SCENE 3

On the heath the **witches** appear. They call themselves the "weird sisters" (1.3.30) and brag of their dread and magical deeds such as killing swine and cursing a sailor to waste away.

*The witches are established as both wicked and magically powerful.*



**Macbeth** and **Banquo** enter. The **witches** hail Macbeth as Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor, and "king hereafter" (1.3.47). Banquo asks Macbeth why he seems to fear this good news, then questions the witches about his own future. They say that Banquo is "lesser than Macbeth and greater" (1.3.63) because though he'll never be king, his descendants will.

*Does the fear Banquo notes in Macbeth signal that Macbeth's doomed struggle against his ambition starts the instant he hears the prophecy?*



**Macbeth** asks how the **witches** know this information. But the witches vanish, making the two men wonder if they could have imagined the whole thing. Just then, **Ross** and **Angus** enter. They tell Macbeth that the old Thane of Cawdor was a traitor and that **Duncan** has made Macbeth the new Thane of Cawdor.

*The prophecy is fulfilled and the witches' power is proved to be genuine. The traitorous old Thane of Cawdor is replaced by Macbeth.*



**Macbeth** and **Banquo** are shocked. Macbeth asks Banquo if he now thinks that his children will be king. Banquo seems unsure, and comments that "instruments of darkness" sometimes tell half truths to bring men to ruin.

*Banquo guesses the witches' plot exactly. This means that when Macbeth chooses to believe the witches and act, he knows the risks.*



As **Banquo** talks with **Ross** and **Angus**, **Macbeth** ponders the prophecy. If it's evil, why would it truly predict his being made Thane of Cawdor? If it's good, why would he already be contemplating murder, a thought that makes "my seated heart knock at my ribs" (1.3.134-136)? Macbeth feels that he's losing himself, and hopes that if fate says he'll become king, he won't have to act to make it happen.

*Macbeth is already thinking about killing Duncan, but the thought terrifies him: he's struggling against his ambition. His thoughts about fate are classic: does fate happen no matter what, or must one act?*



**Ross** and **Angus** think **Macbeth's** reverie is caused by becoming Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth and Banquo agree to speak about the witches' prophecy later.

*This exchange with Banquo is the last time Macbeth is honest in the play.*



## ACT 1, SCENE 4

At a camp near the battlefield, **Malcolm** tells **Duncan** that the old Thane of Cawdor confessed and repented before being executed. Duncan notes that you can't always trust a man by his outward show. **Macbeth**, **Banquo**, **Ross**, and **Angus** enter. Duncan says that even the gift of Cawdor is not as much as Macbeth deserves. Macbeth responds: "The service and loyalty I owe, in doing it, pays itself" (1.4.22).

*Deeply ironic that just as Duncan comments about how you can't trust people's outward shows, Macbeth enters. Duncan's great strength as a king is his trust in his people and his thanes, but it also makes him vulnerable to treachery.*



**Duncan** is pleased. He says: "**I have begun to plant thee, and will labour to make thee full of growing**" (1.4.28-29). Next, he announces that **Malcolm** will be heir to the Scottish throne (the kingship was not hereditary in Scotland at that time). Duncan then adjourns the meeting and decides to spend the night at Inverness, **Macbeth's** castle.

*Duncan thinks of his role as King in terms of what he can give. He's like a gardener in nature; putting his country above his own desires...*



**Macbeth** goes ahead to prepare for the King's visit, but notes that **Malcolm** now stands between him and the throne. He begs the **stars** to "**hide your fires**, let not light see my black and deep desires" (1.4.51).

*...Macbeth, in contrast, thinks in terms of what he can take. This makes his relationship with nature adversarial.*



## ACT 1, SCENE 5

At Inverness, **Lady Macbeth** reads a letter in which **Macbeth** tells her of the witches' prophecy. Lady Macbeth worries Macbeth is too kind and honorable to fulfill his ambition and the prophecy. She decides to question his manhood to make him act.

*Lady Macbeth is established as power-hungry. She sees honor as a weakness, and knows how to push her husband's buttons: question his courage.*



A servant enters with news that **Duncan** will spend the night, then exits. **Lady Macbeth** says Duncan's visit will be fatal, and calls on spirits to "**unsex me here... and take my milk for gall**" (1.5.39-46).

*In order to murder Duncan, Lady Macbeth not only renounces her womanhood, she literally asks to be turned into an unnatural fiend!*



**Macbeth** enters, and says **Duncan** will spend the night and leave the next day. **Lady Macbeth** says Duncan will never see that day. She counsels **Macbeth** to look like an "innocent flower," but be the viper hiding beneath it (1.5.63). Macbeth remains unconvinced. Lady Macbeth tells him to leave the plan to her.

*Macbeth is still struggling against his ambition. Lady Macbeth's advice on how to hide one's true intentions involves exploiting nature. (Note: in the Garden of Eden, the devil hid himself in the form of a snake.)*



## ACT 1, SCENE 6

**Duncan**, **Malcolm**, **Donalbain**, **Banquo**, **Lennox**, **Macduff**, **Ross**, and **Angus** arrive at Inverness. Duncan comments on the sweetness of the air. Banquo notes that martlets, a species of bird that usually nests in churches, have nested in the castle.

*Ironic that Duncan thinks the castle where he'll be murdered is beautiful. Also shows what beauty Macbeth loses when he gives in to his ambition.*



**Lady Macbeth** warmly greets the **King** and the thanes, though **Macbeth** is nowhere to be seen.

*At this point, the planned murder weighs more on Macbeth than on Lady Macbeth.*



## ACT 1, SCENE 7

**Macbeth**, alone, agonizes about whether to kill **Duncan**. He'd be willing to murder Duncan if he thought that would be the end of it. But he knows that "bloody instructions, being taught, return to plague the inventor" (1.7.10). Also, Macbeth notes, Duncan is a guest, kinsman, and good king. He decides ambition is not enough to justify the murder.

*Macbeth wrestles with his ambition and wins! He knows that murdering Duncan will only end up leading to more bloodshed, and ruin his honor, which he prizes.*





**Lady Macbeth** enters, asking where he's been. **Macbeth** tells her they won't murder **Duncan**. She questions his manhood. Macbeth replies: "I dare do all that may become a man; who dares do more is none" (1.7.46-47). But Lady Macbeth continues: she says she has nursed his baby, but if she'd known her husband was such a coward she'd have rather "dashed [the baby's] brains out" (1.7.56).

*Lady Macbeth and Macbeth debate about manhood and courage. She says it's taking what you want. He says it's the power to put responsibility before selfishness, the power to not take what you want.*



**Macbeth** asks what will happen if they fail. **Lady Macbeth** assures him they won't fail if they have courage. She outlines the plan: she'll give **Duncan's** bedroom attendants enough wine to ensure they black out from drunkenness. Then she and Macbeth will commit the murder and frame the attendants. Macbeth, impressed by her courage, agrees.

*Lady Macbeth's tragedy is that she doesn't realize that murdering Duncan will torment and ultimately destroy her. Macbeth's tragedy is more profound: he does realize it, and still gives in to his ambition.*



## ACT 2, SCENE 1

It is after midnight in Inverness. **Banquo** talks with his son **Fleance** and notices the **stars aren't shining**. He prays for angels to "restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature gives way to in repose" (2.1.7-8).

*Banquo is also struggling against ambition. Earlier Macbeth begged the stars to hide (1.4.51). They have.*



**Macbeth** enters. **Banquo** tells Macbeth his **sleep** has been troubled by dreams of the **weird sisters**. Macbeth claims never to think about them. But he suggests they talk about the witches soon, and adds that if Banquo supports him when the time comes he'll reward and honor Banquo for it.

*Banquo is open about the troubling "dreams" the witches have inspired in him. Macbeth, who has decided to act on his own selfish ambition, is not.*



**Banquo** says he'll be receptive to what **Macbeth** has to say provided he loses no honor in seeking to gain more. Banquo and **Fleance** head off to bed.

*Banquo believes true manhood means acting honorably—just what Macbeth used to believe.*



Alone, **Macbeth** sees a **bloody dagger** floating in the air. He can't grasp it, and can't decide whether it's a phantom or his imagination. "**Nature seems dead**" to him (2.1.50).

*As Macbeth gets closer to the murder, nature starts to go haywire.*



Offstage, **Lady Macbeth** rings the bell to signal that **Duncan's** attendants are asleep.

*Interesting that in Macbeth, most of the violence happens offstage.*

**Macbeth** goes to murder Duncan.



## ACT 2, SCENE 2

**Lady Macbeth** waits in agitation for **Macbeth** to do the deed. She comments that had the sleeping **Duncan** not looked like her father she'd have killed him herself.

*Lady Macbeth isn't completely cold-blooded, foreshadowing her future feelings of guilt.*



**Macbeth** enters. He's killed **Duncan** and Duncan's attendants. His hands are **bloodstained** and he's upset that when one of the attendants said "God bless us" in his sleep, he was unable to say "Amen." He also thought he heard a voice say "Macbeth does murder **sleep**" (2.2.34).

*Bloodstained hands and sleeplessness: symbols of guilt. Macbeth is anguished: he knows the consequences of this murder.*



**Lady Macbeth** soothes him and tells him to wash his hands, but notices he's still carrying the daggers he used to kill **Duncan**. **Macbeth** refuses to return to the scene of the crime. Lady Macbeth, furious, runs off to plant the daggers on the attendants.

*Compare Macbeth's nervousness to Lady Macbeth's calm, collected behavior.*



A knock sounds, terrifying **Macbeth**. He worries that not all the water in the world could wash the **blood** from his hands.

*The knock at the door parallels the "knocking" of Macbeth's heart in scene 1.3.*



**Lady Macbeth** returns, her **hands now as bloody** as **Macbeth's**. But she's calm, and identifies the 'mysterious' knocking as someone at the south entrance. She says: "a little water clears us of this deed" (2.2.65), and tells Macbeth to go and put his nightgown on so no one will suspect them.

*Lady Macbeth is calm. She identifies the "mysterious" knocking as someone at the South entrance. But she is naïve, thinking water can wash away her guilt.*



**Macbeth** wishes that the knocking could wake **Duncan**.

*Macbeth shows remorse.*



## ACT 2, SCENE 3

A **porter** goes to the answer the door, joking to himself that he is the doorkeeper at the mouth of hell, and mocking whoever might be knocking to get into hell. At the door are **Macduff** and **Lennox**. Macduff good-naturedly asks what took so long. The porter blames drunkenness, and makes a series of jokes about alcohol and its effects on men.

*The Porter provides a moment of ironic comedy. He imagines he's guarding hell, but with the murder of Duncan he really is guarding a hellish place.*



**Macbeth** enters, pretending to have just woken up. **Macduff** asks if the King has woken yet: **Duncan** had asked to see Macduff early that morning. Macbeth points out where Duncan is sleeping, and Macduff goes off to wake him.

*Introduction of Macduff, and contrast between Macbeth's lying and treachery with Macduff's openness and loyalty.*



As they wait for **Macduff** to return, **Lennox** describes the terrible storm that raged the previous night and sounded like "strange screams of death" (2.3.52).

*The unnatural act of killing Duncan has caused havoc in nature.*



**Macduff** cries out in horror and runs onstage. **Macbeth** and **Lennox** ask what happened, then run to **Duncan's** chamber. **Banquo**, **Malcolm**, and **Donalbain** wake. **Lady Macbeth** enters, pretending not to know what happened, and expressing horror when Macduff tells her of the murder. Macbeth returns, and wishes he had died rather than have to see such a thing. Malcolm and Donalbain enter and ask what's happened. Lennox tells them that Duncan was murdered by his drunken attendants.

*Everyone is being "natural" and honest in their grief except Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. They are the snakes hiding behind the "innocent flower." Everything they do now must protect their secret. This secrecy becomes their defining trait, warping them.*



**Macbeth** wishes aloud that he hadn't killed the attendants. When **Macduff** asks why Macbeth did kill the attendants, Macbeth says he was so furious that they had murdered the **Duncan** that he couldn't control himself. **Lady Macbeth** faints.

*Macbeth killed the attendants to keep them quiet. Does Macduff suspect already? Lady Macbeth faints to head off further questioning.*



The thanes agree to meet in the hall to discuss what's happened. **Malcolm** and **Donalbain**, though, remain behind. They realize that one of the thanes is probably the murderer and fear that they'll be the next targets. They decide to flee: Malcolm to England and Donalbain to Ireland.

*Malcolm and Donalbain realize any one of the thanes could be faking his grief. The unnatural hides itself by looking natural.*



## ACT 2, SCENE 4

**Ross** and an **old man** stand near Macbeth's castle. They discuss the unnatural portents just before and after Duncan's murder: darkness during the day, owls killing hawks, horses eating one another.

*Further havoc in nature caused by the murder of Duncan and destruction of the natural order.*



**Macduff** enters. He says it seems **Duncan's** attendants did commit the murder, and that because **Malcolm** and **Donalbain** fled they likely were behind the plot.

*Macbeth's plot worked! If he could be a good and virtuous King, perhaps it will all turn out well...*



**Macduff** then says **Macbeth** has been made king, and that he has already gone to Scone for the coronation. **Ross** heads to the coronation. But **Macduff** returns to his own castle at Fife.

*...but does Macduff suspect him already? It isn't clear. But the paranoid Macbeth must think he does: violence creates fear which leads to violence.*



### ACT 3, SCENE 1

In the royal palace of Forres, **Banquo** states his suspicion that **Macbeth** fulfilled the **witches'** prophecy by foul play. But he notes that since the prophecy came true for **Macbeth**, perhaps it will come true for him as well.

*Banquo suspects Macbeth, but it is his own ambition—the possibility that the prophecy might be true for him too—that occupies his mind.*



**Macbeth** enters, with other thanes and **Lady Macbeth**. He asks **Banquo** to attend a feast that evening. **Banquo** says he will, but that meanwhile he has to ride somewhere on business. **Macbeth** asks if **Fleance** will be riding with him. **Banquo** says yes, then departs. Once he's alone, **Macbeth** sends a servant to summon two men. As he waits for them to arrive, he muses if the **witches'** prophecy is true, then **Banquo's** descendants will be king, and he'll have murdered **Duncan** for nothing.

*Macbeth wants to kill Banquo because he resents Banquo's honor and because the prophecy makes Banquo a threat. Also, Macbeth's guilt at murdering Duncan makes him want that murder to be "worthwhile." Macbeth's guilt about one crime pushes him to commit another.*



The two men (identified in the stage directions as "**murderers**") enter. **Macbeth** tells them it's **Banquo's** fault they're poor, then questions their manhood for bearing such offenses. The **murderers** agree to kill **Banquo** and **Fleance**.

*Macbeth uses the same methods to get the murderers to kill Banquo and Fleance that Lady Macbeth used against Macbeth: he questions their manhood.*



### ACT 3, SCENE 2

After sending a servant to fetch **Macbeth**, **Lady Macbeth**, waits, and muses that she has what she desires but isn't happy.

*First indication that all is not well with Lady Macbeth.*



**Macbeth** enters. She asks why he spends so much time alone. **Macbeth** responds: "We have scorched the snake, not killed it" (3.2.15). He fears someone might try to kill him as he killed **Duncan**, and seems envious of **Duncan's** "**sleep**" (3.2.25).

*In order to keep power built by violence, more violence is always needed. Macbeth knew this would happen; he's caught in the vicious cycle of violence...*



**Lady Macbeth** reminds him to be "bright and jovial" at the feast. **Macbeth** tells her to act the same. But then **Macbeth** moans, "O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!" (3.2.37) because **Banquo** and **Fleance** are still alive.

*...and that vicious cycle begins to take a psychological toll on Macbeth.*



**Macbeth** says that before the night is through there shall be a "deed of dreadful note" (3.2.45), but adds that she's better off being innocent until she can applaud what has happened.

*Macbeth tries to protect Lady Macbeth: traditional male-female roles.*



### ACT 3, SCENE 3

The **two murderers** lie in wait a mile from the royal castle. A **third murderer** joins them, sent by **Macbeth**.

*The Third Murderer is an unsolved mystery. No critics know who he is or why he's there.*



**Banquo** and **Fleance** enter. The **murderers** attack. **Banquo** is killed, but **Fleance** escapes. The **murderers** return to the castle to tell **Macbeth** what's happened.

*Macbeth's effort to control fate seals his doom. Fleance lives and Banquo's death makes the Thanes suspicious.*



## ACT 3, SCENE 4

**Macbeth** bids all the lords welcome to the feast. Just at that moment, he notices that one of the **murderers** is standing at the door. The murderer tells Macbeth that **Banquo** is dead but **Fleance** escaped. Macbeth comforts himself that Fleance will not be a threat for quite some time.

*Macbeth learns that his first attempt to control fate has failed.*

1 2 3

**Lady Macbeth** calls to **Macbeth** and asks him to return to the feast and sit. But Macbeth doesn't see an empty seat at the table. When Lennox gestures at a seat, saying it's empty, Macbeth sees **Banquo's ghost** sitting there. Macbeth alone can see the ghost. He astonishes the thanes by shouting at the empty chair.

*Is Banquo's ghost real or a figment of Macbeth's guilty mind? The uncertainty emphasizes that Macbeth's fate is part of him, caused by his character: his ambition and guilt.*

2 3 4

**Lady Macbeth** tells the thanes not to worry, that since childhood **Macbeth** has suffered fits. She pulls Macbeth aside and once again questions his manhood. The ghost disappears. Macbeth rambles about murders and spirits risen from the grave until Lady Macbeth reminds him of his guests. He echoes her story about his fits, then leads a toast to the missing **Banquo**.

*Macbeth and Lady Macbeth continue to try to lie to keep their secrets and hold on power, but these lies become less and less effective as guilt about the violence they have committed begins to effect them.*

2 3 4 5

The **ghost reappears** and **Macbeth**, terrified, starts shouting at it. **Lady Macbeth** tries to play down her husband's strange behavior. The ghost again disappears. Macbeth is amazed that everyone could be so calm in the face of such sights. When **Ross** asks what sights, Lady Macbeth steps in and asks the guests to leave at once. The thanes exit.

*Macbeth has become so warped he cannot tell the unnatural from the natural anymore. Lady Macbeth sees lying is useless and chooses isolation: she tells the thanes to leave.*

4

**Macbeth** tells **Lady Macbeth**: "**Blood will have blood**" (3.4.121), and asks what Lady Macbeth makes of the fact that Macduff does not appear at the royal court. He decides to visit the **weird sisters** to find out more about his fate.

*Macbeth's desperation to keep power motivates him to visit the weird sisters. He has sacrificed everything for his ambition...*

1 2 3

He says: "I am in **blood** / Stepped in so far" (3.4.135) that turning back is as difficult as continuing on.

*... now ambition and violence are all he has left, and he knows it.*

1  3

## ACT 3, SCENE 5

The **weird sisters** meet with **Hecate**, the goddess of witches. She rebukes the sisters for meddling with **Macbeth** without first consulting her. But she says she'll help them when Macbeth comes to see them tomorrow. She says that they'll show him visions that will give him confidence and "draw him to his confusion" (3.5.29).

*Many productions of Macbeth cut this scene. It introduces Hecate, and establishes that the witches truly are out to get Macbeth. Many productions of the play prefer to keep the witches' motivations more vague.*

2  4

## ACT 3, SCENE 6

**Lennox** and another lord talk sarcastically about **Macbeth** and the too great similarities between the murders of **Duncan** and **Banquo**, with **Donalbain** and **Malcolm** accused of the first and Fleance blamed for the second.

*Macbeth's murder of Banquo, committed to control his fate, has had the opposite effects. Now the thanes see Macbeth for what he is: a tyrant.*

1 2 3

**Macduff**, the lord says, has gone to England to meet with **Malcolm** and try to get the English King **Edward** and his lords to gather an army to help them defeat **Macbeth**. The rumor is that Macbeth sent a messenger to Macduff. Macduff rebuffed the messenger, who turned his back as if to say that Macduff would pay for that decision.

*Compare Macduff and Macbeth: Macbeth will do anything for personal power; Macduff will do anything to save his country.*

1  3

Both men hope **Macduff** remains safe and soon returns with the armies of **Malcolm** and England to free Scotland from **Macbeth**.

*Ambition has made Macbeth a violent tyrant who holds the throne only through fear.*



## ACT 4, SCENE 1

In a cavern, the **weird sisters** throw awful ingredients such as "eye of newt and toe of frog" (4.1.14) into a cauldron full of a boiling brew. **Hecate** arrives, and all dance and sing. One witch cries out "Something wicked this way comes" (4.1.62): **Macbeth** enters. He commands the witches to answer his questions.

*There is a resemblance between Macbeth and the witches now. All are wicked, all are unnatural.*



The **witches** conjure up three apparitions. First, a floating head appears and tells **Macbeth** to beware **Macduff**.

*The head symbolizes either Macduff's rebellion or Macbeth's fate.*



Next, a bloody child appears. The child says that "no man of woman born / Shall harm **Macbeth**" (4.1.95-96).

*The bloody child symbolizes Macduff's birth by caesarian section.*



Finally, a child wearing a crown and holding a tree appears. It says that **Macbeth** will not be defeated until Great Birnam Wood marches to Dunsinane Hill. Macbeth is pleased: since forests don't march, he must be invincible!

*The child with crown and tree symbolizes Malcolm.*



**Macbeth** wants to know one more thing: will **Banquo's** heirs have the throne? The **witches** perform a final conjuring. Eight kings appear walking in a line, the eighth holding a mirror, and all of them followed by Banquo's ghost. Macbeth, furious at this sign that Banquo's heirs will get the throne, demands answers. But **Hecate** mocks him and the witches vanish.

*The king holding the mirror symbolizes King James who ruled England when Shakespeare wrote Macbeth, and whose family traced its ancestry back to Banquo.*



**Lennox** enters. He brings word that **Macduff** has fled to England. In an aside, **Macbeth** scolds himself for failing to kill Macduff when he wanted to earlier. He vows in the future to act on every impulse, and decides to attack Macduff's castle and kill anyone connected to him: servants, wife, and children.

*Ambition and fear have pushed Macbeth that final step: he is no longer targeting just his political enemies, but also their innocent families. Macbeth is now truly a monster.*



## ACT 4, SCENE 2

At Fife (**Macduff's** castle), **Lady Macduff** is angry. She demands to know why Macduff has gone to England, leaving her behind. She thinks Macduff is a coward. **Ross** says Macduff's flight could result from wisdom, not fear.

*Another debate about manhood. Does a real man sacrifice the safety of his family for the good of his country?*



After **Ross** leaves, **Lady Macduff** turns to her son. She tells the boy that his father is dead. The boy doesn't believe her, but asks if his father is a traitor. Lady Macduff says yes, Macduff is a traitor: a man who swore an oath and broke it and now must hang. The boy thinks if traitors allow themselves to be hanged they must be fools, since there are undoubtedly more traitors than honest men in the world.

*Macduff's son is wise beyond his years, noting that those who put themselves above society far outnumber those who put the common good above their own selfish ambitions.*



A servant bursts in to warn of coming danger, then rushes out. Before **Lady Macduff** or her children can run, **murderers** enter the chamber, stab **Macduff's son**, and chase Lady Macduff offstage.

*Macbeth has ordered the murder of the innocent. His loss of humanity is complete, and the seeds of his self-destruction are sown.*



## ACT 4, SCENE 3

In England, near the palace of **King Edward**, **Macduff** urges **Malcolm** to quickly raise an army against **Macbeth**. But Malcolm says Macduff might actually be working for Macbeth, a suspicion heightened by the fact that Macduff left his family behind and unprotected in Scotland.

*Why does Macduff leave his family behind when he goes to England? Does he underestimate Macbeth's depravity, or has he put too much emphasis on country at the expense of family?*

**Malcolm** then adds that he delays attacking **Macbeth** because he fears that he himself would perhaps be even a worse ruler. Malcolm describes himself as so lustful, vicious, and greedy that he makes Macbeth look kind.

*Macduff proves that his morality and love of country is greater than his ambition.*

**Macduff** cries out in horror, and says he will leave Scotland forever since there is no man fit to rule it. Malcolm then reveals that none of his self-description was true: it was a trick to test Macduff's loyalty. Malcolm now believes that Macduff is loyal to Scotland and not Macbeth, and that he has an army of ten thousand men commanded by the English Lord **Siward**, ready to invade Scotland.

Just then an **English doctor** enters. **Malcolm** speaks with the doctor, then tells **Macduff** that **King Edward** of England is so saintly that he can cure disease.

*In contrast to Macbeth, Edward is so virtuous his touch restores order to nature: it heals.*

**Ross** enters. He tells **Malcolm** that if he invaded the Scottish people would line up to join his army against **Macbeth**. Finally, **Ross** tells **Macduff** his family has been murdered. Macduff cries out in anguish. Malcolm tells him to fight it like a man. Macduff responds that he must also "feel it like a man" (4.3.223). But they agree that Macduff's anger and grief should be used to fuel his revenge.

*True manhood, Macduff realizes in his moment of anguish, involves not just strength, honor, and loyalty, but also emotion, feeling, and love.*

## ACT 5, SCENE 1

It is night in **Macbeth's** castle of Dunsinane. A **doctor** and a **gentlewoman** wait. The gentlewoman called the doctor because she has seen **Lady Macbeth** **sleepwalking** the last few nights, but she refuses to say what Lady Macbeth says or does.

*When he killed Duncan, Macbeth thought he heard a voice say he had murdered sleep. Well, he did: Lady Macbeth's sleep.*

**Lady Macbeth** enters, holding a candle, but asleep. Lady Macbeth keeps **rubbing her hands as if to wash them** while saying "out, damned spot" (5.1.30). Then Lady Macbeth seems to relive her attempt to convince **Macbeth** to kill **Duncan**, concluding with the words: "Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much **blood** in him" (5.1.33-34)?

*Lady Macbeth, who once naively thought she could just wash her hands and forget Duncan's murder, is now sleepwalking and so full of guilt that she imagines her hands are always covered in blood.*

The horrified **doctor** and gentlewoman watch as **Lady Macbeth** then relives conversations with **Macbeth** after the murder of **Banquo** and hears an imaginary knocking and rushes off to bed. The **doctor** says the disease is beyond his power to cure, and that "unnatural deeds do breed unnatural troubles" (5.1.61-62). He also says he dares not speak about what he's just witnessed.

*Lady Macbeth's guilt makes it impossible for her to hide the horrors that she and Macbeth have committed. Her conscience is rebelling against the unnatural fiend that ambition has turned her into.*



### ACT 5, SCENE 2

**Lennox** and other Scottish lords and soldiers discuss the situation: **Malcolm** and his army are at Birnam Wood. **Macbeth**, in a constant rage verging on madness, is fortifying the stronghold of Dunsinane.

*With the mention of Birnam Wood and Dunsinane, the audience can see that Macbeth's fate is approaching.*



The lords agree that **Macbeth** is tormented by his terrible actions, and that those who follow him do so out of fear, not love. The lords ride to join **Malcolm**.

*Macbeth's efforts to maintain power through violence have, in fact, turned people against him and made him weak.*



### ACT 5, SCENE 3

**Macbeth** dismisses all reports about **Malcolm's** army, saying he'll fear nothing until Birnam Wood marches to Dunsinane and mocking Malcolm as a man born of woman. He shouts for his servant **Seyton** to bring his armor, then muses how sick at heart he feels, how withered his life has become.

*Macbeth is fearless because of the prophecies, but he seems to wish he weren't. He knows his life is awful, but he's so gripped by ambition that he can't turn back.*



He asks the **doctor** about **Lady Macbeth**, then commands that the man cure her. In an aside, the doctor says that if he could escape Dunsinane, no fee of any size could bring him back.

*Macbeth seems totally out of touch with reality. He is a man warped beyond any semblance of humanity.*



### ACT 5, SCENE 4

In Birnam Wood, **Malcolm** walks with **Macduff**, **Siward**, **Young Siward**, and others Scottish and English lords. Malcolm gives orders that to hide the size of their army, all soldiers should cut a branch from a tree and hold it upright as they march.

*The first block in Macbeth's fate falls into place: Birnam Wood will march on Dunsinane.*



### ACT 5, SCENE 5

**Macbeth** laughs at the coming army, but seems bored by his lack of fear. Suddenly, a woman cries out. **Seyton** investigates, and returns with news that **Lady Macbeth** has died. Macbeth gives a speech about life: "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow / Creeps in this petty pace from day to day," concluding that life "is a tale / told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / signifying nothing" (5.5.18-27).

*Macbeth has become so numb because of his own terrible actions that he can't even react when his wife dies. All he can do is comment on how meaningless life is.*



A servant rushes in with news that Birnam Wood is marching toward Dunsinane. **Macbeth** rushes to see for himself, and realizes the witches tricked him. He feels fear for the first time, calls to raise the alarm, and says that at least he'll die fighting.

*The prophecy gives Macbeth courage, but also makes his life empty. He almost seems to look forward to dying.*



### ACT 5, SCENE 6

**Malcolm** orders his men to throw down the branches they carry. The first charge against Dunsinane commences under **Siward** and **Macduff**.

*The very quick and sudden scenes in the second half of Act 5 capture the chaos of battle.*



### ACT 5, SCENE 7

In the fighting, **Macbeth** encounters and fights **Young Siward**. Though Young Siward is brave, Macbeth quickly kills him and says in a mocking tone that he fears no man of woman born.

*A reminder of the second half of the prophecy protecting Macbeth.*



### ACT 5, SCENE 8

**Macduff** searches for **Macbeth**, vowing to kill him to avenge his family.

*Emphasis on Macduff's need for revenge against Macbeth. The play is building suspense.*



### ACT 5, SCENE 9

**Malcolm** and **Siward** meet. They have easily captured the castle because **Macbeth's** men barely fight back.

*Macbeth's men don't even fight for him. His rule is utterly hollow.*



### ACT 5, SCENE 10

**Macbeth** and **Macduff** meet. Macbeth says he has avoided fighting Macduff because he has too much blood on his hands already.

*It's unclear if Macbeth is being honest or if he's baiting Macduff.*



They fight. **Macbeth** mocks **Macduff**, saying his effort is wasted: no one of woman born can beat Macbeth. But Macduff replies that he was "untimely ripped" from his mother's womb" (5.10.16).

*The second block of Macbeth's fate slides into place.*



**Macbeth**, suddenly fearful now that the prophecy has turned against him, refuses to fight him. But **Macduff** calls Macbeth a coward and says that Macbeth will be mocked across Scotland if he surrenders. Despite certain death, Macbeth attacks. Macduff kills him.

*Macbeth dies as he lived—a slave to ambition. Lady Macbeth convinced him to sacrifice his honor by questioning his courage, now Macduff gets Macbeth to fight for a lost cause to prove his courage.*



### ACT 5, SCENE 11

**Malcolm**, **Siward**, **Ross**, and others enter. Ross tells Siward of **Young Siward's** death. Siward asks if his son died from wounds on the front or back. Ross replies the front. Siward is content, denying Malcolm's comment that his son is worth more mourning than that.

*Siward is an ambiguous part of an otherwise happy ending. Siward prizes strength and courage above all things, even love for his family. Might he one day become another Macbeth?*



**Macduff** enters, carrying **Macbeth's** severed head. He proclaims **Malcolm** to be King of Scotland and swears his loyalty.

*Macduff shows his loyalty to King and country.*



**Malcolm** accepts the thanes' loyalty and makes them all earls (a higher rank). He pledges to "plant" a new peace, and to heal the wounds **Macbeth** and his "fiend-like queen" (5.11.35) inflicted on Scotland.

*Malcolm returns Scotland to political order, as his use of nature metaphors shows. Malcolm wants to make his country great, not himself.*



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## MACBETH

A line-by-line translation

## Act 1, Scene 1

## Shakespeare

*Thunder and lightning. Three WITCHES enter.***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.

*They exit.*

## Shakesclare Translation

*Thunder and lightning. Three WITCHES enter.***FIRST WITCH**

When will we three meet again? In a thunderstorm, or in a lightning storm, or when it's raining?

**SECOND WITCH**

When the mayhem's finished, when the battle's been lost by one side and won by the other.

**THIRD WITCH**

That will happen before the sun sets.

**FIRST WITCH**

At what place?


**SECOND WITCH**


Out in the field.

**THIRD WITCH**

We'll meet Macbeth there.

**FIRST WITCH**

[Calling to her familiar , a cat] Coming, Graymalkin!

 In Shakespeare's time, it was thought that witches had familiar spirits--usually taking the shape of animals--who assisted them in their witchcraft.

**SECOND WITCH**

[Calling to her familiar, a toad] Paddock calls me.

**THIRD WITCH**

[Calling to her familiar] I'll be there soon.

**ALL**

What's fair is foul, and what's foul is fair. We'll fly off through the fog and filthy air.

*They exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 2

## Shakespeare

*A trumpet and the sounds of fighting offstage. KING DUNCAN enters with his sons MALCOLM and DONALBAIN, along with the Duke of LENNOX and a number of attendants. They meet a wounded CAPTAIN.*

**DUNCAN**

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

## Shakesclare Translation

*A trumpet and the sounds of fighting offstage. KING DUNCAN enters with his sons MALCOLM and DONALBAIN, along with the Duke of LENNOX and a number of attendants. They meet a wounded CAPTAIN.*

**DUNCAN**

Who's this bloody man? From the looks of him, it seems likely he can give us the latest news about the revolt.

**MALCOLM**

This is the sergeant

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

**CAPTAIN**

Doubtful it stood,

- 10 As two spent swimmers that do cling together  
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald—  
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that  
The multiplying villainies of nature  
Do swarm upon him— from the Western Isles  
15 Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied,  
And fortune, on his damnèd quarrel smiling,  
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,  
20 Which smoked with bloody execution,  
Like valor’s minion carved out his passage  
Till he faced the slave;  
Which ne’er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,  
Till he unseamed him from the nave to th’ chops,  
25 And fixed his head upon our battlements.

**DUNCAN**

O valiant cousin! Worthy gentleman!

**CAPTAIN**

As whence the sun ‘gins his reflection  
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,  
So from that spring whence comfort seemed to come  
30 Discomfort swells. Mark, King of Scotland, mark:  
No sooner justice had, with valor armed,  
Compelled these skipping kerns to trust their heels,  
But the Norwegian lord, surveying vantage,  
With furbished arms and new supplies of men,  
35 Began a fresh assault.

**DUNCAN**

Dismayed not this our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

**CAPTAIN**

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

**DUNCAN**

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

*Attendants help the CAPTAIN to exit.*

*ROSS and ANGUS enter.*

**DUNCAN**

Who comes here?

**MALCOLM**


The worthy thane of Ross.


**MALCOLM**

This is the sergeant, a good and tough soldier who fought to stop me from getting captured.

*[To CAPTAIN]* Greetings, brave friend! Tell the king about your knowledge of the battle from how you left it.


**CAPTAIN**

The outcome was in doubt. The two armies were like two tired swimmers clinging to each other, making it impossible for either to stay afloat. The armies of the merciless Macdonwald—who has so many villainous qualities that he’s a natural rebel—were reinforced by foot soldiers and warriors with axes from Ireland and the Hebrides . Luck was smiling on his damned rebellion as if she were his whore. But that wasn’t enough because brave Macbeth—he deserves that description—defied Lady Luck with his sword, which smoked with blood, and carved through Macdonwald’s army until he faced the rogue. Not pausing to shake hands or say goodbye, Macbeth split Macdonwald from belly to jaw and stuck his head on the walls of our castle.

 The Hebrides are a group of islands off of the northwestern Scottish coast.

**DUNCAN**

Oh, heroic cousin ! A worthy gentleman!

 Shakespeare often uses the word "cousin" often as a term of kinship, not necessarily indicating blood relation. However, the historical Macbeth and Duncan were first cousins.


**CAPTAIN**


But just as terrible storms and dreadful thunder come right when the sun rises, so did new trouble arise from what had seemed to be our triumph. Listen, King of Scotland, listen: as soon as we defeated those Irish soldiers and sent them running, the Norwegian king spied an advantage and began a new assault with fresh soldiers and sharpened weapons.

**DUNCAN**

Didn’t this trouble our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

**CAPTAIN**

About as much as sparrows trouble eagles, or rabbits scare a lion. To be honest, they were like cannons loaded with double charges of gunpowder. They fought this new opponent with double their earlier ferocity. Perhaps they wanted to bathe in the blood of their enemies’ wounds, or make that battlefield as infamous as Golgotha . ...But I feel weak. My wounds are crying out for a doctor.

 Golgotha—literally "place of the skull"—was the hill where Christ was crucified.

**DUNCAN**

Your words speak to your honor—as do your wounds. Get him to a doctor.

*Attendants help the CAPTAIN to exit.*


*ROSS and ANGUS enter.*

**DUNCAN**

Who’s just arrived?

**MALCOLM**

The worthy Thane  of Ross.

 A thane was a Scottish noble—usually the head of a clan (or family group), a thane was similar in rank to an earl.

**LENNOX**

50 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  
55 And fan our people cold.  
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,  
60 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**

65 That now  
Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition.  
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**

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

**ROSS**

I'll see it done.

**DUNCAN**

What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.

*They all exit.*

**LENNOX**

His eyes are wild! He looks like a man with an incredible story to tell.

**ROSS**


God save the king.

**DUNCAN**

Where have you come from, heroic thane?

**ROSS**

Great King, I've come from Fife, where the Norwegian flag flies--mocking our land and terrifying our people. The King of Norway—with a huge army and the support of that disloyal traitor, the Thane of Cawdor—began a battle that our forces looked likely to lose. That is, until Macbeth—covered in armor and seeming like [Bellona's](#) husband—met the rebellious thane sword in hand-to-hand combat, and in the end, Macbeth defeated Cawdor. To conclude, we were victorious.

 Bellona was the ancient Roman goddess of war.

**DUNCAN**

Great happiness!

**ROSS**

Now Sweno, the Norwegian king, begs for a peace treaty. We refused to let him bury his men until he retreated to Saint Colme's Inch and gave us ten thousand dollars.

**DUNCAN**

The Thane of Cawdor will never again deceive me. Go proclaim that he will be executed, and tell Macbeth that he will receive Cawdor's title.

**ROSS**

I'll do that.

**DUNCAN**

Noble Macbeth has won what the Thane of Cawdor has lost.

*They all exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*The sound of thunder. The three WITCHES enter.*

**FIRST WITCH**

Where hast thou been, sister?

**SECOND WITCH**

Killing swine.

**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,

10

### Shakesclare Translation

*The sound of thunder. The three WITCHES enter.*

**FIRST WITCH**

Where have you been, sister?

**SECOND WITCH**

Killing pigs.

**THIRD WITCH**

Where were you, sister?

**FIRST WITCH**

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap and munched, and munched them. "Give me one," I said. "Get out of here, witch!" the fat-bottomed, scabby woman cried. Her husband has gone to Aleppo as captain of a sailing ship called The Tiger. I'm going to sail there in a strainer, and

And like a rat without a tail,  
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**

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

**SECOND WITCH**

Show me, show me.

**FIRST WITCH**

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

*A drum sounds offstage.*

**THIRD WITCH**

A drum, a drum!  
Macbeth doth come.

**ALL**

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

*MACBETH and BANQUO enter.*

**MACBETH**

40 So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

**BANQUO**

How far is 't called to Forres? —What are these  
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  
45 That man may question? You seem to understand me,  
By each at once her choppy finger laying  
Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,  
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret  
That you are so.

**MACBETH**

50 Speak, if you can: what are you?

**FIRST WITCH**

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

them--like a rat without a tail--I'll do this to him, and this,  
and that.

**SECOND WITCH**

I'll make a wind for you to sail there.

**FIRST WITCH**

That's very kind.

**THIRD WITCH**

And I'll give you another wind.

**FIRST WITCH**

I'm already master of all the other winds, the locations from  
which they originate, and every direction on the compass  
that they can blow. I'll drain him until he's dry as hay, and  
won't let him sleep during night or day. He'll live as a cursed  
man. For eighty-one wearying weeks he'll slowly become  
sickly, and waste away from grief. Although I can't destroy  
his ship, I can still buffet it with storms by controlling the  
winds. Look what I've got.

**SECOND WITCH**

Show me, show me.

**FIRST WITCH**

Here I hold the thumb of a captain who was shipwrecked  
while returning home.

*A drum sounds offstage.*

**THIRD WITCH**

A drum, a drum! Macbeth comes.

**ALL**

*[Dancing together in a circle]* The weird sisters, hand in  
hand, swift travelers over the sea and land, dance around  
and around! Three times your way, then three times mine,  
and three times again, to add up to nine. Quiet! The spell is  
ready.

*MACBETH and BANQUO enter.*

**MACBETH**

I've never seen a day that was so good--because of our  
great victory--and yet with such bad weather.

**BANQUO**

How far is it to Forres, King Duncan's palace? *[He sees the  
WITCHES]* What are these creatures? They're so wrinkled  
and wildly dressed. They don't look like residents of the  
earth, and yet here they are on it.

*[To the WITCHES]* Are you alive? Are you something that a  
man can question? You seem to understand me, since each  
of you has placed a chapped finger to her skinny lips. You  
look like women, but your beards won't let me believe that  
you actually are.

**MACBETH**

Speak, if you can. What are you?

**FIRST WITCH**

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

**SECOND WITCH**

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  
 55 Things that do sound so fair [to the WITCHES]! I' th'  
 name of truth,  
 are ye fantastical, or that indeed  
 Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner  
 You greet with present grace and great prediction  
 60 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  
 And say which grain will grow and which will not,  
 Speak, then, to me, who neither beg nor fear  
 65 Your favors nor your hate.

**FIRST WITCH**

Hail!

**SECOND WITCH**

Hail!

**THIRD WITCH**

Hail!

**FIRST WITCH**

Lesser than Macbeth and greater.

**SECOND WITCH**

70 Not so happy, yet much happier.

**THIRD WITCH**

Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.  
 So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

**FIRST WITCH**

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

**MACBETH**

Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more.  
 75 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  
 Stands not within the prospect of belief,  
 No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence  
 80 You owe this strange intelligence, or why  
 Upon this blasted heath you stop our way  
 With such prophetic greeting. Speak, I charge you.

*The WITCHES vanish.*

**BANQUO**

The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,  
 And these are of them. Whither are they vanished?

**MACBETH**

85 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?  
 Or have we eaten on the insane root  
 That takes the reason prisoner?

**MACBETH**

90 Your children shall be kings.

**SECOND WITCH**

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

**THIRD WITCH**

All hail, Macbeth, who will be king in the future!

**BANQUO**

[To MACBETH] Good sir, why do you flinch and seem afraid  
 of these words that predict such good things for you?

[To the WITCHES] Be truthful, are you some kind of illusion-  
 -or are you, in fact, what you appear to be? You've greeted  
 my noble friend by his current title, and predict a future of  
 additional noble titles and the promise of becoming king--  
 all of which has left him astonished. Yet you don't speak at  
 all to me. If you can look into the future and say what will  
 happen, then speak to me. I neither want your favors nor  
 fear your hatred.

**FIRST WITCH**

Hail!

**SECOND WITCH**

Hail!

**THIRD WITCH**

Hail!

**FIRST WITCH**

You are lesser than Macbeth but also greater.

**SECOND WITCH**

You will not be so fortunate as Macbeth, and yet much more  
 fortunate.

**THIRD WITCH**

Your descendants will be kings, though you will not be king.  
 So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

**FIRST WITCH**

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

**MACBETH**

Wait! You have not told me everything. Tell me more. I know  
 I am the Thane of Glamis, because the title became mine  
 when my father Sinel died. But how can I be the Thane of  
 Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor is alive--and he is a rich,  
 strong man too. And for me to become king is beyond  
 belief--just as it's crazy for me to be Thane of Cawdor. Tell  
 me where you got this unnatural information. And why did  
 you come to us on this bleak and empty field with such a  
 prophecy? I command you to speak.

*The WITCHES vanish.*

**BANQUO**

The earth has bubbles, just like as water does. These beings  
 must come from such a bubble. Where did they vanish?

**MACBETH**

Into the air. They seemed solid, but then just melted like  
 breath into the wind. I wish that they would have stayed!

**BANQUO**

Were these creatures that we're discussing ever even here?  
 Or have we both eaten some root that's given us  
 hallucinations?

**MACBETH**

Your children will 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?

*ROSS and ANGUS enter.*

**ROSS**

The king hath happily received, Macbeth,  
 95 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,  
 In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,  
 100 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  
 Thy praises in his kingdom's great defense,  
 105 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**

110 And, for an earnest of a greater honor,  
 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**

115 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  
 120 With those of Norway, or did line the rebel  
 With hidden help and vantage, or that with both  
 He labored in his country's wrack, I know not;  
 But treasons capital, confessed and proved,  
 Have overthrown him.

**MACBETH**

125 *[aside]* Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!  
 The greatest is behind. *[to ROSS and ANGUS]* Thanks for  
 your pains.  
*[aside to BANQUO]* Do you not hope your children shall  
 be kings,  
 130 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.  
 135 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.

**BANQUO**

You will be king.

**MACBETH**

And Thane of Cawdor too. Is that what they said?

**BANQUO**

Those were their exact words. Who's coming here?

*ROSS and ANGUS enter.*

**ROSS**

Macbeth, the king was happy to learn of your success. And when he heard the story of your personal heroism in the battle against the rebels, he couldn't decide whether to praise you or just be silently amazed. He was also at a loss for words to find out that on the same day you fought the rebels, you also fought against the army of Norway--and that you weren't at all afraid of death, even as you killed those around you. A stream of messengers brought news of this to the king, and they gushed with praise for how you defended his country.

**ANGUS**

We've been sent to give you the king's thanks and to escort you to him, although we don't have your reward.

**ROSS**

But--to give you a hint of the honors coming your way--the king told me to call you the Thane of Cawdor. Hail, most worthy thane, for that title is now yours.

**BANQUO**

What? Can the devil speak the truth?

**MACBETH**

The Thane of Cawdor is still alive. How can you pretend that his title is now mine?

**ANGUS**

The former Thane of Cawdor is still alive, but he's held under a death sentence--and he deserves to die. I don't know whether he fought alongside the Norwegians or if he secretly helped the rebels, or if he worked with both of our enemies to destroy our country. But his capital treason has been proven, and he has confessed to it, so he has lost his former title.

**MACBETH**

*[To himself]* Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor! With the biggest part of their prophecy yet to come.

*[To ROSS and ANGUS]* Thanks for your efforts to bring this news.

*[To BANQUO so that only he can hear]* Are you starting to believe your children might be kings, since the witches who said I would be Thane of Cawdor promised they would be?

**BANQUO**

If you trust them, then it seems you might eventually become king, not just Thane of Cawdor. But all of this is strange. Often, to lead us to harm, the agents of darkness will first tell us some bit of truth. They win us over by telling us the truth about unimportant things, only to betray us when the consequences will be most terrible.

[to ROSS and ANGUS] Cousins, a word, I pray you.

ROSS, ANGUS, and BANQUO move off to one side.

**MACBETH**

140 *[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  
145 Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,  
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  
150 And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,  
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  
155 That function is smothered in surmise,  
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  
160 Without my stir.

**BANQUO**

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,  
165 Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

**BANQUO**

Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

**MACBETH**

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

**BANQUO**

175 Very gladly.

**MACBETH**

Till then, enough. [to ROSS and ANGUS] Come, friends.

*They all exit.*

[To ROSS and ANGUS] Gentlemen, speak with me a  
moment, please.

ROSS, ANGUS, and BANQUO move off to one side.

**MACBETH**

*[To himself]* Two of the prophecies have come true, making  
it seem like this will end with my rise to the throne.

*[To ROSS and ANGUS]* Thank you, gentlemen.

*[To himself]* This supernatural temptation doesn't seem like  
it's a bad thing, but it can't be good either. If it's bad, why  
did it promise me a success that turned out to be true? I am  
the Thane of Cawdor. But if this is a good thing, why do I  
find myself thinking about something that is so horrid that  
it makes my hair stand on end, and my heart pound  
unnaturally within my chest? The things I should fear are  
less frightening to me than the horrible things I'm  
imagining. Although my thoughts of murder are just a  
fantasy, they shake my very sense of self. My ability to act is  
blocked by my swirling thoughts, and all that matters to me  
are things that don't exist.

**BANQUO**

Look how our friend is daydreaming.

**MACBETH**

*[To himself]* If fate wants me to be king, well, maybe fate  
will give me the throne without me having to do anything at  
all.

**BANQUO**

Like brand new clothes, Macbeth's new titles don't fit well  
until they've been worn for a while.

**MACBETH**

*[To himself]* No matter what happens, time continues on.

**BANQUO**

Good Macbeth, we're waiting for you, whenever you're  
ready to go.

**MACBETH**

Pardon me. I was occupied by forgotten thoughts. Kind  
gentlemen, I won't forget your efforts today, and will  
remember them every day. Let's go to the king.

*[To BANQUO so that only he can hear]* Think about what  
just happened, and let's discuss it freely with one another  
when we've both had more time to consider its  
implications.

**BANQUO**

Gladly.

**MACBETH**

Until then, we'll keep quiet about it.

*[To ROSS and ANGUS]* Let's go, my friends.

*They all exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Shakescleare Translation

*Trumpets sound. KING DUNCAN, LENNOX, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, and their attendants enter.*

**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  
5 With one that saw him die, who did report  
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  
10 As one that had been studied in his death  
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.  
15 He was a gentleman on whom I built  
An absolute trust.

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

**DUNCAN**

*[to MACBETH]*  
O worthiest cousin,  
The sin of my ingratitude even now  
20 Was heavy on me. Thou art so far before  
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow  
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,  
That the proportion both of thanks and payment  
Might have been mine! Only I have left to say,  
25 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  
Is to receive our duties, and our duties  
Are to your throne and state children and servants,  
30 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  
To make thee full of growing. *[to BANQUO]* Noble  
35 Banquo,  
That hast no less deserved, nor must be known  
No less to have done so, let me unfold thee  
And hold thee to my heart.

**BANQUO**

There, if I grow,  
40 The harvest is your own.

**DUNCAN**

My plenteous joys,  
Wanton in fullness, seek to hide themselves  
In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,  
And you whose places are the nearest, know  
45 We will establish our estate upon  
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter  
The prince of Cumberland; which honor must  
Not unaccompanied invest him only,  
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine  
50 On all deservers. *[to MACBETH]* From hence to Inverness,  
And bind us further to you.

*Trumpets sound. KING DUNCAN, LENNOX, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, and their attendants enter.*

**DUNCAN**

Has the Thane of Cawdor been executed? Have those in  
charge of the execution returned?

**MALCOLM**

My lord, they haven't returned yet. But I spoke with  
someone who saw Cawdor die. He reported that Cawdor  
confessed his treason, begged your Highness's forgiveness,  
and displayed deep regret for his actions. Nothing he did in  
his entire life was as noble as the way he died. He died like a  
man completely prepared to throw away the most precious  
thing he owned as if it were a worthless trinket.

**DUNCAN**

It's impossible to tell what's in a man's mind by looking at  
his face. Cawdor was a gentleman whom I trusted  
completely.

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

**DUNCAN**

*[To MACBETH]* My noble cousin! I've just been feeling guilty  
for not showing you enough gratitude. You've  
accomplished so much that, no matter how fast I try to  
reward you, I haven't been able to give you enough. If you  
deserved less, then perhaps the balance between what I  
can reward and what you deserve could be tipped in my  
favor. But all I have left to say is that I owe you more than I  
can ever repay.

**MACBETH**

The loyalty I feel to you and the chance to serve you is its  
own reward. Your Highness's duty is to accept our loyalty  
and service, while our duty to your kingship and country is  
similar to that owed by children to their father or servants  
to their master: we're only doing what we should when we  
do all we can to protect you.

**DUNCAN**

Be welcome here. The rewards I have given you are like  
newly planted seeds, and now I will work to help you grow  
into a great future.

*[To BANQUO]* Noble Banquo, you are just as deserving as  
Macbeth, as everyone should and must know. Let me bring  
you close and hold you to my heart.

**BANQUO**

Then, if I grow to greatness, it will be a benefit to you as  
well.

**DUNCAN**

I am so full of joy it brings tears to my eyes. My sons,  
relatives, thanes, and all those who are most close to me: I  
hereby proclaim that the heir to my throne is my eldest son,  
Malcolm, whom we will now call the Prince of Cumberland.  
He will not be alone in gaining new titles—new titles of  
nobility, like stars, will shine on all who deserve them.

*[To MACBETH]* From here, let's go to your castle at  
Inverness, where your hospitality will make me even more  
indebted to you.



**MACBETH**

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.  
55 So humbly take my leave.

**DUNCAN**

My worthy Cawdor!

**MACBETH**

[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;  
60 Let not light see my black and deep desires.  
The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be  
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

*MACBETH exits.*

**DUNCAN**

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

*Trumpets sound. They exit.*

**MACBETH**

Any effort in your service does not feel like work at all. I'll be  
the messenger and delight my wife with the news that  
you're coming. Now I will humbly be on my way.

**DUNCAN**

My noble Cawdor!

**MACBETH**

[To himself] Malcolm is the Prince of Cumberland! Because  
he is between me and the throne, I'm either going to have  
to move above him, or give up my hopes of kingship. Stars,  
hide your brightness so that my evil desires are hidden from  
the light. May my eye be blind to the actions of my hand.  
Yet if I do the thing that my eyes fear to see, I will be forced  
to see it once it's been done.

*MACBETH exits.*

**DUNCAN**

True, Banquo. Macbeth is incredibly heroic, and by praising  
him I myself benefit. Let's follow him, since he's gone ahead  
of us to prepare for our arrival. He is unequaled as a lord or  
kinsman.

*Trumpets sound. They all exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 5

### Shakespeare

*LADY MACBETH enters, reading 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  
5 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  
10 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  
15 What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature;  
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness  
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great,  
Art not without ambition, but without  
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst  
20 highly,  
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,  
And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'ld'st have, great  
Glamis,  
That which cries, "Thus thou must do," if thou have it,  
25 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  
All that impedes thee from the golden round,  
30 Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem  
To have thee crowned withal.

*A SERVANT enters.*

### Shakescleare Translation

*LADY MACBETH enters, reading a letter.*

**LADY MACBETH**

[Reading] "The witches met me on my day of victory, and I  
have since learned for certain that they have supernatural  
knowledge. When I tried frantically to question them  
further, they vanished into the air. While I stood amazed at  
the strangeness of all of this, messengers from the king  
arrived and greeted me as "Thane of Cawdor," which is  
exactly what the weird sisters had called me before then  
hailing me as 'the future king!' My dearest partner in  
greatness, I wanted to tell you this news, so that you would  
not be ignorant of the greatness promised to us and  
therefore be unable to celebrate. Keep it close to your  
heart, and farewell." [She puts down the letter] You are  
Thane of Glamis, and Cawdor, and you will be the king just  
as you were promised. Yet I worry about your character. You  
are too full of the milk of human kindness to take the  
shortest route to power. You want to be powerful, and you  
don't lack ambition--but you don't have the nastiness  
required to truly go for it. You hope to become great by  
acting with virtue and goodness. You don't want to lie or  
cheat, yet you want to win what Great Thane of Glamis, you  
want to have something, but you're too frightened to do it.  
Get yourself home, so I can whisper in your ear and criticize  
you so that you cease to be affected by everything that's  
keeping you from taking the crown--which fate and magic  
both seem to want you to have.

*A SERVANT enters.*

**LADY MACBETH**

What is your tidings?

**SERVANT**

The king comes here tonight.

**LADY MACBETH**

Thou 'rt mad to say it.

35 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,

40 Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more  
Than would make up his message.

**LADY MACBETH**

Give him tending.

He brings great news.

*The SERVANT exits.*

**LADY MACBETH**

The raven himself is hoarse

That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan

45 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,

50 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 murd'ring ministers,  
Wherever in your sightless substances

55 You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,  
And pall thee in the dunest 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!"

*MACBETH enters.*

**LADY MACBETH**

60 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**

65 My dearest love,  
Duncan comes here tonight.

**LADY MACBETH**

And when goes hence?

**MACBETH**

Tomorrow, as he purposes.

**LADY MACBETH**

O, never

70 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,  
Your hand, your tongue. Look like th' innocent flower,  
75 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,  
Which shall to all our nights and days to come  
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

**LADY MACBETH**

What's your news?

**SERVANT**

The king is coming here tonight.

**LADY MACBETH**

You're crazy to think that. Isn't my lord Macbeth with the king? If what you say is true, Macbeth would have sent word so I could prepare?

**SERVANT**


I beg your pardon, but it's true: our lord is coming. One of my fellow servants raced ahead of him, and was so out of breath that he almost couldn't tell me his message.


**LADY MACBETH**

Take care him. He brings great news.

*The SERVANT exits.*

**LADY MACBETH**

The messenger croaks the announcement of Duncan's fatal arrival to my castle, just like a raven  would croak out a warning. Come on, you spirits that aid thoughts of murder: remove my womanhood and fill me up from head to toe with terrible cruelty! Thicken my blood. Block my veins from all feelings of regret, so that no natural feelings of guilt or doubt can sway me from my dark desires, or prevent me from accomplishing them! Demons of murder, come to me from wherever you hide yourselves as you wait to aid and abet corrupt and evil feelings, and turn my mother's milk into bitter acid. Come, thick night--wrapped in the darkest smoke of hell--so that my sharp knife can't see the wound it makes, and heaven can't peek through the darkness and cry: "Stop! Stop!"

 *The raven symbolized bad omens.*

*MACBETH enters.*

**LADY MACBETH**

Great Thane of Glamis and noble Thane of Cawdor, you'll be greater than both when you become king. Your letter has transported me beyond the present moment and all its ignorance of what will come, so that I now feel like the future is here now.

**MACBETH**

My dearest love, Duncan will be here tonight.

**LADY MACBETH**

And when does he leave?

**MACBETH**

Tomorrow, according to his plans.

**LADY MACBETH**

That will never happen. My thane, your face betrays your troubled thoughts, so that others can read it like a book. To deceive all others, you have to look exactly as they do. When you greet the king, do so completely: with your eyes, hands, and words. Look like an innocent flower, but be the snake that hides beneath it. The king must be taken care of. Allow me to manage everything tonight, because the events of this night will bring us sole mastery and power for all our nights and days to come.

**MACBETH**

80 We will speak further.

**LADY MACBETH**

Only look up clear.  
To alter favor ever is to fear.  
Leave all the rest to me.

*They exit.*

**MACBETH**

We'll speak about this further.

**LADY MACBETH**

Keep your head up and look calm. If your expression changes it will arouse suspicion. Leave all the rest to me.

*They exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 6

### Shakespeare

*Torches light the stage. The sound of oboes playing. DUNCAN enters, along with MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, and their attendants.*

**DUNCAN**

This castle hath a pleasant seat. The air  
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself  
Unto our gentle senses.

**BANQUO**

This guest of summer,  
5 The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,  
By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath  
Smells wooingly here. No jutty, frieze,  
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird  
Hath made his pendant bed and procreant cradle.  
10 Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed,  
The air is delicate.

*LADY MACBETH enters.*

**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  
15 How you shall bid God 'ild us for your pains,  
And thank us for your trouble.

**LADY MACBETH**

All our service,  
In every point twice done and then done double,  
Were poor and single business to contend  
20 Against those honors deep and broad wherewith  
Your majesty loads our house. For those of old,  
And the late dignities heaped up to them,  
We rest your hermits.

**DUNCAN**

Where's the thane of Cawdor?  
25 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 holp him  
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,  
We are your guest tonight.

**LADY MACBETH**

Your servants ever  
30 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.  
35 Conduct me to mine host. We love him highly  
And shall continue our graces towards him.

### Shakesclare Translation

*Torches light the stage. The sound of oboes playing. DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, and their attendants enter.*

**DUNCAN**

This castle sits in a pleasant place. The fresh, sweet air  
delights my noble senses.

**BANQUO**

That the martin—a summer bird that builds its nest in the  
steeple of churches—builds its nest here proves how sweet  
and blessed the breeze is. These birds have built nests on  
every projection, carving, buttress, and corner of this castle.  
I've noticed that martins prefer to live and mate in places  
where the air is most fine.

*LADY MACBETH enters.*

**DUNCAN**

Look, it's our honored hostess! I am troubled sometimes by  
the lengths that my subjects go to out of love for me, but I  
still thank you for your love. In saying this, I'm suggesting  
that you thank me for the trouble my presence is causing  
you, since I'm here out of my love for you.

**LADY MACBETH**

All our efforts—even if they were doubled and then doubled  
again—are poor and small acts when compared to the  
profound honor you've brought to our home. In gratitude  
for the honors you've given us in the past, and those you've  
added just recently, we will always pray for and support  
you.

**DUNCAN**

Where's Macbeth, Thane of Cawdor? We followed closely  
after him, and hoped to overtake him on the road so that  
we would be the ones to welcome him. But he rides well,  
and his great love for you—which is as sharp as his spur--  
helped him reach his home before us. Beautiful and noble  
hostess, we are your guests tonight.

**LADY MACBETH**

We are always your servants. And our servants, we  
ourselves, and everything we own belong to you. It is all  
yours to use and enjoy, and we are ready to return it to you  
because it is really your own, after all.

**DUNCAN**

Give me your hand. Lead me to Macbeth, my host. I love  
him dearly, and I shall continue to hold him in high favor.  
When you're ready, hostess.

By your leave, hostess.

*They all exit.*

*They all exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 7

### Shakespeare

*The sound of oboes playing. Torches light the stage. A butler enters, as do a number of servants carrying utensils and dishes of food. Then MACBETH enters.*

#### 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,  
15 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.

*LADY MACBETH enters.*

#### MACBETH

How now! What news?

#### LADY MACBETH

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

#### MACBETH

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  
35 Golden opinions from all sorts of people,  
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,  
Not cast aside so soon.

#### LADY MACBETH

Was the hope drunk  
Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?  
40 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

### Shakescleare Translation

*The sound of oboes playing. Torches light the stage. A butler and number of servants carrying utensils and dishes of food enter. Then MACBETH enters.*

#### MACBETH

If this will really all be over once it's done, then it would be best to get it over with quickly. If the assassination of the king could be like a net--catching up all the consequences of the act within it--then the act would be the be-all and end-all of the whole affair. Then, at this point, I would do it and risk the afterlife. But for such crimes there are still consequences in this world. Violent acts only teach others to commit violence--and the violence of our students will come back to plague us teachers. Justice, being even-handed, forces the cup we poisoned and gave to others back to our own lips. The king trusts me twice over: first, I am his kinsman and his subject. Second, I am his host, and should be closing the door to any murderer rather than trying to murder him myself. Besides, Duncan has been such a humble leader--so honest and free from corruption--that his virtues will make angels sing for him and cry out like trumpets against his murder. Pity, like an innocent newborn baby, will ride the wind like a winged angel, or on invisible horses through the air, to spread news of the horrible deed across the land, so that a flood of tears will fall from the sky. I have no reason to spur myself to act on my desires other than ambition, which makes people leap into action and into tragedy.

*LADY MACBETH enters.*

#### MACBETH

What's the news?

#### LADY MACBETH

He's almost finished eating dinner. Why have you left the dining room?

#### MACBETH

Has he asked for me?

#### LADY MACBETH

Don't you know that he has?

#### MACBETH

We'll go no further with this plan. He has recently honored me, and I have earned the good opinions of all sorts of people. I should be basking in my new honor and position, not throwing it aside so quickly.

#### LADY MACBETH

Were you drunk when you were so hopeful earlier? Did you then go to sleep, and wake up sick and pale in fear of what we planned before? From this point on I will see your love in a new way. Are you afraid to act on your desires? Will you take the thing you want more than anything else? Or will

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

**MACBETH**

Prithce, peace:  
50 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;  
55 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  
60 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**

65 If we should fail?

**LADY MACBETH**

We fail?  
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  
70 Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains  
Will I with wine and wassail so convince  
That memory, the warder of the brain,  
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason  
A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep  
75 Their drenchèd natures lie as in a death,  
What cannot you and I perform upon  
The unguarded Duncan? What not put upon  
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt  
Of our great quell?

**MACBETH**

80 Bring forth men-children only,  
For thy undaunted mettle should compose  
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,  
When we have marked with blood those sleepy two  
Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,  
85 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  
90 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.

*They exit.*

you live as a coward in your own mind, always saying "I can't" after you say "I want to?" You're like the poor cat in the old story, who wants to eat fish but refuses to get its feet wet.

**MACBETH**

I beg you, no more! I dare to do only what's appropriate for a man to do. Anyone who dares to do more is not a real man at all.

**LADY MACBETH**

Then what kind of beast were you when you first told me about all this? When you dared to do it, that's when you were a man. And to actually do it in order to become king, then you'll be that much more of a man. The time and place weren't right before—but you would have done it anyway. Now the time and place are perfect, but it's as if their very perfectness unnerves you. I have breastfed a baby, and I know how sweet it is to love a nursing baby. But even as the baby was smiling up at me, I would have yanked my nipple from its mouth and dashed out its brains if I had sworn to do it in the same way you have sworn to do this.

**MACBETH**

But what if we fail?

**LADY MACBETH**

We, fail? Just get a hold of your courage, and we won't fail. When Duncan is asleep—and he surely will be soon, after this day's hard journey—I'll get his two servingmen so drunk on wine and ale that their memory will disappear in the fumes of alcohol. As they lie in their piggish sleep, so drunk they might as well be dead, you and I will be able to do what we please. What will stop us from doing what we want to the unguarded Duncan? And what will stop us from blaming the murder on his drunken servants?

**MACBETH**

May you only give birth to boys, because your fearless spirit could only create males. Are you sure that smearing the two drunken servants with blood, and using their daggers to do the deed, will really make people believe that they were the ones who did it?

**LADY MACBETH**

Who would possibly think that it could be anyone else? The two of us will wail with grief when we learn of his death.

**MACBETH**

I am convinced, and now I will use all my strength to achieve this great and terrible thing. Go now, and deceive everyone with a show of friendliness. You must hide your treacherous heart behind a false face.

*They exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Shakescleare Translation

*BANQUO enters with FLEANCE, who carries a torch.*

**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**

5 Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heaven;  
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,  
10 Restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature  
Gives way to in repose.

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

**BANQUO**

Give me my sword. Who's there?

**MACBETH**

A friend.

**BANQUO**

15 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,  
By the name of most kind hostess, and shut up  
In measureless content.

**MACBETH**

20 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:  
To you they have showed some truth.

**MACBETH**

25 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**

30 If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,  
It shall make honor for you.

**BANQUO**

35 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**

Thanks, sir: the like to you!

*BANQUO enters with FLEANCE, who carries a torch.*

**BANQUO**

What time is it, boy?

**FLEANCE**

The moon has set. I haven't heard a clock strike, though.

**BANQUO**

The moon sets at twelve.

**FLEANCE**

I think it's later than that, sir.

**BANQUO**

Wait, take my sword. The heavens are being thrifty, keeping the stars dark. Take this, too. *[He gives FLEANCE his belt and dagger]* Sleepiness weighs on me like lead, but I don't want to sleep. Angels of mercy, help me to control the evil thoughts that fill my mind whenever I lay down to rest.

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

**BANQUO**

Give me my sword. Who's there?

**MACBETH**

A friend.

**BANQUO**

What, you're not asleep yet? The king's in bed. He's been unusually pleased, and has given gift after gift to your servants. He wants to give this diamond to your wife for being such an attentive hostess and ensuring his total comfort.

**MACBETH**

As we were unprepared for his visit, we could only be imperfect hosts. If we had been prepared, everything would have been much better.

**BANQUO**

Everything is all right. I had a dream last night about the three witches. Some of their predictions about you have come true.

**MACBETH**

I don't think about them. But when we have an hour to spare, I'd like to talk about it a bit more, if you'd be willing.

**BANQUO**

Whenever you like.

**MACBETH**

If you will agree to follow me when the time comes, it will result in more honor for you.

**BANQUO**

As long as I don't lose any honor in trying to gain more, and can keep a clear conscience, I will listen to you.

**MACBETH**


In the meantime, rest well.

**BANQUO**

Thanks, sir. The same to you!


*BANQUO and FLEANCE exit.***MACBETH***[to the SERVANT]* Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,

40 She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

*The SERVANT exits.***MACBETH**Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.45 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?  
I see thee yet, in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw.50 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,  
Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still,  
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,  
55 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  
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse  
The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates  
60 Pale Hecate's offerings, and withered murder,  
Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,  
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,  
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design  
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,  
65 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,  
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives.  
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.*A bell rings.***MACBETH**70 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.*MACBETH exits.**BANQUO and FLEANCE exit.***MACBETH***[To the SERVANT]* Go and tell Lady Macbeth that, when my drink is ready, she should strike the bell. Then get yourself to bed.*The SERVANT exits.***MACBETH**Is this a dagger I see in front of me, with its handle aimed toward my hand? Come here, dagger, and let me grasp you. *[He grabs at the dagger but his hand passes right through]* I don't have you, and yet I can still see you. Deadly apparition, is it possible to see you but not touch you? Or are you just a dagger created by the mind, an illusion of my feverish brain? I still see you, and you look as real as this other dagger that I'm unsheathing now. *[He draws a dagger]* You're leading me the way I was going already, and I was going to use a weapon just like you. Either my eyesight is the only sense of mine that isn't working, or it's the only one that's working correctly. I still see you--and some spots of blood on your blade and handle that weren't there before. This dagger doesn't exist. It's the murder I'm planning that's affecting my eyes. Now half the world is asleep and being attacked by nightmares. Witches offer sacrifices to their goddess Hecate. Meanwhile old man Murder--having been awakened by the howls of his wolf--walks like a ghost, like that ancient Roman rapist Tarquin , to do the deed. You firm, hard earth: don't listen to my steps or their direction. I fear the stones will echo and reveal where I am, breaking the awful silence that suits what I'm about to do so well. While I talk here about the plan, Duncan lives. Speaking cools the heat of my willingness to act.*A bell rings.***MACBETH**

Now I go, and the deed is as good as done. The bell invites me to act. Duncan, don't hear the bell, because it is the sound of your summon to heaven or to hell.

*MACBETH exits.*

 Tarquin was an ancient Roman prince who snuck into the room of a nobleman's wife, Lucretia, and raped her. Her story is detailed in Shakespeare's poem "The Rape of Lucrece."

## Act 2, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*LADY MACBETH enters.***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,5 Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it.  
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,  
10 Whether they live or die.**MACBETH***[within]* Who's there? What, ho!

### Shakescleare Translation

*LADY MACBETH enters.***LADY MACBETH**The wine that made the servants drunk has made me bold.  
The liquor that put them to sleep has filled me with fire.  
Listen! Quiet! That was the shriek of an owl--an omen of  
death like the bell struck at midnight by the night  
watchman before the cell of a man condemned to death.  
Macbeth is killing Duncan right now. The doors to Duncan's  
chamber are open, and the snores of the drunk servants  
make a mockery of their job of guarding him. I drugged  
their drinks to make them sleep so soundly that they seem  
dead.**MACBETH***[Offstage]* Who's there? What's that!

**LADY MACBETH**

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

*MACBETH enters, holding bloody daggers.*

**LADY MACBETH**

My husband!

**MACBETH**

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

**LADY MACBETH**

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

**MACBETH**

When?

**LADY MACBETH**

Now.

**MACBETH**

As I descended?

**LADY MACBETH**

Ay.

**MACBETH**

25 Hark! Who lies i' th' second chamber?

**LADY MACBETH**

Donalbain.

**MACBETH**

*[looking at his hands]* This is a sorry sight.

**LADY MACBETH**

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

**MACBETH**

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

**LADY MACBETH**

There are two lodged together.

**MACBETH**

35 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**

Consider it not so deeply.

**MACBETH**

40 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.

**LADY MACBETH**

Oh no, I'm afraid the servants woke up, and the job is not done. It would ruin us completely to fail in our attempt to murder the king. *[She hears a noise]* Listen! I placed the servants' daggers where Macbeth could not miss seeing them. I would have killed Duncan myself if he didn't look so much like my own father while he slept.

*MACBETH enters, holding bloody daggers.*

**LADY MACBETH**

My husband!

**MACBETH**

I have done the deed. Didn't you hear a noise?

**LADY MACBETH**

I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry. Did you say something?

**MACBETH**

When?

**LADY MACBETH**

Just now.

**MACBETH**

As I came down?

**LADY MACBETH**

Yes.

**MACBETH**

Listen! Who's sleeping in the second bedroom?

**LADY MACBETH**

Donalbain.

**MACBETH**

*[Looking at the blood on his hands]* This is a sorry sight.

**LADY MACBETH**

That's a foolish thing to say, that it's a "sorry sight."

**MACBETH**

One servant laughed in his sleep, and one cried, "murder!" so that they woke each other up. I stood and listened, but they just said their prayers and fell back asleep.

**LADY MACBETH**

Malcolm and Donalbain are asleep in the same room.

**MACBETH**

One servant cried, "God bless us!" and the other said, "Amen," as if they'd seen me with my blood-stained hands. Though I heard the fear in their voices, I couldn't respond "Amen" when they said "God bless us!"

**LADY MACBETH**

Try not to think about it so much.

**MACBETH**

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

**LADY MACBETH**

We must not think in that way about what we've done. Thinking that way will drive us crazy.



**MACBETH**

45 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,  
50 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**

55 Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,  
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?  
60 They must lie there. Go carry them and smear  
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**

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

*LADY MACBETH exits.*

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**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.  
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood  
75 Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather  
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,  
Making the green one red.

*LADY MACBETH enters.*

**LADY MACBETH**

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

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**LADY MACBETH**

80 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.

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**LADY MACBETH**

85 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**

I thought I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more! Macbeth  
murders sleep." Innocent sleep. Sleep that smooths away  
all our fears and worries; that puts an end to each day; that  
eases the aches of the day's work; and soothes hurt minds.  
Sleep, the main and most nourishing course in the feast of  
life.

**LADY MACBETH**

What's your meaning?

**MACBETH**

The voice cried and cried, "Sleep no more!" to the entire  
house. "Glamis has murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor  
will sleep no more. Macbeth will sleep no more."

**LADY MACBETH**

Who was it that cried out these words? Oh, my noble thane,  
you make yourself weak and unable to act when you think  
so obsessively about things. Go get some water and wash  
this filthy evidence from your hands. Why did you bring  
these daggers from the room? They must remain there. Go  
return them and smear the sleeping servants with the  
blood.

**MACBETH**

I won't go back. I'm afraid just to think about what I've  
done. I don't dare to look at it again.

**LADY MACBETH**

You weakling! Give me the daggers. Dead and sleeping  
people are as harmless as pictures: it's childish to fear a  
scary painting. If Duncan is still bleeding, I'll cover the faces  
of the servants with the blood. They must appear to be  
guilty.

*LADY MACBETH exits.*

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**MACBETH**

Where is that knocking coming from? What's wrong with  
me, that every noise terrifies me? *[Looking at his hands]*  
Whose hands are these? Ha! They're plucking out my eyes.  
Could even all the water in the ocean wash this blood  
from my hands? No, my hands would instead stain the seas  
crimson, turning the green water entirely red.

*LADY MACBETH enters.*

**LADY MACBETH**

My hands are red like yours, but I'd be ashamed if my heart  
were as bloodless and cowardly as yours.

*A knock sounds offstage.*


**LADY MACBETH**

I hear knocking at the south gate. We must return to our  
bedroom. A little water will wash away all the evidence of  
what we've done. It is so easy! Your determination has  
deserted you.

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**LADY MACBETH**

Listen! More knocking. Put on your sleeping robe, so that  
when we have to appear it won't seem as if we've been  
awake and watching this whole time. Break free of the sad  
thoughts that hold you down.

 In the original text, Macbeth refers to Neptune, the ancient Roman god of the sea.

**MACBETH**

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

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**MACBETH**

90 Wake Duncan with thy knocking. I would thou couldst.

*They exit.*

**MACBETH**

The only way I can acknowledge what I've done is to forget who I am.

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**MACBETH**

Wake Duncan with your knocking. I wish you could.

*They exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 3

## Shakespeare

*A knock sounds offstage. A porter enters.*

**PORTER**

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

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**PORTER**

5 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.

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**PORTER**

10 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.

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**PORTER**

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.

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**PORTER**

15 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.

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**PORTER**


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

*The PORTER opens the gate.*

*MACDUFF and LENNOX enter.*

## Shakescleare Translation

*A knock sounds offstage. A drunken [porter](#) enters.*

 A porter is a gatekeeper.

**PORTER**

What a lot of knocking! If a man were gatekeeper for the gates of hell, he'd sure have to turn the key to open that gate often.

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**PORTER**

*[Pretending he's the gatekeeper of hell]* Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, in the name of the devil? Perhaps a farmer who hanged himself because he'd hoarded grain, hoping to charge high prices during a famine that never came. *[Speaking to an imagined farmer]* You've come at a good time. Make sure you have a lot of handkerchiefs, because you're going to sweat a lot here in hell.

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**PORTER**

Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name? Indeed, it's some slick schemer who vowed his support to two opposing sides. He committed treason in the name of God, but found in the end that you can't lie to God about your actions. Oh, come in, schemer.

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**PORTER**

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Perhaps it's an English tailor who skimped on the amount of fabric needed to make pants in the baggy French style. Come in, tailor. You can heat your pressing iron up in the fires of hell, since you're done for.

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**PORTER**

Knock, knock! Never stopping. Who are you? Well, this place is too cold to be hell. I'll stop pretending to be the devil's gatekeeper. I had wanted to let into hell someone from each of the professions who'd given in to temptation.

*A knock sounds offstage.*

**PORTER**

Coming! Coming! And please don't forget to leave me a tip.

*The PORTER opens the gate.*

*MACDUFF and LENNOX enter.*

**MACDUFF**

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

**PORTER**

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

**MACDUFF**

25 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  
30 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**

35 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**

40 Is thy master stirring?

*MACBETH enters.*

**MACDUFF**

Our knocking has awaked him. Here he comes.

**LENNOX**

Good morrow, noble sir.

**MACBETH**

Good morrow, both.

**MACDUFF**

Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

**MACBETH**

45 Not yet.

**MACDUFF**

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

**MACBETH**

I'll bring you to him.

**MACDUFF**

50 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**

I'll make so bold to call,  
For 'tis my limited service.

*MACDUFF exits.*

**MACDUFF**

Friend, did you go to sleep so late that you had to lie in bed  
this morning?


**PORTER**


That's the truth, sir. We drank and sang until three in the  
morning. And, sir, drinking results in three things.

**MACDUFF**

What three things does drinking result in?

**PORTER**

Indeed , sir, drinking results in a red nose, sleep, and  
urine. It provokes desire, but also hinders it. Drinking  
arouses desire, but inhibits performance. Therefore, drink is  
like a traitor in relation to sex. It makes you feel good, but it  
blocks your abilities. It gets you up, but then lets you down.  
It eggs you on, but leaves you dismayed. It gives you an  
erection, but soon takes it away again. And, finally, it gives  
you erotic dreams, but they disappear, just leaving you with  
the need to pee.

 In the original text, the porter  
uses the mild oath "marry," derived  
from the Virgin Mary's name.

**MACDUFF**

I believe drinking did all that to you last night.

**PORTER**

Yes it did, sir. Drinking told me I was a liar to my face. But I  
got my revenge on drinking. I was too strong for it. It may  
have weakened my legs a bit, and knocked me off balance,  
but I found a way to give it the slip: I threw up.

**MACDUFF**

Is your master getting up?

*MACBETH enters.*

**MACDUFF**

Our knocking woke him up. Here he comes.

**LENNOX**

Good morning, noble sir.

**MACBETH**

Good morning to you both.

**MACDUFF**

Is the king awake, noble thane?

**MACBETH**

Not yet.

**MACDUFF**

He commanded me to call on him early this morning. I'm  
almost late.

**MACBETH**

I'll bring you to him.

**MACDUFF**

I know that hosting the king is a labor of love, but that  
doesn't make it any less work.

**MACBETH**

Work we enjoy removes the pain of the effort. This is the  
door.

**MACDUFF**

I'll wake him, because it is my duty.

*MACDUFF exits.*

**LENNOX**

55 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,  
60 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  
Was feverous and did shake.

**MACBETH**

65 'Twas a rough night.

**LENNOX**

My young remembrance cannot parallel  
A fellow to it.

*MACDUFF rushes in.*

**MACDUFF**

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

**MACBETH and LENNOX**

70 What's the matter?

**MACDUFF**

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**

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

**LENNOX**

Mean you his majesty?

**MACDUFF**

Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight  
With a new Gorgon. Do not bid me speak.  
See, and then speak yourselves.

*MACBETH and LENNOX exit.*

**MACDUFF**

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

*A bell rings. LADY MACBETH enters.*

**LADY MACBETH**

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

**MACDUFF**

O gentle lady,  
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:  
The repetition, in a woman's ear,

**LENNOX**

Will the king move on from here today?

**MACBETH**

Yes. He told us to have everything ready for his departure.

**LENNOX**

The night was wild. Where we were sleeping, the wind blew  
down the chimneys. People are saying they heard cries of  
grief in the air, strange screams of death, and terrifying  
voices prophesying fire and chaos that will result in the  
beginning of a new and awful time. The owl--that omen of  
destruction--hooted all night long. Some people are saying  
that the earth shook from a fever.

**MACBETH**

It was a rough night.

**LENNOX**

I'm young and can't remember anything similar to it.

*MACDUFF rushes in.*

**MACDUFF**

Oh, horror, horror, horror! I don't have the words to  
describe this or the heart to believe it!

**MACBETH and LENNOX**

What's the matter?

**MACDUFF**

Chaos has taken over. A blasphemous murder has broken  
open God's temple and stolen the life from it.

**MACBETH**


What are you saying? "The life?"

**LENNOX**

You mean the king?

**MACDUFF**

Go look into the bedroom, and you will be appalled and  
frozen as if you'd seen a [Gorgon](#). Don't ask me to  
describe it. Go, see it and then describe it yourselves.

 Gorgons were mythological  
monsters whose looks could turn a  
person into stone.

*MACBETH and LENNOX exit.*

**MACDUFF**

Get up, get up! Ring the alarm bell. Murder and treason!  
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! Wake up! Shake off your  
sleep--that fake death--and look on death itself! Get up, get  
up, and see the exact image of doomsday! Malcolm!  
Banquo! Get up as if from your graves, and come here like  
ghosts to see face this horror. Ring the bell.

*A bell rings. LADY MACBETH enters.*

**LADY MACBETH**

What's happened that makes the awful trumpet call  
everyone who's sleeping in the house to come together?  
Tell me! Tell me!

**MACDUFF**

Oh, dear lady, the news I could tell you is not something  
you should hear. Telling it to a woman would kill you  
instantly.

Would murder as it fell.

*BANQUO enters.*

**MACDUFF**

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

**LADY MACBETH**

Woe, alas!  
What, in our house?

**BANQUO**

Too cruel any where.  
100 Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,  
And say it is not so.

*MACBETH and LENNOX reenter, with ROSS.*

**MACBETH**

Had I but died an hour before this chance,  
I had lived a blessed time, for from this instant  
There's nothing serious in mortality.  
105 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.

*MALCOLM and DONALBAIN enter.*

**DONALBAIN**

What is amiss?

**MACBETH**

You are, and do not know 't.  
110 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**

Those of his chamber, as it seemed, had done 't.  
115 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**

Oh, yet I do repent me of my fury,  
120 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  
125 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  
130 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!

*BANQUO enters.*

**MACDUFF**

Oh, Banquo, Banquo, our royal king has been murdered!

**LADY MACBETH**

Oh no! What, in our own house?

**BANQUO**

It is too awful no matter where it happened. Dear Macduff, I  
beg you, change your story and say it isn't true.

*MACBETH and LENNOX reenter, with ROSS.*

**MACBETH**

If I had died an hour before this happened I would have  
lived a blessed life. Because starting from this moment,  
there's no reason to keep living. Everything is meaningless.  
All grace and distinction are dead. The wine of life has been  
poured away. In all the world, only the dregs remain.

*MALCOLM and DONALBAIN enter.*

**DONALBAIN**

What's wrong?

**MACBETH**

You are, but you don't know it yet. The spring, the source,  
the very origin of your blood has been stopped.

**MACDUFF**

Your royal father has been murdered.

**MALCOLM**

Oh, who did it?

**LENNOX**

Apparently, the servants who were watching his bedroom  
did it. Their hands and faces were covered in blood. So were  
their daggers, which we found still bloody on their pillows.  
They stared at us, confused. They shouldn't have been  
trusted with any man's life.

**MACBETH**

Even so, I regret my fury, which pushed me to kill them.

**MACDUFF**

Why did you do that?

**MACBETH**

Can someone be wise, shocked, calm, furious, loyal, and  
neutral all at the same time? No man can. My love for  
Duncan resulted in a violent rage that made me kill them  
before I could pause to think. There was Duncan, his white  
skin all splattered with his precious blood, covered in  
gashes that looked like wounds to nature that let the rot in.  
And there next to him were the murderers, dripping with  
blood, their daggers covered in gore. Who could have  
stopped himself, who loved Duncan and had the courage to  
act on it?

**LADY MACBETH**

Get me away from here, now! *[She faints]*

**MACDUFF**

Look to the lady.

**MALCOLM**

135 *[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,

140 Hid in an auger-hole, may rush and seize us?  
Let's away. Our tears are not yet brewed.

**MALCOLM**

*[aside to DONALBAIN]* Nor our strong sorrow  
Upon the foot of motion.

**BANQUO**

Look to the lady.

*LADY MACBETH is carried out.*

**BANQUO**

145 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.  
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence  
Against the undivulged pretense I fight  
150 Of treasonous malice.

**MACDUFF**

And so do I.

**ALL**

So all.

**MACBETH**

Let's briefly put on manly readiness,  
And meet it 'th' hall together.

**ALL**

155 Well contented.

*Everyone exits 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**

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

**MALCOLM**

165 This murderous shaft that's shot  
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way  
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.

*They exit.*

**MACDUFF**

See to the lady's health.

**MALCOLM**

*[To DONALBAIN so that only he can hear]* Why aren't we  
saying anything? The two of us have the greatest reason to  
express our horror and grief.

**DONALBAIN**

*[To MALCOLM so that only he can hear]* What should we say  
when we ourselves may be in immediate danger from some  
hidden place? We should run. We're not yet ready to show  
our tears.

**MALCOLM**

*[To DONALBAIN so that only he can hear]* Nor is it yet time  
for us to take our grief and turn it into action.

**BANQUO**

See to the lady.

*LADY MACBETH is carried out.*

**BANQUO**

When we're properly dressed to be out of our rooms, let's  
meet and discuss this bloody crime to see if we can figure  
out what happened. At the moment, fears and doubts  
shake us. I'm putting myself in the hands of God, and from  
there I'll fight the treasonous plot behind this murder.

**MACDUFF**

I will too.

**ALL**

We all will.

**MACBETH**

Let's get dressed quickly and regain our manly strength,  
and then meet together in the hall.

**ALL**

Agreed.

*Everyone but MALCOLM and DONALBAIN exits.*

**MALCOLM**

What will you do? Let's not meet with them. A liar has no  
trouble pretending to show sorrow he does not actually  
feel. I'm going to England.

**DONALBAIN**

And I'll go to Ireland. We'll be safer if we separate ourselves.  
No matter where we are, every smile might have a dagger  
hiding behind it. And those who are most closely related to  
us--and therefore closest in line to the throne--are the ones  
most likely to try to kill us.

**MALCOLM**

This murderous plot has only just begun, and we'll be safest  
if we can avoid the scheme. Therefore, let's get on our  
horses and not worry about being polite and saying  
goodbye. We should just disappear. We're justified in  
sneaking off when there's no mercy left for us to count on.

*They exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 4

## Shakespeare

ROSS and an OLD MAN enter.

## 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

5 Ha, good father,  
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  
10 That darkness does the face of Earth entomb  
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,  
15 Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.

## ROSS

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

## OLD MAN

'Tis said they eat each other.

## ROSS

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

MACDUFF enters.

## ROSS

How goes the world, sir, now?

## MACDUFF

25 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

30 They were suborned.  
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!  
35 Thriftless ambition, that will raven up  
Thine own lives' means! Then 'tis most like  
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.


## Shakescleare Translation


ROSS and an OLD MAN enter.

## OLD MAN

I remember the past seventy years. In that time, I've seen  
some strange and dreadful things. But what I saw last night  
made everything I've seen before seem like nothing.

## ROSS

Yes, old man . The skies--troubled by the acts of men--  
threaten the bloody earth with storms. According to a clock  
it's daytime, yet dark night continues to strangle the sun. Is  
darkness covering the earth when it's supposed to be light  
because the night is so powerful? Or is the day ashamed to  
show itself?

 In the original text, Ross uses the  
word "father," a friendly term to  
address an old man, not indicating a  
family relationship.

## OLD MAN

It's unnatural--just like the murder that was committed.  
Last Tuesday, as a falcon soared in its rightful place high in  
the sky, it was attacked and killed by an owl, whose normal  
prey are mice.

## ROSS

And this is also just as strange: Duncan's beautiful and fast  
horses--the best of their breed--went wild and broke out of  
their stalls. They all refused to be calmed, and acted as if  
they were at war with mankind.

## OLD MAN

It's said that the horses ate each other.

## ROSS

They did. I witnessed it, and was astonished. Here comes  
the good Macduff.

MACDUFF enters.

## ROSS

How are things going, sir?

## MACDUFF

Why, can't you see?

## ROSS

Is it known who committed this bloody crime?

## MACDUFF

The servants that Macbeth killed.

## ROSS

Oh, what a terrible day! What could they have hoped to  
gain?

## MACDUFF

They were bribed. The king's two sons Malcolm and  
Donalbain have snuck off and fled, which makes them the  
main suspects.

## ROSS

Even more unnatural! What a wasteful ambition that would  
cause sons to kill the very thing that gave them life! Then it  
seems most likely that Macbeth will become king.

**MACDUFF**

He is already named and gone to Scone  
To be invested.

**ROSS**

40 Where is Duncan's body?

**MACDUFF**

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

**ROSS**

Will you to Scone?

**MACDUFF**

45 No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

**ROSS**

Well, I will thither.

**MACDUFF**

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

**ROSS**


Farewell, father.


**OLD MAN**

50 God's benison go with you and with those  
That would make good of bad and friends of foes.

*All exit.*

**MACDUFF**

He's already been named king and has left for Scone  for  
the coronation.

 *Scone Palace was the place where Scottish kings were coronated from at least the 9th century.*

**ROSS**

Where is Duncan's body?

**MACDUFF**

It's been carried to Colmekill, the sacred burial place for all  
Scottish kings that guards their bones.

**ROSS**

Will you now head to Scone?

**MACDUFF**

No, cousin, I'm going to my home in Fife.

**ROSS**

Well, I'll go to Scone.

**MACDUFF**

May the ceremony there go well. Goodbye! Here's hoping  
that our new king is as suited to the role as our old king  
was.

**ROSS**

Farewell, old man.

**OLD MAN**

God's blessing on you, and on all who make good things out  
of bad, and turn enemies into friends!

*They all exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*BANQUO enters.*

**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.

*A trumpet sounds. MACBETH enters dressed as king, and LADY MACBETH enters dressed as queen, together with 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-thing unbecoming.

**MACBETH**

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

### Shakescleare Translation

*BANQUO enters.*

**BANQUO**

You have it now: you're King, the Thane of Cawdor, and the  
Thane of Glamis, just as the witches promised. And I fear  
that you used foul play to get it. But the witches also  
promised that your descendants would not be kings, and  
that my descendants would form a line of kings instead. If  
the witches do tell the truth—and what they told you,  
Macbeth, was brilliantly true—then maybe their prophecies  
about me are true as well. But now I must be quiet.

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

**MACBETH**

Here's our most important guest, Banquo.

**LADY MACBETH**

If we had forgotten to invite him it would have been entirely  
inappropriate, and our celebratory feast would be  
incomplete.

**MACBETH**

*[To BANQUO]* Tonight we're having a ceremonial feast, and I  
formally request that you attend.



**BANQUO**

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

**MACBETH**

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—  
25 In this day's council, but we'll take tomorrow.  
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  
30 For a dark hour or twain.

**MACBETH**

Fail not our feast.

**BANQUO**

My lord, I will not.

**MACBETH**

We hear our bloody cousins are bestowed  
In England and in Ireland, not confessing  
35 Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers  
With strange invention. But of that tomorrow,  
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**

40 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.  
Farewell.

*BANQUO exits.*

**MACBETH**

Let every man be master of his time  
45 Till seven at night. To make society  
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself  
Till suppertime alone. While then, God be with you!

*Everyone exits except MACBETH and a SERVANT.*

**MACBETH**

Sirrah, a word with you. Attend those men  
Our pleasure?

**SERVANT**

50 They are, my lord, without the palace gate.

**MACBETH**

Bring them before us.

*The SERVANT exits.*

**BANQUO**

I am always bound by duty to obey whatever your Highness  
commands me to do.

**MACBETH**

Do you plant to go riding this afternoon?

**BANQUO**

Yes, my good lord.

**MACBETH**

If you had you been here, we would have wanted your  
advice—which is always wise and profitable—at the council  
meeting earlier today. But we'll settle for tomorrow. Will  
you be riding far?

**BANQUO**

Far enough that the trip will take me from now until  
dinner, my lord. Unless my horse goes faster than I expect,  
I'll be riding in the dark for an hour or two after sunset.

**MACBETH**

Do not miss our feast.

**BANQUO**

I won't, my lord.

**MACBETH**

We hear that the murderous princes have gone to England  
and Ireland. They haven't confessed to cruelly murdering  
their father, and they've been telling strange lies to anyone  
who will listen. But we'll discuss that tomorrow, as well as  
other matters of state that are important to us both. Go  
hurry to your horse. I'll see you when you return tonight. Is  
Fleance going with you?

**BANQUO**

Yes, my good lord. It's time we got going.

**MACBETH**

May your horses be fast and surefooted. With that wish, I  
send you to your horseback riding. Farewell.


*BANQUO exits.*


**MACBETH**

All of you can do what you want until seven o'clock tonight.  
To make the evening all the more enjoyable, I'm going to  
spend the time until dinner alone. Until then, God be with  
you!

*Everyone except MACBETH and a SERVANT exits.*

**MACBETH**

[To the SERVANT] Sir , a word with you. Are those men  
waiting for my instructions?

 Macbeth uses the word "sirrah"—a familiar form of "sir" sometimes used to address men of lower social rank—in the original text.

**SERVANT**

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

**MACBETH**

Bring them in to see me.

*The SERVANT exits.*

**MACBETH**

To be thus is nothing,  
 But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo  
 Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature  
 55 Reigns that which would be feared. 'Tis much he dares,  
 And to that dauntless temper of his mind  
 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  
 60 My genius is rebuked, as it is said  
 Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters  
 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.  
 65 Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown  
 And put a barren scepter in my grip,  
 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;  
 70 For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered;  
 Put rancors in the vessel of my peace  
 Only for them; and mine eternal jewel  
 Given to the common enemy of man,  
 To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!  
 75 Rather than so, come fate into the list,  
 And champion me to th' utterance. Who's there?

*The SERVANT enters along with two MURDERERS.*

**MACBETH**

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

*The SERVANT exits.*

**MACBETH**

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

**FIRST MURDERER**

It was, so please your highness.

**MACBETH**

80 Well then, now  
 Have you considered of my speeches? Know  
 That it was he, in the times past, which held you  
 So under fortune, which you thought had been  
 Our innocent self. This I made good to you  
 85 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  
 To half a soul and to a notion crazed  
 90 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  
 95 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**

100 Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,  
 As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,  
 Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are clept  
 All by the name of dogs. The valued file

**MACBETH**

If my position isn't safe, then being king is worthless. I'm deeply afraid of Banquo—he has a natural nobility about him that makes him a threat to me. He's a risk-taker, and yet in addition to his unbreakable courage, he also has the wisdom to act with care and forethought. He's the only one I fear. In his presence, my guardian spirit is intimidated, just as they say Mark Antony's spirit was intimidated by Octavius Caesar. When the witches first said I would be king, Banquo scolded them, and told them to speak with him. Then, like prophets, they said his descendants would form a line of kings. The witches put a crown on my head and a scepter in my hand, but then said that I would never pass them on. My crown and scepter will be taken from me by someone from outside my family. No son of mine will succeed me as king. If what the witches say is true, then everything I've done has been for the benefit of Banquo's children—dishonoring myself, murdering gracious Duncan, destroying my peace of mind, all for them. I've given my eternal soul to the devil so that they could become kings. Banquo's sons, kings! Rather than let that happen, I'll invite fate to come into the battleground and fight it to the death. Who's there?

*The SERVANT enters along with two MURDERERS.*

**MACBETH**

[*To the SERVANT*] Now go to the door and stay there until I call you.

*The SERVANT exits.*

**MACBETH**

Wasn't it yesterday that we last spoke?

**FIRST MURDERER**

It was, your Highness.

**MACBETH**

So then, have you thought about what I said? You must know that it was Banquo who made your lives so miserable for so long. You thought I did it, but I was innocent. I told you all about it when we last met and showed you proof—how you were tricked and deceived by the agents who did the dirty work, and who they were working with, and enough other details that even a half-wit would say "Banquo did it!"

**FIRST MURDERER**

You made it known to us.

**MACBETH**


I did that and more. Which leads me to the point of this second meeting. Is your nature so forgiving that you don't feel the need for revenge? Are you so religious that you'd pray for this "good" man and his children, when he's forced you into an early grave and made your entire family beggars?

**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, shaggy water-dogs, and half-wolves are all dogs. But you can distinguish which of these dogs are fast, slow,

 In ancient Rome, the general Mark Antony was rival to Julius Caesar's heir, Octavius.

Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,  
 105 The housekeeper, the hunter, every one  
 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.  
 110 Now, if you have a station in the file,  
 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,  
 115 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  
 120 I do to spite the world.

**FIRST MURDERER**

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**

125 Both of you  
 Know Banquo was your enemy.

**BOTH MURDERERS**

True, my lord.

**MACBETH**

So is he mine; and in such bloody distance  
 That every minute of his being thrusts  
 130 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,  
 Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall  
 135 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**

We shall, my lord,  
 140 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,  
 145 Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' th' time,  
 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—  
 150 Fleance, his son, that keeps him company,  
 Whose absence is no less material to me  
 Than is his father's, must embrace the fate  
 Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart.  
 I'll come to you anon.

**BOTH MURDERERS**

155 We are resolved, my lord.

**MACBETH**

I'll call upon you straight. Abide within.

or clever; which are watchdogs, and which ones hunters.  
 You can describe each dog based on the natural gifts that  
 separate and make it different from the general qualities  
 that define a dog. It's the same with men. Now, if you stand  
 in the list of men in some position that isn't down at the  
 very bottom rank, say so. Because then I will tell you a  
 secret plan that will get rid of your enemy and bring you  
 closer to me. As long as a certain man lives, I am sick. His  
 death would cure me.

**SECOND MURDERER**

My lord, I'm a man who has gotten so angry from the  
 beatings that the world has given me, that I don't care what  
 I do.

**FIRST MURDERER**

I'm also so sick of bad luck and being at the mercy of fate  
 that I'd risk everything for a chance to either fix my life or  
 end it.

**MACBETH**

Both of you know Banquo was your enemy.

**BOTH MURDERERS**

Yes, my lord.

**MACBETH**

He's also mine, and to such a degree that every minute he's  
 alive threatens my own well-being. Though, as King, I could  
 just use my raw power to destroy him, I can't do that  
 because we have mutual friends whom I need. I have to be  
 able to grieve and cry over his death, even though I am the  
 one who will have him killed. So that's why I have come to  
 you asking for your help. I have to hide my real plans from  
 the public eye for a variety of important reasons.

**SECOND MURDERER**

We'll do what you command, my lord.

**FIRST MURDERER**

Though our lives—

**MACBETH**

Your resolve shines in your eyes. Within the hour, I'll tell you  
 where to go, and advise you about exactly when to strike.  
 Because it must be done tonight, some distance from the  
 palace. Always keep in mind that I must be free from  
 suspicion. For the job to be done right, you must kill both  
 Banquo and his son, Fleance, who is with him. Fleance--  
 whose absence is as important to me as his father's--must  
 also die during that dark hour. Each of you should decide  
 for himself whether you will do this. I'll come to you soon.

**BOTH MURDERERS**

We will do it, my lord.

**MACBETH**

I'll call for you soon. Wait for me in the other room.

*The MURDERERS exit.*

**MACBETH**

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

*He exits.*

*The MURDERERS exit.*

**MACBETH**

It's settled, then. Banquo, tonight is when your soul will  
learn whether it's going to heaven or to hell.

*He exits.*

## Act 3, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*LADY MACBETH and a SERVANT enter.*

**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.

*The SERVANT exits.*

**LADY MACBETH**

Naught's had, all's spent,  
Where our desire is got without content.  
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy  
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

*MACBETH enters.*

**LADY 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,  
20 Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep  
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  
25 In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave.  
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**

So shall I, love,  
And so, I pray, be you. Let your remembrance

35

### Shakescleare Translation

*LADY MACBETH and a SERVANT enter.*

**LADY MACBETH**

Has Banquo left the castle?

**SERVANT**

Yes, madam, but he'll return tonight.

**LADY MACBETH**

Tell the king that I'd like to speak with him when he has a  
moment.

**SERVANT**

I will, madam.

*The SERVANT exits.*

**LADY MACBETH**

When you get what you want but have no peace of mind,  
then you've gotten nothing, and spent everything. It's  
better to be the person who was murdered than to be the  
murderer and have to live with doubt and anxiety.

*MACBETH enters.*

**LADY MACBETH**

How are you, my lord? Why do you keep to yourself, with  
only your sad thoughts for company? Those sad thoughts  
should have died along with the men you're thinking about.  
You should not think about things you can't change. What's  
done is done.

**MACBETH**

We have merely slashed the snake, not killed it. The snake  
will heal and we'll once more be threatened by its fangs.  
But let the universe fall apart, and heaven and earth  
collapse, before I eat my meals in fear or spend my nights  
troubled by the nightmares I've been having. It's better to  
be dead—like the one whom we sent to eternal peace in  
order to gain our own peace of mind—than be tortured by  
nightmares and anxiety. Duncan is in his grave, no longer  
troubled by life, and sleeping well. Our treason has put him  
beyond reach of any other pain or hurt, whether from steel,  
poison, rebellion, invasion, or anything else.

**LADY MACBETH**

Come on, my noble lord. Hide your troubled thoughts  
behind a happy face. Be friendly and cheerful with your  
guests tonight.

**MACBETH**

I will, my love. And I hope you'll do the same. Pay particular  
attention to Banquo. Speak to him and look at him so that

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**

40 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**

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

**MACBETH**

There's comfort yet; they are assailable.  
45 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**

50 What's to be done?

**MACBETH**

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  
55 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;  
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.  
60 Thou marvel'st at my words: but hold thee still.  
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.  
So, prithee, go with me.

*They exit.*

he feels proud and important. We're unsafe as long as we  
have to flatter him, hiding our true feelings behind a  
friendly face.

**LADY MACBETH**

You must stop thinking like this.


**MACBETH**


Oh! My mind is full of scorpions, dear wife! You know that  
Banquo and his son Fleance are still alive.

**LADY MACBETH**

But they won't live forever.

**MACBETH**

That's a comfort. They can be killed. So be joyful. Before the  
bat flies in the darkness, and before the beetle obeys the  
summons of Hecate --and with his droning hum  
announces the arrival of night--a dreadful deed will be  
done.

 We recall that Hecate was the  
ancient Greek goddess of the dark,  
often associated with witchcraft.

**LADY MACBETH**

What will be done?

**MACBETH**

My dearest one, you're better off not knowing about it until  
you can celebrate the finished deed. Come, night, and  
blindfold the kindhearted day. Then with your bloody and  
invisible hand, destroy Banquo's hold on life--which keeps  
me fearful. The sky darkens, and the crow flies home to  
roost in the forest. The gentle creatures of the day fall  
asleep, while night's predators wake to hunt for prey.

*[To LADY MACBETH]* You are shocked by my words, but you  
shouldn't be. Things accomplished through bad deeds can  
only grow stronger through more bad deeds. So, please,  
come with me.

*They exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Three MURDERERS enter.*

**FIRST MURDERER**

But who did bid thee join with 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.

### Shakesclare Translation

*Three MURDERERS enter.*

**FIRST MURDERER**

But who told you to come here and join us?

**THIRD MURDERER**

Macbeth.

**SECOND MURDERER**

We can trust him, since he's stated his instructions and they  
are identical to the ones that we were given.

**FIRST MURDERER**

Then stay with us. The western sky is still lit with streaks of  
daylight. Now all the late travelers are hurrying to reach  
their inns, and the one we were sent to watch for should be  
coming near.

**THIRD MURDERER**

Listen! 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  
15 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  
Make it their walk.

*BANQUO and FLEANCE enter with a torch.*

**SECOND MURDERER**

20 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**

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

*BANQUO dies. FLEANCE escapes.*

**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**

30 We have lost best half of our affair.

**FIRST MURDERER**

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

*They exit.*

**BANQUO**

*[Offstage]* Hey, give us some light!

**SECOND MURDERER**

That is him. All of the other expected guests are already  
inside the castle.

**FIRST MURDERER**

You can hear his horses being taken to the stables.

**THIRD MURDERER**

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

*BANQUO and FLEANCE enter with a torch.*

**SECOND MURDERER**

Here comes a light! A light!

**THIRD MURDERER**

It's him.

**FIRST MURDERER**

Get ready.

**BANQUO**

It will rain tonight.

**FIRST MURDERER**

Then let it rain.

*The MURDERERS attack BANQUO.*

**BANQUO**

Oh, treachery! Run, good Fleance, run, run, run! Maybe one  
day you can get revenge.

*[To one of the MURDERERS]* Oh, you villain!

*BANQUO dies. FLEANCE escapes.*

**THIRD MURDERER**

Who put out the light?

**FIRST MURDERER**

Wasn't that what we were supposed to do?

**THIRD MURDERER**

But there's only one body here. The son escaped.

**SECOND MURDERER**

We failed half of our mission.

**FIRST MURDERER**

Well, let's get out of here and tell Macbeth what we  
managed to do.

*They all exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 4

### Shakespeare

*A banquet. MACBETH enters with LADY MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, LORDS, and their attendants.*

### Shakescleare Translation

*A banquet. MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, LORDS, and their attendants enter.*

**MACBETH**

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

*The LORDS sit.*

**LORDS**

Thanks to your majesty.

**MACBETH**

5 Ourself will mingle with society  
And play the humble host.  
Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time  
We will require her welcome.

**LADY MACBETH**

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

*The lords cheer. The FIRST MURDERER appears and catches  
Macbeth's attention.*

**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**

15 'Tis Banquo's then.

**MACBETH**

'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**

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

**MACBETH**

35 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.

*The FIRST MURDERER exits.*

**MACBETH**

You know your own ranks, so you know where to sit  
according to your order of importance. To both the highest  
and lowest of you, I bid you a hearty welcome.

*The LORDS sit.*

**LORDS**

Thank you, your Majesty.

**MACBETH**

I will mingle with all of you, playing the humble host. My  
wife, the hostess, will stay on her royal throne, but in good  
time I will ask her to welcome you all.

**LADY MACBETH**

Sir, deliver my welcome to all of our friends for me, since  
they are all welcome in my heart.

*The LORDS cheer. The FIRST MURDERER appears and  
catches MACBETH's attention.*

**MACBETH**

See, they respond to you with their hearts as well. The table  
is full on both sides. I'll sit here in the middle. Be happy.  
Soon we'll have a toast to the full table.

[*To the FIRST MURDERER so that only he can hear*] There's  
blood on your face.

**FIRST MURDERER**

It's Banquo's blood then.

**MACBETH**

It's better that you have his blood on your face than Banquo  
having his lifeblood still coursing in his veins. Is he dead?

**FIRST MURDERER**

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

**MACBETH**

You are the best of the cutthroats. But whoever did the  
same to Fleance is just as good. If you cut Fleance's throat,  
then you are a cutthroat without compare.

**FIRST MURDERER**

Most royal sir, Fleance has escaped.

**MACBETH**

Now my torment returns. Otherwise, I would have been  
perfect: solid as a piece of marble, as firm as a rock, as free  
as the air which surrounds everything. But now I'm all  
confined and bound in doubts and fears. But Banquo's been  
killed?

**FIRST MURDERER**

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

**MACBETH**

Thanks for that. The adult serpent lies in the ditch. The  
young worm that escaped will in time become poisonous.  
But right now he has no fangs. Be gone now. I'll talk to you  
again tomorrow.

*The FIRST MURDERER exits.*

**LADY MACBETH**

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

**MACBETH**

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

**LENNOX**

45 May 't please your highness sit.

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

**MACBETH**

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**

50 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.

**MACBETH**

55 Where?

**LENNOX**

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

**MACBETH**

Which of you have done this?

**LORDS**

What, my good lord?

**MACBETH**

60 *[To GHOST]* Thou canst not say I did it. Never shake  
 Thy gory locks at me.

**ROSS**

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.  
 65 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.  
 Feed and regard him not. *[aside to MACBETH]* Are you a  
 man?

**MACBETH**

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

**LADY MACBETH**

My royal lord, you're not entertaining the guests. If you do not regularly make clear that your guests are welcome, they'll start to feel as if they're paying for their meal. If you simply want to eat, it's best to do that at home. When you're eating out, you need some ceremony to act as an extra sauce for the meat. Without it, the party will be dull.

**MACBETH**

Thank you for reminding me! *[Raising a glass]* Good digestion requires a good appetite, and good health requires both those things. To good appetite, good digestion, and good health!

**LENNOX**

Please sit, your Highness.

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

**MACBETH**

All the nobility of Scotland would be gathered under one roof, if only the noble Banquo were also here. I hope I can scold him for rudeness, and not have to grieve because something has happened to him.

**ROSS**

His absence means only that he's broken his promise to attend. If it pleases you, your Highness, won't you sit and grace us with your royal company?

**MACBETH**

The table's full.

**LENNOX**

Here's a place saved for you, sir.

**MACBETH**

Where?

**LENNOX**

*[Pointing to where the GHOST sits]* Here, my good lord.  
 What's bothering you, your highness?

**MACBETH**

*[Seeing the GHOST]* Which one of you did this?

**LORDS**

Did 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, noble friends. My husband is often like this, and has been since childhood. Please, stay seated. This is a momentary fit. He'll be well again in just a second. If you pay too much attention to him you'll offend him, which will prolong the fit. Eat, and pay no attention to him.

*[To MACBETH]* Are you a man?

**MACBETH**

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



**LADY MACBETH**

O proper stuff!

This is the very painting of your fear.

This is the air-drawn dagger which you said

75 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!

Why do you make such faces? When all's done,

80 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

85 Shall be the maws of kites.

*The GHOST vanishes.*

**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,

90 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

95 With twenty mortal murders on their crowns

And push us from our stools. This is more strange

Than such a murder is.

**LADY MACBETH**

My worthy lord,

Your noble friends do lack you.

**MACBETH**

100 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.

*The GHOST OF BANQUO enters.*

**MACBETH**

105 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.

**LORDS**

Our duties, and the pledge.

*They drink.*

**MACBETH**

110 *[Seeing the GHOST]* Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the  
earth hide thee.

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold.

Thou hast no speculation in those eyes

Which thou dost glare with!

**LADY MACBETH**

Oh, utter nonsense! This is a hallucination brought on by

fear. This is like the floating dagger that you said led you to

Duncan. This panic attack can't even be compared to real

fear. It's more like a performance put on by a woman telling

a scary story by the fireside in front of her grandmother.

Shame on you! Why are you making such faces? When the

hallucination passes, you'll see that you're looking at

nothing but a stool.

**MACBETH**

Please, look there. See? Look!

*[To the GHOST]* Hey! What do you have to say? And what do

I care? If you can nod, then speak. If the dead are going to

return from their graves, then we might as well not bury

anyone and let the birds eat them.

*The GHOST vanishes.*

**LADY MACBETH**

What, has your foolishness destroyed your manhood?

**MACBETH**

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

**LADY MACBETH**

Nonsense! Shame on you!

**MACBETH**

In ancient times--before humane laws cleansed the

commonwealth and made it noble--much blood was shed.

Yes, and since then too, murders have been committed that

are too terrible to mention. It used to be that when you

knocked a man's brains out he would die, and that was the

end of it. But now they rise again with twenty fatal wounds

on their head and push us from our stools. This returning

from the dead is more strange than the original murder.

**LADY MACBETH**

My dear lord, your noble friends miss your company.

**MACBETH**

I forgot.

*[To the lords]* Don't be shocked at my behavior, my most

noble friends. I have a strange condition, which no longer

bothers those who know me well. *[Raising his glass again]*

Come: love and health to you all. Now I'll sit down. Give me

some wine. Fill my cup.

*The GHOST OF BANQUO enters.*

**MACBETH**

I drink to the joy of all of you at the table, and to our dear

friend Banquo, whom we miss. I wish he were here! To

everyone here and to Banquo. Everyone drink to everyone

else's health.

**LORDS**

We drink to our allegiance to you, and to your toast.

*They drink.*

**MACBETH**

*[Seeing the GHOST]* Go! Get out of my sight! Hide in your

grave. Your bones have no marrow, and your blood is cold.

The eyes with which you're glaring at me have no power of

sight!

**LADY MACBETH**

115 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,  
120 The armed rhinoceros, or th' Hyrcan tiger;  
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  
125 The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!  
Unreal mockery, hence!

*The GHOST vanishes.*

**MACBETH**

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

**LADY MACBETH**

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting,  
130 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,  
135 When now I think you can behold such sights,  
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,  
When mine is blanched with fear.

**ROSS**

What sights, my lord?

**LADY MACBETH**

I pray you, speak not. He grows worse and worse.  
140 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**

145 A kind good night to all!

*Everyone leaves except 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 choughs and rooks brought forth  
150 The secret'st man of blood. —What is the night?

**LADY MACBETH**

Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

**MACBETH**

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

**LADY MACBETH**


Did you send to him, sir?

**LADY MACBETH**

Think of this, good friends, as just a strange habit. It's  
nothing else. Too bad it's spoiling our evening!

**MACBETH**

I dare as much as any man. Approach me in the form of a  
rugged Russian bear, an armor-plated rhinoceros, or a  
Hyrcan tiger. Take any shape but the one you have, and I  
won't tremble. Or return to life and challenge me to a duel  
in some deserted place. If I tremble then, mock me as a  
little girl's doll. Be gone, horrible ghost! You hallucination,  
be gone!

 Hyrcania was an historical region on the Caspian Sea. Like Russian bears, Hyrcanian tigers had a fearsome reputation.

*The GHOST vanishes.*

**MACBETH**

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

**LADY MACBETH**

You have disrupted our dinner and destroyed everyone's  
good cheer with your astonishing behavior.

**MACBETH**

*[To the guests]* Can such things exist—and overcome a  
person as suddenly as a summer storm—without making  
everyone astonished? You make me feel like I don't know  
my own character and courage, when I see you looking at  
these terrible things without going pale with fear, while my  
own face has gone white.

**ROSS**

What sights, my lord?

**LADY MACBETH**

*[To the guests]* Please, don't speak with him. He's growing  
worse and worse. Talking only exacerbates it. Right now,  
good night. Don't worry about leaving in a certain order  
according to your rank. Just leave right away.

**LENNOX**

Good night. I hope better health returns to his Majesty!

**LADY MACBETH**

A kind good night to all of you!

*Everyone except MACBETH and LADY MACBETH exits.*

**MACBETH**

Blood will lead to blood, as the saying goes. Gravestones  
have been known to move, trees to speak, and the  
jackdaws, crows, and rooks to cackle out the names of even  
the most secret murderers.

*[To LADY MACBETH]* How late is it?

**LADY MACBETH**

It's almost morning. You can't tell whether it's one or the  
other.

**MACBETH**

What do you think about the fact that Macduff does refuse  
to come even should I command him to?

**LADY MACBETH**

Did you officially send for him, sir?

**MACBETH**

155 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—  
And betimes I will—to the weird sisters.  
More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know,  
160 By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good,  
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,  
165 Which must be acted ere they may be scanned.

**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.

*They exit.*

**MACBETH**

I heard about it indirectly, but I will send for him. I have a servant paid to spy for me in every one of my lords' households. I will go see the witches tomorrow, early. They will tell me more, because I'm now determined to know the worst of what is to come. My own interests are more important than anything else. I have waded so far into this river of blood that even if I stopped now, it would be as unpleasant to go back as to continue forward. I have some plans in my head that I must act upon before I have a chance to think carefully about them.

**LADY MACBETH**

You lack the rest and ease that sleep provides.

**MACBETH**

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

*They exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 5

### Shakespeare

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

**FIRST WITCH**

Why, how now, Hecate! You look angerly.

**HECATE**

Have I not reason, beldams as you are?  
Saucy and overbold, how did you dare  
To trade and traffic with Macbeth  
5 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.

*A song play offstage with the lyrics: "Come away, come away."*

### Shakescleare Translation

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


**FIRST WITCH**

Why, how are you, Hecate? You look angry.

**HECATE**

Don't I have a reason to be angry, you hags? How dare you trick Macbeth with riddles and prophecies without including me--the source of your powers; the creator of all evil things; and the greatest practitioner of our magic? And, even worse, you've done all this for an unreliable, angry, and spiteful brat. Like all brats, he cares only about what he wants and not about you. But you can make this better. Get out of here and meet me at the pit of [Acheron](#), where Macbeth will go to learn his destiny. Bring your cauldrons, your spells, your charms, and everything else. Now I must fly. I'll spend the night working to make a terrible and deadly outcome for him. I have a lot to accomplish before noon. On the corner of the moon there hangs a droplet, ready to fall. I'll catch it before it hits the ground. When I charm the droplet with magic spells, it will raise up fantastic spirits that will trick Macbeth with illusions, and he'll walk right into his own destruction. He'll think himself immune to fate; will mock death; and will think he has no need for wisdom, grace, or fear. As you all know, overconfidence is mortal man's worst enemy.

*A song play offstage with the lyrics: "Come away, come away."*

 *Acheron was a river in hell in ancient Greek mythology. Hecate implies that Macbeth is willing to go to the depths of hell to learn his fate.*

**HECATE**

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


*HECATE exits.*


**FIRST WITCH**

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

*They all exit.*

**HECATE**

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

 This spirit is likely Hecate's familiar, similar to the ones listed in Act 1, Scene 1.

*HECATE exits.*

**FIRST WITCH**

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

*They all exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 6

## Shakespeare

*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**

25 The son of Duncan—  
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  
30 Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff  
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  
35 Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,  
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  
40 Prepares for some attempt of war.

**LENNOX**

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  
45 That clogs me with this answer."

## Shakescleare Translation


*LENNOX and another LORD enter.*


**LENNOX**

What I said before shows the similarity of our thoughts, and we can draw a few further conclusions . I'm just saying that strange things have been happening. Macbeth pitied the gracious Duncan—though only after Duncan was dead. And heroic Banquo went out walking too late at night. I guess, if you like, we can say that Fleance must have killed him, because Fleance ran from the crime scene. Obviously, men should not go out walking too late at night. And who can disagree that it was monstrous of Malcolm and Donalbain to kill their gracious father? A damned act! How it upset Macbeth! Why, in a righteous rage, didn't he then immediately kill those two servants while they were still drunk and sleeping? Wasn't that the noble thing for Macbeth to do? Yes, and wise too, because it would have angered anyone alive to hear those two servants deny their guilt. So, given all of this, I think Macbeth has handled things well. I do believe that if Macbeth had Duncan's sons in custody—which I pray won't happen—they would learn the awful the punishment for killing a father. Fleance would learn it too. But enough of that. For I hear that Macduff, who spoke too plainly and failed to appear when summoned by Macbeth, now lives in disgrace with the king. Can you tell me where he's staying?

 Lennox and the Lord share suspicions about Macbeth. Here, Lennox begins an ironic speech, in which he hints at Macbeth's guilt.

**LORD**

Duncan's son Malcolm, whose birthright was stolen by Macbeth, lives in England, where the saintly  King Edward treats Malcolm with all due respect—despite all of Malcolm's misfortunes. Macduff went there to beg holy King Edward to call Northumberland and the great warrior lord Siward to arms. Macduff hopes that with their help—and the support of God above—we may once again be able to put food on our tables; escape our sleepless nights; enjoy our feasts and banquets without any violent murders; pay sincere homage to our king; and receive the honors we are due. We pine for all of that now. Macbeth knows of Macduff's mission, and is so angry that he's preparing for war.

 Here, the Lord refers to England's king, Edward the Confessor, who reigned in the early 11th century and was made a saint by the Catholic Church.

**LENNOX**

Did Macbeth order Macduff to return?

**LORD**

He did, but Macduff responded, "Sir, I won't." The messenger bearing the command turned his back on Macduff and hummed, as if to say, "You'll regret the day you gave me this answer."

**LENNOX**

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

**LORD**

I'll send my prayers with him.

*They exit.*

**LENNOX**

That should be warning enough for Macduff to be cautious  
and stay away from Scotland and Macbeth. Some holy  
angel should fly to the English court and tell Macduff to  
quickly return to help our country, which is suffering under  
a cursed tyrant!

**LORD**

I'll send my prayers with him.

*They exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

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

**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**

Round about the cauldron go,  
5 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' charmed pot.

**ALL**

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

**SECOND WITCH**

Fillet of a fenny snake,  
In the cauldron boil and bake.  
Eye of newt and toe of frog,  
15 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**

Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,  
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf  
Of the ravined salt-sea shark,  
25 Root of hemlock digged 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,

### Shakesclare Translation

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

**FIRST WITCH**

The striped cat has meowed three times.

**SECOND WITCH**

Three times. And the hedgehog has whined once.

**THIRD WITCH**

My familiar spirit Harpier cries out: "It's time, it's time!"

**FIRST WITCH**

Dance around the cauldron, and throw in the poisoned  
entrails. This toad--which has slept under a cold rock,  
sweating venom for thirty-one days--will be the first to boil  
in this magic cauldron.

**ALL**

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

**SECOND WITCH**

A fillet of swamp snake to boil and bake in the cauldron.  
And a newt's eye; a frog's toe; a bat's fur; a dog's tongue; an  
adder's forked tongue; a blindworm's venomous tongue; a  
lizard's leg; and an owl's wing. For a charm of powerful  
trouble, boil and bubble like a broth of hell.

**ALL**

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

**THIRD WITCH**

A dragon's scale; a wolf's tooth; a mummified witch; a  
ravenous shark's gullet and stomach; a root of hemlock dug  
up in the dark; a blaspheming Jew's liver; a goat's  
gallbladder; twigs of yew taken during a lunar eclipse; a  
Turk's nose; a Tartar's lips; and the finger of a baby  
strangled just after a prostitute gave birth to it in a ditch.  
Make this potion sticky and thick. And now let's add a  
tiger's entrails to the ingredients in our cauldron.

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.

*HECATE enters with three other WITCHES.*

**HECATE**

Oh well done! I commend your pains,  
40 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 plays. The six WITCHES sing a song called "Black Spirits."  
HECATE exits.*

**SECOND WITCH**

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

*MACBETH enters.*

**MACBETH**

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

**ALL**

50 A deed without a name.

**MACBETH**

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  
55 Confound and swallow navigation up,  
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  
60 Of nature's germens tumble all together,  
Even till destruction sicken, answer me  
To what I ask you.

**FIRST WITCH**

Speak.

**SECOND WITCH**

Demand.

**THIRD WITCH**

65 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**

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

**ALL**

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

**SECOND WITCH**

We'll cool the mixture with a baboon's blood. Then the  
charm will be done.

*HECATE enters with three other WITCHES.*

**HECATE**

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

*Music plays. The six WITCHES sing a song called "Black  
Spirits." HECATE exits.*

**SECOND WITCH**

I can tell by the tingling in my thumbs: something wicked is  
coming. Open the doors for whoever is knocking.

*MACBETH enters.*

**MACBETH**

What's going on here, you secret, dark, midnight hags?  
What is it that you're doing here?

**ALL**

Something that has no name.

**MACBETH**

I command you by the demonic powers you serve to  
answer my questions, no matter how you come to know  
those answers. I don't care if you unleash violent winds that  
tear down churches; cause the foaming waves to rise up  
and destroy all ships and sailors; flatten crops and trees  
with storms; make castles fall down on the heads of their  
inhabitants; cause palaces and pyramids to topple; or  
create so much chaos in nature that destruction gets tired  
of itself. Just give me answers.

**FIRST WITCH**

Speak.

**SECOND WITCH**

Demand.

**THIRD WITCH**

We'll answer.

**FIRST WITCH**

Tell us: would you rather hear the answers from our mouths  
or from our masters'?

**MACBETH**

Call them. Let me see them.

**FIRST WITCH**

Pour in the blood of a sow that has eaten her nine offspring.  
Take the liquefied fat from the corpse of a murderer hanged  
on the gallows, and throw it into the flame.

**ALL**

Come, high or low;  
Thyself and office deftly show!

*Thunder. The FIRST APPARITION appears, in the form of a head wearing a helmet.*

**MACBETH**

75 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.

*The FIRST APPARITION descends.*

**MACBETH**

80 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. The SECOND APPARITION appears, in the form of a bloody child.*

**SECOND APPARITION**

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!—

**MACBETH**

85 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.

*The SECOND APPARITION descends.*

**MACBETH**

90 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. The THIRD APPARITION appears, in the form of a child wearing a crown and holding a tree in his hand.*

**MACBETH**

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

**ALL**

Listen but speak not to 't.

**THIRD APPARITION**

100 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.

*The THIRD APPARITION descends.*

**ALL**

Come, spirit, high or low. Show yourself and your function.

*Thunder sounds. The FIRST APPARITION appears, in the form of a head wearing a helmet.*

**MACBETH**

Tell me, you unknown power—

**FIRST WITCH**

He knows your thoughts. Listen to what he says, but don't  
say a thing.

**FIRST APPARITION**

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! Beware Macduff. Beware the  
Thane of Fife. Release me. Enough.

*The FIRST APPARITION descends.*

**MACBETH**

Whatever you are, thanks for your good advice. You have  
described exactly what I feared. But one more thing—

**FIRST WITCH**

You can not command him. Here's another, stronger than  
the first.

*Thunder sounds. The SECOND APPARITION appears, in the form of a bloody child.*

**SECOND APPARITION**

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

**MACBETH**

If I had three ears, I'd use all three to listen.

**SECOND APPARITION**

Be violent, bold, and determined. Mock the strength of  
other men, because no man born from a woman will ever  
harm Macbeth.

*The SECOND APPARITION descends.*

**MACBETH**

Then live, Macduff. Why should I fear you? Yet, I'll make  
doubly sure and guarantee my fate. You will die, Macduff,  
and by killing you I will defeat my fear and always sleep  
easily.

*Thunder sounds. The THIRD APPARITION appears, in the form of a child wearing a crown and holding a tree in his hand.*

**MACBETH**

What is this spirit that appears like the child of a king,  
wearing a royal crown on his young head?

**ALL**

Listen, but do not speak to it.

**THIRD APPARITION**

Be as courageous and proud as a lion. Don't worry about  
who dislikes you, who resents you, and who conspires  
against you. Macbeth will never be beaten until Great  
Birnam Wood comes to fight you at Dunsinane Hill.

*The THIRD APPARITION descends.*

**MACBETH**

That will never be.

- 105 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  
110 To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart  
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**

- 115 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?

*Oboes play music for a ceremonial procession.*

**FIRST WITCH**

Show.

**SECOND WITCH**

Show.

**THIRD WITCH**

- 120 Show.

**ALL**

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

*Eight kings parade across the stage, the last one holds a mirror in his hand, followed by BANQUO.*

**MACBETH**

- Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo. Down!  
Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs. And thy hair,  
125 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.  
130 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  
135 And points at them for his.

*The spirits of the kings and BANQUO vanish.*

**MACBETH**

What, is this so?

**FIRST WITCH**

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

**MACBETH**

That will never happen. Who can command the forest so  
that the trees lift their roots from the earth? Sweet  
prophecies! Good! My murders will never rise until the  
forest of Birnam rises, and I will live a full life and die only of  
old age, as is customary. But my heart still throbs to know  
one thing. Tell me, if your dark powers can see it: will  
Banquo's sons ever reign in this kingdom?

**ALL**

Do not try to learn more.

**MACBETH**

I demand to be satisfied. If you deny me, may an eternal  
curse fall on you! Let me know. Why is that cauldron  
sinking? And what is that sound?

*Oboes play music for a ceremonial procession.*

**FIRST WITCH**

Show.

**SECOND WITCH**

Show.

**THIRD WITCH**

Show.

**ALL**

Show him so his heart grieves. Come like shadows and  
depart as shadows too!

*Eight kings parade across the stage, the last one holds a mirror in his hand, followed by BANQUO.*

**MACBETH**

*[To BANQUO]* You look too much like Banquo's ghost. Be  
gone!

*[To the first king]* Your crown hurts my eyes.

*[To the second king]* Your golden hair, which looks itself like  
a crown, resembles the hair on the first king. And this third  
king looks just like the second one.

*[To himself]* Filthy hags! Why do you show me this? A  
fourth! My eyes bulge from their sockets! Will this line of  
kings stretch on to infinity? Yet another one? And a seventh?  
I want to see no more. And yet an eighth appears, holding a  
mirror in which I see many more kings. And some of those  
kings carry double orbs and triple scepters! Horrible  
sight! Now I see it's true: blood-splattered Banquo smiles at  
me and points at them, identifying them as his  
descendants.


*The spirits of the kings and BANQUO vanish.*

**MACBETH**

What? Is this true?

**FIRST WITCH**

Yes, it's all true. But why do you stand there so amazed?  
Come, sisters, let's conjure up some spirits and show him  
what we can do. I'll charm the air to make music while you  
perform your wild dance. Then this noble king will say that  
our ceremonies repaid his friendly welcome.

 The double orbs may represent King James' two coronations, in first in Scotland and later in England. The triple scepters show that the line of kings culminating in James, who descends from Banquo, will rule three countries--England, Ireland, and Scotland.



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

**MACBETH**

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

*LENNOX enters.*

**LENNOX**

What's your grace's will?

**MACBETH**

Saw you the weird sisters?

**LENNOX**

150 No, my lord.

**MACBETH**

Came they not by you?

**LENNOX**

No, indeed, my lord.

**MACBETH**

155 Infected be the air whereon they ride,  
And damned all those that trust them! I did hear  
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**

160 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,  
165 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  
170 That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool.  
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool.  
But no more sights! —Where are these gentlemen?  
Come, bring me where they are.

*They exit.*

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

**MACBETH**


Where are they? Gone? Let this evil hour be marked as  
cursed in the calendar.

*[Calling to someone offstage]* You outside, come in!

*LENNOX enters.*

**LENNOX**

What does your Grace  command?

 "Your Grace" is an honorific title for nobility and royalty, similar to "your Majesty" or "your Highness."

**MACBETH**

Did you see the weird sisters?

**LENNOX**

No, my lord.

**MACBETH**

They didn't pass by you?

**LENNOX**

No, indeed, my lord.

**MACBETH**

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

**LENNOX**

My lord, two or three men came, bringing word that  
Macduff has fled to England.

**MACBETH**

Fled to England?

**LENNOX**

Yes, my good lord.

**MACBETH**

*[To himself]* Time, you stand in the way of my terrifying  
plans. Unless you immediately do what you planned, you  
never get the chance to do it. From this moment on, I will  
act as soon as I want to do something. I will begin right now  
to follow my thoughts immediately with action. I'll launch a  
surprise attack against Macduff's castle; seize the town of  
Fife; and kill his wife, his children, and anyone else  
unfortunate enough to bear even a trace of his blood. No  
more boasting like a fool. I will do this deed before my  
sense of purpose dulls. And no more hallucinations!

*[To LENNOX]* Where are these messengers? Come, lead me  
to them.

*They exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

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

**LADY MACDUFF**

What had he done to make him fly the land?

### Shakescleare Translation

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

**LADY MACDUFF**

What did he do that made him flee Scotland?

**ROSS**

You must have patience, madam.

**LADY MACDUFF**

He had none.

His flight was madness. When our actions do not,

5 Our fears do make us traitors.

**ROSS**

You know not

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

10 From whence himself does fly? He loves us not;

He wants the natural touch. For the poor wren,

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,

15 As little is the wisdom, where the flight

So runs against all reason.

**ROSS**

My dearest coz,

I pray you school yourself. But for your husband,

He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows

20 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

From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,

But float upon a wild and violent sea

25 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

To what they were before.—My pretty cousin,

Blessing upon you.

**LADY MACDUFF**

30 Fathered he is, and yet he's fatherless.

**ROSS**

I am so much a fool, should I stay longer

It would be my disgrace and your discomfort.

I take my leave at once.

*ROSS exits.*

**LADY MACDUFF**

Sirrah, your father's dead.

35 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**

Poor bird! Thou 'dst never fear the net nor lime,

40 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?

**ROSS**

You must have patience, madam.

**LADY MACDUFF**

He had no patience. To run away was insane. Even if we're

not actually traitors, our fears of being accused of treason

can make us seem like traitors.

**ROSS**

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

him flee.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Wisdom? Was it wise to leave his wife, his children, his

house, and his titles in a place from which he himself flees?

He doesn't love us. He lacks the natural feelings of a

husband and father. Even the fragile wren—the smallest of

birds—will fight an owl to protect her young ones in the

nest. Macduff's running away has everything to do with fear

and nothing to do with love. And since running away is

contrary to all reason, it also must have nothing to do with

wisdom.

**ROSS**

My dearest cousin, I beg you, control yourself. Your husband

is noble, wise, and judicious, and understands the current

political unrest. I don't dare say anything more than this,

but it is a bad time when people are denounced as traitors

and have no idea why; when we believe rumors out of fear,

but aren't even sure what we're afraid of. It's like floating in

a wild ocean storm, being tossed all around and getting

nowhere. I must leave now, but it won't be long before I

return. When things are at their worst they must eventually

end, or else improve to be like how they were before. My

good cousin, I give my blessing to you.

**LADY MACDUFF**

My son has a father, and yet he's fatherless.

**ROSS**

If I stay longer, I'll disgrace myself and embarrass you by

crying. I must leave now.

*ROSS exits.*

**LADY MACDUFF**

Little sir, your father's dead. What will you do now? How will

you live?

**SON**

I'll live as birds do, Mother.

**LADY MACDUFF**

What? You'll eat worms and flies?

**SON**

I'll live on whatever I get, like birds do.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Oh, you pitiful bird! You wouldn't know to fear any traps or

snares set out by hunters.

**SON**

Why should I fear them, Mother? Hunters do not try to catch

pitiful birds. No matter what you say, my father is not dead.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Yes, he's dead. What will you do for a father?

**SON**

Nay, how will you do for a husband?

**LADY MACDUFF**

45 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**

Was my father a traitor, Mother?

**LADY MACDUFF**

50 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**

55 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**

60 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**

65 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!

*A MESSENGER enters.*

**MESSENGER**

70 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;

75

**SON**

No, what will you do for a husband?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Well, I can buy myself twenty husbands at any market.

**SON**

If so, you'd be buying them to sell again.

**LADY MACDUFF**

You talk with all of your wit; and yet your wit is still that of a  
child.

**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 does that a traitor?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Everyone who does so is a traitor and should be hanged.

**SON**

And should everyone be hanged who makes and breaks  
promises?

**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 defeat and hang the honest men.

**LADY MACDUFF**

*[Laughing]* Heaven help you, my poor little monkey! *[Sad  
again]* But what will you do for 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**

My poor little chatterer, how you talk!

*A MESSENGER enters.*

**MESSENGER**

Bless you, fair lady! You don't know me, but I know very  
well about your high social rank. I suspect something  
dangerous approaches you. If you'll take a simple man's  
advice, get out of here. Go away with your children. I think I  
am being too blunt to frighten you this way, but the cruelty

To do worse to you were fell cruelty,  
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!  
I dare abide no longer.

*The MESSENGER exits.*

**LADY MACDUFF**

Whither should I fly?  
I have done no harm. But I remember now  
80 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?

*The MURDERERS enter.*

**LADY MACDUFF**

85 What are these faces?

**FIRST MURDERER**

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**

90 Thou liest, thou shag-ear'd villain!

**FIRST MURDERER**

*[stabbing him]* What, you egg?  
Young fry of treachery!

**SON**

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

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

that is already close to you will do much worse! Heaven  
help you! I don't dare to stay any longer.

*The MESSENGER exits.*

**LADY MACDUFF**

Where should I run? I haven't done anything wrong. But I  
remember now that I'm here on earth, where doing evil is  
often praised, and doing good is sometimes a foolish  
mistake. So why do I make this womanish defense that I've  
done no harm?

*The MURDERERS enter.*

**LADY MACDUFF**

Why do you make such angry faces?

**FIRST MURDERER**

Where is your husband?

**LADY MACDUFF**

I hope he's not anywhere so disgraceful that men like you  
could find him.

**FIRST MURDERER**

He's a traitor.

**SON**

You lie, you long-eared villain!

**FIRST MURDERER**

*[Stabbing him]* What's that, pipsqueak? 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.*

## Act 4, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*MALCOLM and MACDUFF enter.*

**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,  
5 Bestride our downfall'n birthdom. Each new morn  
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows  
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds  
As if it felt with Scotland and yelled out  
Like syllable of dolor.

**MALCOLM**

10 What I believe I'll wail;  
What know believe, and what I can redress,  
As I shall find the time to friend, I will.  
What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.  
15 This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,

### Shakescleare Translation

*MALCOLM and MACDUFF enter.*

**MALCOLM**

Let's find some private shady place where we can go and  
cry our hearts out.

**MACDUFF**

Instead, let's hold tight to our swords, and defend our fallen  
country like honorable men. Each morning new widows  
howl and new orphans cry. New sorrows fly up to heaven so  
that heaven itself echoes with the screams, and seems to  
feel Scotland's pain.

**MALCOLM**

I will avenge whatever I believe is wrong. I'll believe  
whatever I know is true. And when the time is right, I'll fix  
whatever I can. What you've told me may in fact be true.  
This tyrant--whose mere name is so awful that saying it  
puts blisters on our tongues--was once thought to be

Was once thought honest. You have loved him well.  
He hath not touched you yet. I am young, but something  
You may deserve of him through me, and wisdom  
To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb  
T' appease an angry god.

**MACDUFF**

20 I am not treacherous.

**MALCOLM**

But Macbeth is.  
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.

25 Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell.  
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,  
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,  
Without leave-taking? I pray you,

Let not my jealousies be your dishonors,  
But mine own safeties. You may be rightly just,  
35 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;  
The title is affeered.—Fare thee well, lord.

40 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.

45 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  
50 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,  
55 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  
60 Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state  
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  
65 In evils to top Macbeth.

**MALCOLM**

I grant him bloody,  
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,

honest. You and he were great friends. He's done nothing  
yet to harm you. I'm inexperienced, but you could win  
Macbeth's favor by betraying me and then offer me up to  
him like a sacrificial lamb to an angry god.

**MACDUFF**

I am not treacherous.

**MALCOLM**

But Macbeth is. Even someone with a good and virtuous  
nature might give in to the command of this king. Still, I beg  
your pardon. My fears don't change what you truly are.  
Angels are still bright even though Lucifer, the brightest  
angel, fell from heaven. Though everything evil tries to  
disguise itself as good, good must continue to look good as  
well.

**MACDUFF**

My hopes are lost.

**MALCOLM**

Perhaps you lost your hope in the same place I found my  
suspicions of you. Why did you leave behind your wife and  
child—the most precious things in your life that the strong  
bonds of love should motivate you to protect—in that  
dangerous place, without even saying goodbye? I beg you,  
don't take my suspicion as an insult. I just have to protect  
myself. You may truly be honest, no matter what I think.

**MACDUFF**

Bleed, bleed, my poor country! Terrible tyrant, be  
comfortable in your position, because good people fear to  
confront you. Enjoy what you stole, because your title is  
safe!

[To MALCOLM] Goodbye, my lord. I wouldn't be the villain  
that you think I am, even if I were offered all of Macbeth's  
kingdom and the wealth of the East as well.

**MALCOLM**

Don't be offended. It's not that I totally mistrust you. I agree  
that Scotland is sinking under Macbeth's tyranny. Scotland  
weeps, it bleeds, and each day a new injury is added to her  
wounds. I think, too, that many men would fight for me if I  
returned to claim the throne. And England has promised to  
give me thousands of troops. But, for all this, when I have  
my foot on Macbeth's head, or have his head on my sword,  
then my poor country will be in even worse shape than  
before. It will suffer more, and in more ways, under the king  
who succeeds Macbeth.

**MACDUFF**

And who would that be?

**MALCOLM**

I mean myself. I know I have so many evil qualities that—  
when they are exposed—will make evil Macbeth seem pure  
as snow, and poor Scotland will think of him as a sweet  
lamb in comparison to me and my infinite wickedness.

**MACDUFF**

There is not a devil as cursed as Macbeth in all of hell.

**MALCOLM**

I admit he's violent, lecherous, greedy, deceitful, hot-  
tempered, malicious, and guilty of every sin that has a

Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin  
That has a name. But there's no bottom, none,  
70 In my voluptuousness. Your wives, your daughters,  
Your matrons, and your maids could not fill up  
The cistern of my lust, and my desire  
All continent impediments would o'erbear  
That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth  
75 Than such an one to reign.

**MACDUFF**

Boundless intemperance  
In nature is a tyranny. It hath been  
The untimely emptying of the happy throne  
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet  
80 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  
That vulture in you to devour so many  
85 As will to greatness dedicate themselves,  
Finding it so inclined.

**MALCOLM**

With this there grows  
In my most ill-composed affection such  
A stanchless avarice that, were I king,  
90 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  
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,  
95 Destroying them for wealth.

**MACDUFF**

This avarice  
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root  
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been  
The sword of our slain kings. Yet do not fear;  
100 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,  
105 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  
110 Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,  
Uproar the universal peace, confound  
All unity on earth.

**MACDUFF**

O Scotland, Scotland!

**MALCOLM**

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

**MACDUFF**

Fit to govern?  
No, not to live. —O nation miserable,  
With an untitled tyrant bloody-sceptered,  
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,  
120 Since that the truest issue of thy throne  
By his own interdiction stands accursed,  
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,  
125 Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!  
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself  
Have banished me from Scotland. —O my breast,

name. But there is no end--absolutely none--to my sexual  
sinfulness. Your wives, your daughters, your old women,  
and your young women could not satisfy the depths of my  
lust. My desire would overwhelm anything and everyone  
who opposed me. It's better that Macbeth rule rather than  
someone like me.

**MACDUFF**

Extreme lust can overwhelm a man. It has caused the  
downfall of many kings in previously happy kingdoms. But  
don't be afraid to take the crown that is yours. You can  
satisfy your desires in secret, while still appearing virtuous  
in public. You can hide the truth from everyone. Scotland  
has more than enough willing women. It's not possible that  
your lust could be so great that you'd go through all the  
women willing to sleep with the king once they find out his  
interest in them.

**MALCOLM**

In addition to my lust, I'm also insatiably greedy. If I were  
king, I'd take the nobles' lands, steal the jewels of one, and  
take the house of another. And everything I took would  
make me hungrier to steal even more, until I'd create  
unjustified arguments with my good and loyal subjects so  
that I could take their wealth.

**MACDUFF**

This greed you describe is even worse than lust because it  
will not pass as you leave your youth, and it has led to the  
death of numerous kings. But don't be afraid. Scotland has  
enough wealth that you will be satisfied, even by your own  
income alone. These bad qualities are bearable when  
weighed against your good qualities.

**MALCOLM**

But I have no good qualities. I have none of the qualities  
necessary for a king--such as justice, truthfulness,  
moderation, consistency, generosity, perseverance, mercy,  
humility, devotion, patience, courage, and bravery. Instead,  
I'm full of every type of sin, and each of those in a variety of  
ways. No, if I had power, I would take the sweet milk of  
peace and pour it into hell. I would destroy all peace, end  
all unity on earth.

**MACDUFF**

Oh, Scotland, Scotland!

**MALCOLM**

If someone like me is fit to rule, tell me. I am exactly as I  
have described myself.

**MACDUFF**

Fit to rule? No, not even fit to live. Oh, miserable country,  
ruled by a murderous tyrant with no right to rule--when will  
you possibly see peaceful days if your legal heir to the  
throne indicts himself as a cursed man and a disgrace to the  
royal family? Your royal father Duncan was a virtuous king.  
The queen your mother was more often kneeling in prayer  
than standing up, and lived a pious life. Goodbye. The evils  
of which you accuse yourself have driven me from Scotland  
forever. Oh, my heart, your hope ends here!

Thy hope ends here!

**MALCOLM**

Macduff, this noble passion,  
 130 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  
 135 Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me  
 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,  
 140 For strangers to my nature. I am yet  
 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  
 145 No less in truth than life. My first false speaking  
 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,  
 150 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**

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

*A DOCTOR enters.*

**MALCOLM**

155 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  
 The great assay of art, but at his touch—  
 Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand—  
 160 They presently amend.

**MALCOLM**

I 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,  
 165 Which often since my here-remain in England  
 I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,  
 Himself best knows, but strangely visited people,  
 All swoll'n and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,  
 The mere despair of surgery, he cures,  
 170 Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,  
 Put on with holy prayers. And, 'tis spoken,  
 To the succeeding royalty he leaves  
 The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,  
 He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,  
 175 And sundry blessings hang about his throne,  
 That speak him full of grace.

*ROSS enters.*

**MACDUFF**

See, who comes here?

**MALCOLM**

Macduff, this noble outburst can only be a product of integrity, and has removed from my soul the doubts I had about you, proving your honor and truthfulness to me. The devilish Macbeth has tried many plots to lure me into his power, so I must be cautious and not too quick to trust anyone. But may God show my truthfulness now to you! I will let myself be guided by you, and I take back all of the terrible things I said about myself. All the flaws I described myself as having are in fact alien to my character. I haven't slept with a woman yet, and I've never broken a vow. I barely even care about my own possessions, much less what anyone else owns. I've never broken a promise and wouldn't even betray the devil. I love truth as much as I love life. Those lies I told about myself are the first false words I've ever said. The true me is ready to serve you and our poor country. In fact, before you got here, old Siward—with ten thousand battle-ready soldiers—was just setting out for Scotland. Now we'll fight Macbeth together, and our chance of our success is as good as the reasons motivating us to act! Why are you silent?

**MACDUFF**

It's hard to understand such a sudden change in your story.

*A DOCTOR enters.*

**MALCOLM**

Well, we'll speak more about this soon.

*[To the DOCTOR]* Can you tell me, is King Edward coming?

**DOCTOR**

Yes, sir. A wretched group of the sick wait for him to heal them. Their illness doesn't respond to the efforts of medicine, but when Edward touches them—because of the sacred power given to him by heaven—they are healed.

**MALCOLM**


Thank you, doctor.


*The DOCTOR exits.*

**MACDUFF**

What disease does he mean?

**MALCOLM**

It's called the evil . Many times during my stay in England, I have seen the good king Edward perform an incredible miracle. Only he can say how he prays to heaven for these gifts. He cures people afflicted with this strange disease—all swollen and ulcerous, pitiful to look at, and beyond the help of surgery—by placing a gold coin around their necks and saying holy prayers over them. And it's said that he will pass on this blessed healing power to his royal descendants. In addition to this strange power, he has the gift of prophecy, as well as various other abilities that mark him as a man full of God's grace.

 The "King's Evil" was a disease also known as scrofula (likely a form of tuberculosis), which caused glandular swellings and was thought to be healed by a king's touch.

*ROSS enters.*

**MACDUFF**

Look there, who's coming?

**MALCOLM**

My countryman, but yet I know him not.

**MACDUFF**

My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.

**MALCOLM**

180 I know him now.—Good God, betimes remove  
The means that makes us strangers!

**ROSS**

Sir, amen.

**MACDUFF**

Stands Scotland where it did?

**ROSS**

Alas, poor country!  
185 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;  
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air  
Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems  
190 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,  
Dying or ere they sicken.

**MACDUFF**

Oh, relation  
195 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**

200 Why, well.

**MACDUFF**

And all my children?

**ROSS**

Well too.

**MACDUFF**

The tyrant has not battered at their peace?

**ROSS**

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

**MACDUFF**

205 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  
Of many worthy fellows that were out;  
Which was to my belief witnessed the rather  
210 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,  
To doff their dire distresses.

**MALCOLM**

He's dressed like a Scotsman, but I don't know him.

**MACDUFF**

My always noble kinsman, welcome.

**MALCOLM**

I recognize him now. Dear God, may you quickly change the  
circumstances that keep us apart!

**ROSS**

Amen to that, sir.

**MACDUFF**

Is Scotland as it has been?

**ROSS**

Alas, poor country! It's almost too scared to even recognize  
itself. Scotland is no longer our motherland. It is our grave,  
where the only people who smile are those who know  
nothing. Where sighs, groans, and shrieks split the air, but  
no one pays attention. Where violent sorrow is a common  
emotion. When the funeral bells ring, people no longer ask  
who died. Good men's lives are shorter than the time it  
takes the flowers in their caps to wilt. They die before they  
even fall sick.

**MACDUFF**

Oh, your report is too precise and too true!

**MALCOLM**

What is the latest bad news?

**ROSS**

Every hour brings new bad news. Every minute gives birth  
to some new bad thing.

**MACDUFF**

How is my wife?

**ROSS**

She's well.

**MACDUFF**

And all my children?

**ROSS**

They're well too.

**MACDUFF**

The tyrant Macbeth hasn't come after them?

**ROSS**

No, they were at peace when I left them.

**MACDUFF**

Don't be coy with what you're saying. What's happened?

**ROSS**

As I was coming here to tell you the news that has weighed  
me down, I heard rumors that many good men are armed  
and moving to fight Macbeth. I knew the rumors were true  
when I saw Macbeth's army on the move. Now is the time  
when we need your help. Your presence in Scotland would  
inspire more men—and women—to fight against Macbeth's  
tyranny.



**MALCOLM**

Be 't their comfort

215 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

220 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

225 Due to some single breast?

**ROSS**

No mind that's honest

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

**MACDUFF**

If it be mine,

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

**ROSS**

Let not your ears despise my tongue forever,  
Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound  
That ever yet they heard.

**MACDUFF**

Hum! I guess at it.

**ROSS**

235 Your castle is surprised, your wife and babes  
Savagely slaughtered. To relate the manner,  
Were, on the quarry of these murdered deer  
To add the death of you.

**MALCOLM**

Merciful heaven!

240 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**

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

**MACDUFF**

245 And I must be from thence!  
My wife killed too?

**ROSS**

I have said.

**MALCOLM**

Be comforted.

250 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

At one fell swoop?

**MALCOLM**

Let them be comforted—we're returning to Scotland.

Gracious King Edward has lent us noble Lord Siward and  
ten thousand soldiers. No soldier is more experienced or  
successful than Siward in all of the Christian countries.

**ROSS**

I wish I could respond to this good news with good news of  
my own. But I do have news that should be howled out into  
the sky of a barren desert, where nobody could hear it.

**MACDUFF**

What is the news about? Does it concern everyone, or is it a  
grief belonging to just one person?

**ROSS**

No honest man could stop himself from sharing in the  
sorrow, but my news relates to you alone.

**MACDUFF**

If it's for me, don't keep it from me. Quickly, tell me.

**ROSS**

I hope your ears won't hate my tongue forever for saying  
these things, the saddest news they've ever heard.

**MACDUFF**

Oh no! I can guess what you're going to say.

**ROSS**

Your castle was ambushed. Your wife and children were  
savagely slaughtered. If I described their murders, it would  
kill you too, and add your body to the pile.

**MALCOLM**

Merciful heaven!

*[To MACDUFF]* Come, man, don't hide your grief. Put your  
sorrow into words. A grief that hides in silence will whisper  
in your heart and break it.

**MACDUFF**

My children too?

**ROSS**

Your wife, your children, your servants--everyone they  
could find.

**MACDUFF**

And I was away! My wife was killed too?

**ROSS**

As I have said.

**MALCOLM**

Take comfort. Let's make a medicine out of revenge to ease  
your dreadful grief.

**MACDUFF**

He doesn't have any children. All my little children? Did you

say all? Oh, hawk from hell! All of them? What, all my

children and their mother killed in one deadly swoop?

**MALCOLM**

255 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  
That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,  
260 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**

Be this the whetstone of your sword. Let grief  
265 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.  
270 Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,  
Heaven forgive him too.

**MALCOLM**

This tune goes manly.  
Come, go we to the king. Our power is ready;  
Our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth  
275 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.

*ALL exit.*

**MALCOLM**

Fight it like a man.

**MACDUFF**

I'll do that. But I must also feel it like a man. I can't help remembering those things that were most precious to me. Did heaven just watch my family die, and refuse to help them? Sinful Macduff, they were killed because of you! As wicked as I am, they were slaughtered not because of their own flaws, but because of mine. May they rest in heaven now.

**MALCOLM**

Let all this sharpen your sword. Let grief become anger. Don't hold back your heart. Let it rage.

**MACDUFF**

Oh, I could weep like a woman while bragging about taking revenge! But, gentle heavens, cut short any delay. Bring me face to face with the devil of Scotland, so that he's within reach of my sword. If he escapes, may heaven forgive him as well!

**MALCOLM**

Now you sound like a man. Come, we'll go see King Edward. Our army is ready, and we can leave once we get King Edward's permission. Macbeth is ripe for the taking, with the powers above are armed and on our side. Take heart, as much as you can. A new day will dawn.

*They all exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*A DOCTOR and a waiting GENTLEWOMAN enter.*

**DOCTOR**

I have two nights watched with you but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walked?

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock  
5 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**

A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of watching. In  
10 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.

### Shakescleare Translation

*A DOCTOR and a waiting-  GENTLEWOMAN enter.*

 *A waiting-woman serves a noblewoman or royal woman.*

**DOCTOR**

For two nights I've watched her with you, but I haven't seen any evidence of what you've described. When did you last see her walk?

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Since the king 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; and then return to bed again--all while remaining fast asleep.

**DOCTOR**

It's deeply unnatural to be asleep and, at the same time, perform the actions of those who are awake. When she is in this state--besides walking and doing other things--have you heard her say anything?

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Yes, sir, but I will not repeat it.

**DOCTOR**

You can tell me. That would be the proper thing to do.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

15 Neither to you nor any one, having no witness to confirm my speech.

*LADY MACBETH enters, holding a candle.*

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Lo you, here she comes. This is her very guise; and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her, stand close.

**DOCTOR**

How came she by that light?

**GENTLEWOMAN**

20 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**

25 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**

30 Hark! She speaks. I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

**LADY MACBETH**

35 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**

40 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.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that. Heaven knows what she has known.

**LADY MACBETH**

45 Here's the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, Oh, Oh!

**DOCTOR**

What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

I won't tell you or anyone else without having another witness to confirm what I heard.

*LADY MACBETH enters, holding a candle.*

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Look, here she comes! This is what she always wears, and—I swear on my life—she's fast asleep. Watch her. Stay out of sight.

**DOCTOR**

How did she get that candle?

**GENTLEWOMAN**

It stands by her bedside. She keeps a light by her at all times. That's her command.

**DOCTOR**

You see, her eyes are open.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Yes, but they don't see anything.

**DOCTOR**

What is she doing now? Look how she rubs her hands.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

She does that a lot, as if she's washing her hands. I've seen her keep doing that for fifteen minutes.

**LADY MACBETH**

Yet there's still a spot here.

**DOCTOR**

Listen! She's talking. I'll write down what she says, so that I'll remember it.

**LADY MACBETH**

*[Rubbing her hands]* Come out, damned spot! Out, I order you! One, two. Now, it's time to do it. Hell is murky! Shame on you, my lord, shame! You're a soldier, and yet you're afraid? Why should we fear anyone who might know what happened, when no one can match our power? 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 in this startled way.

**DOCTOR**

Oh no. Oh no! You've learned something you shouldn't have.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

She said something she shouldn't have said, I'm sure of that. Heaven knows what other secrets she has.

**LADY MACBETH**

My hands still smell of blood. All the perfumes of Arabia won't sweeten the smell of my little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

**DOCTOR**

What a sigh! Her heart is painfully weighed down.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

**DOCTOR**

Well, well, well.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

50 Pray God it be, sir.

**DOCTOR**

This disease is beyond my practice. Yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died hollily in their beds.

**LADY MACBETH**

55 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**

60 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!

*LADY MACBETH exits.*

**DOCTOR**

Will she go now to bed?

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Directly.

**DOCTOR**

Foul whisp'rings are abroad. Unnatural deeds  
Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds  
65 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,  
And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night.  
70 My mind she has mated, and amazed my sight.  
I think, but dare not speak.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Good night, good doctor.

*They exit.*

**GENTLEWOMAN**

I wouldn't want a heart like hers in my chest even if I could be queen.

**DOCTOR**

Well, well, well.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

I pray to God that all will be well, sir!

**DOCTOR**

It is beyond my skill level to cure this disease. Yet I have known people who walked in their sleep and died without sin.

**LADY MACBETH**

Wash your hands. Put on your nightgown. Don't look so pale. I tell you again, Banquo is buried. He cannot come out of his grave.

**DOCTOR**

Is it true?

**LADY MACBETH**

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**

Now will she go to bed?

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Right to bed.

**DOCTOR**

Evil rumors are circulating. Unnatural actions lead to unnatural troubles. Those with guilty consciences will confess their secrets to their pillows while they are asleep. Lady Macbeth needs a holy priest, not a doctor. God forgive us all!

*[To the GENTLEWOMAN]* Look after her. Remove anything she could use to hurt herself, and even then keep watch over her. Now, good night. She has shocked my mind and amazed my eyes. I have thoughts about all this, but don't dare to say them out loud.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Good night, good doctor.

*They exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, and soldiers enter along with a drummer and flag.*

**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.

### Shakescleare Translation

*MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, and soldiers enter along with a drummer and flag.*

**MENTEITH**

The English army is near, led by Malcolm, his uncle Siward, and the good Macduff. The desire for revenge burns in them. Their reasons for wanting revenge would cause even dead men to rise and rush to battle.

**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  
10 Of all the gentry. There is Siward's son,  
And many unrough youths that even now  
Protest their first of manhood.

**MENTEITH**

What does the tyrant?

**CAITHNESS**

Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies.  
15 Some say he's mad, others that lesser hate him  
Do call it valiant fury. But, for certain,  
He cannot buckle his distempered cause  
Within the belt of rule.

**ANGUS**

Now does he feel  
20 His secret murders sticking on his hands.  
Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach.  
Those he commands move only in command,  
Nothing in love. Now does he feel his title  
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe  
25 Upon a dwarfish thief.

**MENTEITH**

Who then shall blame  
His pestered senses to recoil and start,  
When all that is within him does condemn  
Itself for being there?

**CAITHNESS**

30 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**

35 Or so much as it needs,  
To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.  
Make we our march towards Birnam.

*They exit, marching.*

**ANGUS**

We'll meet them near Birnam Wood. That's the way they're coming.

**CAITHNESS**

Does anyone know if Donalbain is with his brother?

**LENNOX**

Sir, it's certain that he is not. I have a list of all the important men. Siward's son is there, as well as many boys too young to even have beards who are ready to proclaim their manhood in battle.

**MENTEITH**

What is the tyrant Macbeth doing?

**CAITHNESS**

He is fortifying his castle at Dunsinane with strong defenses. Some say he's insane. Those who hate him less call it noble fury. One thing is certain: he can't control himself or his anger.

**ANGUS**

Now Macbeth feels the blood from his secret murders sticking to his hands. Now, each minute, rebel armies punish his treachery. The soldiers he commands are just following orders. They don't fight for him out of love. Now his kingship seems to hang loosely on him, as if he's a dwarf trying to wearing the robes of a giant.

**MENTEITH**

Who can blame him for acting twitchy and jumpy, when everything inside him condemns itself for what it's done?

**CAITHNESS**

Well, we march on to give our loyalty to the man to whom it is truly owed. We go to meet Malcolm, who is the medicine that will cure our sick country. And with him we will pour out all of our own blood to heal our nation.

**LENNOX**

Or as much as we need to water the royal flower of Malcolm, and to drown the weed that is Macbeth. Let's march to Birnam.

*They exit, marching.*

## Act 5, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*MACBETH, a DOCTOR, and attendants enter.*

**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.  
10 The mind I sway by and the heart I bear

### Shakescleare Translation

*MACBETH, a DOCTOR, and attendants enter.*

**MACBETH**

Don't bring me any more reports. Let all the thanes run from me. Until Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane, I'll be unaffected by fear. What's the boy Malcolm? Wasn't he born from a woman? The spirits that know the future have told me this: "Do not fear, Macbeth. No man born from a woman will ever overpower you." So run, disloyal thanes, and join the soft and self-indulgent English! My mind and heart will never waver with doubt or shake with fear.

Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.

*A SERVANT enters.*

**MACBETH**

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!  
Where got'st thou that goose look?

**SERVANT**

There is ten thousand—

**MACBETH**

15 Geese, villain?

**SERVANT**

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  
20 Are counselors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?

**SERVANT**

The English force, so please you.

**MACBETH**

Take thy face hence.

*The SERVANT exits.*

**MACBETH**

Seyton!—I am sick at heart,  
When I behold—Seyton, I say!— This push  
25 Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.  
I have lived long enough. My way of life  
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf,  
And that which should accompany old age,  
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,  
30 I must not look to have, but, in their stead,  
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honor, breath  
Which the poor heart would fain deny and dare not.  
Seyton!

*SEYTON enters.*

**SEYTON**

What's your gracious pleasure?

**MACBETH**

35 What news more?

**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**

'Tis not needed yet.

**MACBETH**

40 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**

Not so sick, my lord,  
45 As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies

*A SERVANT enters.*

**MACBETH**

May the devil turn you black, you pale-faced fool! Why do  
you look as frightened as a goose?

**SERVANT**

There are ten thousand—

**MACBETH**

Geese, fool?

**SERVANT**

Soldiers, sir.

**MACBETH**

Go prick your cheeks so blood will hide their whiteness, you  
cowardly boy. What soldiers, fool? Damn you! That pale face  
of yours will influence the others to be afraid as well. What  
soldiers, milk-face?

**SERVANT**

The English army, sir.

**MACBETH**

Get your face out of here.

*The SERVANT exits.*

**MACBETH**

Seyton! I'm sick at heart when I see—Seyton, come  
here!—This battle will either secure my place forever or  
knock me from my throne. I have lived long enough. The  
path of my life now leads me toward withering and death,  
like a yellowing leaf. And I cannot hope to have those things  
that should be a part of old age, like honor, love, obedience,  
and loyal friends. Instead, men curse me, quietly but with  
profound hate; people honor me with words but not in their  
hearts. My heart would happily end my life, and yet does  
not dare to do it. Seyton!

*SEYTON enters.*

**SEYTON**

What do you desire, your Grace?

**MACBETH**

Is there more news?

**SEYTON**

All the rumors have been confirmed, my lord.

**MACBETH**

I'll fight until they hack the flesh off my bones. Give me my  
armor.

**SEYTON**

It's not needed yet.

**MACBETH**

I'll put it on anyway. Send out more cavalry. Search the  
entire country. Hang anyone talking of fear. Give me my  
armor.

*[To the DOCTOR]* How is your patient, doctor?

**DOCTOR**

She is not physically sick, my lord. But she is troubled with  
constant visions that keep her from sleeping.

That keep her from her rest.

**MACBETH**

Cure her of that.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,

50 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

55 Must minister to himself.

**MACBETH**

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

60 The water of my land, find her disease,  
And purge it to a sound and pristine health,  
I would applaud thee to the very echo,  
That should applaud again.— Pull 't off, I say.—  
What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,  
65 Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of them?

**DOCTOR**

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,

70 Till Birnam Forest come to Dunsinane.

**DOCTOR**

(aside) Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,  
Profit again should hardly draw me here.

*They exit.*

**MACBETH**

Cure her of that. Can't you heal a diseased mind? Remove from her mind the memory of sorrow? Eliminate the troubling thoughts from her brain, and use some sweet medicine to clean her chest of that awful stuff that weighs upon her heart?

**DOCTOR**

For that kind of relief, the patient must heal herself.

**MACBETH**

Medicine is for the dogs. I will have nothing to do with it.

[To SEYTON] Come, put on my armor. Give me my lance.  
Seyton, send out the soldiers.

[To the DOCTOR] Doctor, the thanes run from me.

[To SEYTON] Come on, sir, hurry up.

[To the DOCTOR] Doctor, if you could please examine my country's urine, diagnose what ails it, and bring my country back to health, I will applaud you so loudly that you will hear it echo back from the end of the world.

[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 war preparations sounds like such a drug.

**MACBETH**

[To SEYTON] Follow me with the armor. I will not be afraid of death and destruction until Birnam Forest comes to Dunsinane.

**DOCTOR**

[To himself] If I were only far away and free from Dunsinane, no amount of money could bring me back.

*They all exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 4

### Shakespeare

MALCOLM, Old SIWARD, YOUNG SIWARD, MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS, and SOLDIERS enter marching, with a drummer and flag.

**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?

### Shakescleare Translation

MALCOLM, Old SIWARD, YOUNG SIWARD, MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS, and SOLDIERS enter marching, with a drummer and flag.

**MALCOLM**

Kinsmen, I hope the time is near when people will be safe in their own bedrooms.

**MENTEITH**

We don't doubt it.

**SIWARD**

What forest is this ahead of us?

**MENTEITH**

5 The wood of Birnam.

**MALCOLM**

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**

10 It shall be done.

**SIWARD**

We learn no other but the confident tyrant  
Keeps still in Dunsinane and will endure  
Our setting down before 't.

**MALCOLM**

'Tis his main hope:  
15 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  
20 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.  
25 Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,  
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate.  
Towards which, advance the war.

*They exit, marching.*

**MENTEITH**

Birnam Wood.

**MALCOLM**

Every soldier should hack off a branch and hold it in front of him. By doing so, we will make it difficult for Macbeth's spies to get an accurate count of the number of soldiers in our army to report back to him.

**SOLDIERS**

It will be done.

**SIWARD**

We've heard nothing other than that the overconfident Macbeth remains in Dunsinane and will let us lay siege to the castle.

**MALCOLM**

That's exactly what he wants. Whenever they have the chance, his thanes and common soldiers all desert him. No one serves in his army except men who are forced to, whose hearts aren't in it.

**MACDUFF**

Let's not judge the situation until we see how it turns out. For now, let's just act like hard-working soldiers.

**SIWARD**

The time is quickly coming when we'll know just what we've accomplished and what we still have to do. Speculations only express our uncertain hopes. But we'll only get certainty by actually going out and fighting, so let's start this war.

*They exit, marching.*

## Act 5, Scene 5

### Shakespeare

*MACBETH, SEYTON, and SOLDIERS enter, with a drummer and flag.*

**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.

*Women crying offstage.*

**MACBETH**

What is that noise?

**SEYTON**

It is the cry of women, my good lord.

*SEYTON exits.*

**MACBETH**

10 I have almost forgot the taste of fears.  
The time has been my senses would have cooled  
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair

### Shakescleare Translation

*MACBETH, SEYTON, and SOLDIERS enter, with a drummer and flag.*

**MACBETH**

Hang our flags on the outer walls. You all keep shouting, "They're coming!" Our castle's strength is enough to laugh off their siege. Let them sit out there until they're killed off by hunger and disease. If so many of our own soldiers hadn't revolted and joined them, we would have met them in front of the castle, man to man, and beat them back to England.

*Women crying offstage.*

**MACBETH**

What's that noise?

**SEYTON**

It's the sound of women crying, my good lord.

*SEYTON exits.*

**MACBETH**

I've almost forgotten what fear feels like. There was a time when a shriek in the night would have filled me with dread, and a ghost story would have made the hairs on my skin



15 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  
Cannot once start me.

*SEYTON comes back in.*

**MACBETH**

Wherefore was that cry?

**SEYTON**

The queen, my lord, is dead.

**MACBETH**

20 She should have died hereafter.  
There would have been a time for such a word.  
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
To the last syllable of recorded time,  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
25 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  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
30 Signifying nothing.

*A MESSENGER enters.*

**MACBETH**

Thou comest to use  
Thy tongue; thy story quickly.

**MESSENGER**

35 Gracious my lord,  
I should report that which I say I saw,  
But know not how to do 't.

**MACBETH**

Well, say, sir.

**MESSENGER**

As I did stand my watch upon the hill,  
I looked toward Birnam, and anon methought  
The wood began to move.

**MACBETH**

40 Liar and slave!

**MESSENGER**

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**

45 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  
50 That lies like truth. "Fear not, till Birnam wood  
Do come to Dunsinane"; and now a wood  
Comes toward Dunsinane. —Arm, arm, and out!—  
If this which he avouches does appear,  
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.  
55 I 'gin to be aware of the sun,  
And wish th' estate o' th' world were now undone.—  
Ring the alarum-bell!—Blow, wind! Come, wrack!  
At least we'll die with harness on our back.

rise up as if they were alive. But now I've feasted on true horrors, and horror is so familiar to my bloody thoughts that it can't startle me.

*SEYTON comes back in.*

**MACBETH**

What was the cause of that cry?

**SEYTON**

The queen is dead, my lord.

**MACBETH**

She would have died eventually anyway. That news was bound to come at some point. Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow--creeping at this slow pace, day after day, until the very end of time. And the days that have gone by are just another step for fools on the way to their deaths. Go out, go out, brief candle. Life is an illusion, a pitiful actor who struts and worries for his hour on the stage and then disappears forever. Life is a story told by an idiot, full of noise and emotion, without any meaning.

*A MESSENGER enters.*

**MACBETH**

You've come to tell me something. Speak quickly.

**MESSENGER**

My gracious lord, I want to tell you what I saw, but I don't know how to say it.

**MACBETH**

Well, just say it, sir.

**MESSENGER**

As I stood on guard duty on the hill, I looked toward Birnam--and then I thought I saw the forest begin to move.

**MACBETH**

You liar and villain!

**MESSENGER**

I accept your punishment if it's not true. You can see it coming about three miles away--it's a moving forest, I say.

**MACBETH**

If you're lying, you'll hang on the nearest tree until you die of hunger. If you're speaking the truth, I wouldn't care if you were to do the same to me.

*[To himself]* My resolve is failing, and now I begin to doubt that the lies the witches told me only sounded like the truth. "Don't worry until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane." And now a wood is coming to Dunsinane.

*[To SOLDIERS]* Arm yourselves, arm yourselves, and go fight!

*[To himself]* If what the messenger swears to me is actually true, then I can neither run away nor stay here. I'm beginning to grow weary of life. I wish the established order of the world would fall to chaos.

*[To SOLDIERS]* Ring the alarms! Blow, wind! Come, ruin! At least we'll die with our armor on our backs.

*They exit.**They all exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 6

### Shakespeare

*MALCOLM, Old SIWARD, MACDUFF, and their army enter with a drummer and flag and carrying branches.*

**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.

*They exit.*

### Shakescleare Translation

*MALCOLM, Old SIWARD, MACDUFF, and their army enter, carrying branches, with a drummer and flag.*

**MALCOLM**

We're close enough. Throw down these branches and let everyone see who you really are.

*[To SIWARD]* Noble uncle, you and your honorable son will lead the first battle. Brave Macduff and I will do the rest, as we worked out in our plan of attack.

**SIWARD**

Farewell. If we meet Macbeth's army tonight, let us be defeated if we cannot fight.

**MACDUFF**

With all your breath, blow the trumpets, those deafening heralds of blood and death.

*They all exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 7

### Shakespeare

*Trumpets. MACBETH enters.*

**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.

*YOUNG SIWARD enters.*

**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.

### Shakescleare Translation

*Trumpets sound. MACBETH enters.*

**MACBETH**

They have tied me to a stake. I can't run. Instead, I must stand and fight, like a bear . Where's the man who wasn't born from a woman? I fear him, and no one else.

 *In Shakespeare's time, bear-baiting--tying a bear to a stake and allowing it to be attacked by other animals--was a form of popular entertainment.*

*YOUNG SIWARD enters.*

**YOUNG SIWARD**

What's your name?

**MACBETH**

You'll be afraid to hear it.

**YOUNG SIWARD**

No, not even if you called yourself a name more evil than any demon that's 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 killed.*

**MACBETH**

- 15 Thou wast born of woman.  
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,  
Brandished by man that's of a woman born.

*MACBETH exits.*

*Trumpets. MACDUFF enters.*

**MACDUFF**

- That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!  
If thou beest slain, and with no stroke of mine,  
20 My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.  
I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms  
Are hired to bear their staves. Either thou, Macbeth,  
Or else my sword with an unbattered edge  
I sheathe again undecided. There thou shouldst be;  
25 By this great clatter, one of the greatest note  
Seems bruited. Let me find him, Fortune,  
And more I beg not.

*MACDUFF exits. Trumpets.*

*MALCOLM and Old SIWARD enter.*

**SIWARD**

- This way, my lord. The castle's gently rendered.  
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight,  
30 The noble thanes do bravely in the war,  
The day almost itself professes yours,  
And little is to do.

**MALCOLM**

We have met with foes  
That strike beside us.

**SIWARD**

- 35 Enter, sir, the castle.

*They exit. Trumpets.*

**YOUNG SIWARD**

You lie, hated tyrant. My sword will prove that you speak  
lies.

*They fight and YOUNG SIWARD is killed.*

**MACBETH**

You were born from a woman. I smile at swords, and laugh  
at any weapon held by a man born from a woman.

*MACBETH exits.*

*Trumpets sound. MACDUFF enters.*

**MACDUFF**

The noise is coming from over there. Tyrant, show your  
face! If you are killed without a strike from my own sword,  
the ghosts of my wife and children will haunt me forever. I  
won't fight these wretched soldiers. Macbeth, I'll dull the  
edge of my sword fighting you, or else I'll sheathe my  
sword, unused. You must be over there based on that great  
noise, which sounds like the announcement of some  
notable man. Oh Fortune, let me find him! That's all I ask.

*MACDUFF exits. Trumpets sound.*

*MALCOLM and Old SIWARD enter.*

**SIWARD**

Come this way, my lord. The castle has surrendered without  
a fight. Macbeth's soldiers are fighting on both sides, while  
our thanes fight bravely. The victory is almost yours, and  
there is little left to do.

**MALCOLM**

Our enemies seem to be trying to miss when they strike at  
us.

**SIWARD**

Sir, enter the castle.

*They exit. Trumpets sound.*

## Act 5, Scene 8

## Shakespeare

*MACBETH enters.*

**MACBETH**

Why should I play the Roman fool and die  
On mine own sword? Whiles I see lives, the gashes  
Do better upon them.

*MACDUFF enters.*

**MACDUFF**

Turn, hellhound, turn!

**MACBETH**

- 5 Of all men else I have avoided thee.  
But get thee back. My soul is too much charged  
With blood of thine already.

## Shakesclare Translation

*MACBETH enters.*

**MACBETH**

Why should I act like some ancient Roman fool and commit  
suicide by stabbing myself? As long as I see living enemies,  
I'd rather wound them than be wounded myself.

*MACDUFF enters.*

**MACDUFF**

Turn and face me, you dog from hell, turn!

**MACBETH**

You are the only man I have avoided. Go away. My soul is  
already stained too much by the blood of your murdered  
family.

**MACDUFF**

I have no words.

My voice is in my sword. Thou bloodier villain

10 Than terms can give thee out!

*They fight.*

**MACBETH**

Thou lovest labor.

As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air

With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed.

Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;

15 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

Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb

20 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,

That palter with us in a double sense,

25 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.

We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,

30 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.

35 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!"

*They exit fighting. Trumpets. They reenter, still fighting, and MACBETH is killed. A trumpet sounds a call to retreat. Another trumpet sounds a call of victory. MALCOLM, Old SIWARD, ROSS, the other THANES, and SOLDIERS enter, with a drummer and flag.*

**MALCOLM**

40 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**

Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt.

45 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?

**MACDUFF**

I have nothing to say to you. My sword will be my voice. You

are too vicious for words to describe!

*They fight.*

**MACBETH**

You're wasting your effort. You might as well try to stab the

air with your sword rather than try to use it to make me

bleed. Use your sword to fight someone who can be

harméd. I lead a charmed life, and can't be defeated by

anyone born from a woman.

**MACDUFF**

Then you should despair. The evil spirit you serve can tell

you that I was not born. I was cut out of my mother's womb

before she could deliver me naturally.

**MACBETH**

Curse your tongue for telling me this, for now my courage

has deserted me! I no longer believe those tricky witches.

They tricked me with their double meanings, raising my

hopes only to destroy them. I won't fight you.

**MACDUFF**

Then surrender, coward, and live on as an amusement we

all mock and stare at. As with a rare beast, we'll put a

picture of you on a sign, right above the words, "Here is the

tyrant!"

**MACBETH**

I won't surrender and kiss the ground in front of young

Malcolm's feet, or be taunted by commoners. Though

Birnam Wood really did come to Dunsinane, and I'm facing

a man not born of a woman, I'll fight to the end. I'll raise my

shield in front of my body. Now come and fight, Macduff,

and damn the first of us who cries, "Stop! Enough!"

*They exit fighting. Trumpets sound. They reenter, still fighting, and MACBETH is killed. A trumpet sounds a call to retreat. Another trumpet sounds a call of victory. MALCOLM, Old SIWARD, ROSS, the other THANES, and SOLDIERS enter, with a drummer and flag.*

**MALCOLM**

I wish all of our friends had survived to be here.

**SIWARD**

Some people will be killed in every battle. And yet, from

what I can see, our great victory didn't cost us very much.

**MALCOLM**

Macduff is missing, as is your noble son.

**ROSS**

My lord, your son, Young Siward, has paid the soldier's

price. He lived just long enough to be a man, and he had no

sooner proved his manhood through courage in battle than

he died.

**SIWARD**

Then he is dead?

**ROSS**

50 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**

55 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**

60 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.

*MACDUFF enters, carrying MACBETH's head.*

**MACDUFF**

65 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**

70 Hail, King of Scotland!

*Trumpets sound.*

**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  
75 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  
80 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.  
85 So, thanks to all at once and to each one,  
Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone.

*Trumpets sound. All exit.*

**ROSS**

Yes, and carried off the battlefield. If your grief were to  
equal his worth, then it 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 for any of them to  
die with more honor. And so, his time has come to die.

**MALCOLM**

He's worth more grief than that, and I'll mourn for him.

**SIWARD**

He is worth no more than that. They say he died well, and  
did his duty. And so, may God be with him! Here comes  
better news.

*MACDUFF enters, carrying MACBETH's head.*

**MACDUFF**

Hail, King Malcolm! Because that's what you are. Look, here  
is Macbeth's cursed head. We are free of the tyrant. I see  
that you are surrounded by the kingdom's noblemen, and  
they're thinking what I'm saying. I ask them to cheer aloud  
with me: Hail, King of Scotland!

**ALL**

Hail, King of Scotland!

*Trumpets sound.*

**MALCOLM**

It will not take long for me to repay my debt to you all by  
rewarding each of you as your loyalty and service deserves.  
My thanes and kinsmen, I name you all earls--the first ever  
to be named earls in Scotland. We have much else to do as  
well, which should be started soon, as the beginning of a  
new era. We must call home our exiled friends who fled  
from the trap of Macbeth's tyranny, and we must find all  
those cruel attendants who helped this dead butcher and  
his demon-like queen, who is thought to have killed herself.  
This, and whatever else we must do, by the grace of God,  
we will do in the right amount, at the right time, and in the  
right place. So I thank you all together and individually, and  
I invite you to come see me be crowned King of Scotland at  
Scone.

*Trumpets sound. They all exit.*

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