

The tragedy of Macbeth -- a first revision of the script

THE TRAGEDY OF
MACBETH.

Scene 1.

I i

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches, *flying*.

1 Witch. When shall we three meet again?

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

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

3 Witch. That will be ere the set of sun.

1 Witch. Where the place?

2 Witch. Upon the heath.

3 Witch. There to meet with Macbeth. [Horrid noises.]

1 Witch. I come, Grey-malkin.

2 Witch. Paddock calls.

3 Witch. Anon!

All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair.

Hover through the fog and filthy air. [Exeunt, *flying*.]

Scene 2.

I ii

Alarum within. Enter King, Malcolm, Donalbain, Lenox, with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Captain.

King. What bloody man is that?

He can report, as seemeth by his plight,
Of the revolt the newest state.

Malcolm. This is the sergeant

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

Captain. Doubtful it stood,

As two spent swimmers that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonald --
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him -- from the western isles
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied,
And fortune on his damned 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
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valour'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 the chops
And fixed his head upon our battlements.

King. Oh, valiant cousin, worthy gentleman!

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

King. 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 over-charged with double cracks,
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.

King. So well thy words become thee as thy wounds.
They smack of honour both. -- Go get him surgeons. --

Enter Ross and Angus.

Who comes here?

Malcolm. The worthy thane of Ross.

Lenox. What a haste looks through his eyes!

So should he look,

That seems to speak things strange.

Ross. God save the king!

King. Whence camest thou, worthy thane?

Ross. From Fife, great king,

Where the Norwegian banners flout the sky
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,
Confronted him with self-comparisons,

Point against point, rebellious arm against arm,
Curbing his lavish spirit. And, to conclude,
The victory fell on us.
King. Great happiness!
Ross. That now
Sweno the Norways' king craves composition.
Nor would we deign him burial of his men
Till he disbursed at Saint Colum's inch
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.
King. 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.
King. What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.
[Exeunt.]

Scene 3.

I iii

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

1 Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?
2 Witch. Killing swine.
3 Witch. Sister, where thou?
1 Witch. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
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 of the Tiger.
But in a sieve I'll thither sail
And like a rat without a tail
I'll do, I'll do and I'll do.
2 Witch. I'll give thee a wind.
1 Witch. Th'art kind.
3 Witch. And I another.
1 Witch. I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
In the shipman's card.
I'll drain him dry as hay.
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his penthouse lid.
He shall live a man forbid.
Weary sennights, nine times nine,
Shall he dwindle, peak and pine.
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tossed. --
Look what I have.
2 Witch. Show me, show me.
1 Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wrecked as homeward he did come. [Drum within.]

3 Witch. A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

All. The weyard sisters, hand in hand,
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.

Enter Macbeth and Banquo.

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

Banquo. How far is it called to Forres? -- What are these,
So withered and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants of the earth
And yet are on it? -- Live you? Or are you aught
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. Speak if you can. What are you?

1 Witch. All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

2 Witch. All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

3 Witch. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

Banquo. Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? -- In the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal. To me you speak not.
If you can look into the seeds of time
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favours nor your hate.

1 Witch. Hail!

2 Witch. Hail!

3 Witch. Hail!

1 Witch. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater!

2 Witch. Not so happy, yet much happier!

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

1 Witch. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

Macbeth. Stay, you imperfect speakers -- tell me more.
By Sinel's death I know I am thane of Glamis --
But how of Cawdor? The thane of Cawdor lives --
A prosperous gentleman. And to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence

You owe this strange intelligence, or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting. Speak, I charge you.

[Witches vanish.]

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

Macbeth. Into the air -- and what seemed corporal melted
as breath into the wind. Would they had stayed!

Banquo. Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?

Macbeth. Your children shall be kings!

Banquo. You shall be king!

Macbeth. And thane of Cawdor too! Went it not so?

Banquo. To the self-same tune and words. -- Who's here?

Enter Ross and Angus.

Ross. The king hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success -- and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his. Silenced with that,
In viewing o'er the rest of the self-same day,
He finds thee in the stout Norwegian ranks,
Nothing afeard 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 defence
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. And, for an earnest of a greater honour,
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. The thane of Cawdor lives. Why do you dress me
In borrowed robes?

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

Macbeth. Glamis and thane of Cawdor --
The greatest is behind. -- Thanks for your pains. --

Do you not hope your children shall be kings
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?

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

Macbeth. Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme. -- I thank you, gentlemen. --
This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I'm thane of Cawdor.
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smothered in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

Banquo. Look how our partner's rapt.

Macbeth. If chance will have me king, why, chance may
crown me,
Without my stir.

Banquo. New honours come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould
But with the aid of use.

Macbeth. Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

Banquo. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

Macbeth. Give me your favour. My dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten. --
Kind gentlemen, your pains are registered
Where every day I turn the leaf to read them.
Let us toward the king. --
Think upon what hath chanced, and at more time,
The interim having weighed it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

Banquo. Very gladly.

Macbeth. Till then, enough. -- Come, friends. [Exeunt.]

Flourish. Enter King, Lenox, Malcolm,
Donalbain, and Attendants.

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

Malcolm. My liege,

They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
That very frankly he confessed his treasons,
Implored your highness's pardon, and set forth
A deep repentance. Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it. He died
As one that been studied in his death
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle.

King. There's no art

To find the mind's construction in the face.
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Enter Macbeth, Banquo, Ross, and Angus.

O worthiest cousin!

The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me. Thou art so far before
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine. Only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

Macbeth. The service and the loyalty I owe,

In doing it, pays itself. Your highness's part
Is to receive our duties, and our duties
Are, to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should by doing everything
Safe toward your love and honour.

King. Welcome hither.

I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing. -- Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserved, nor must be known
No less to have done so, let me enfold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

Banquo. There if I grow,

The harvest is your own.

King. 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
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter

The prince of Cumberland -- which honour must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness like stars shall shine
On all deservers. -- From hence to Inverness,
And bind us further to you.

Macbeth. The rest is labour which is not used for you.
I'll be myself the harbinger and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach.
So humbly take my leave.

King. My worthy Cawdor!

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

King. True, worthy Banquo, he is full so valiant,
And in his commendations I am fed.
It is a banquet to me. -- Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome.
It is a peerless kinsman. [Flourish. Exeunt.

Scene 5.

I v

Enter Macbeth's Wife alone with a letter.

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

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature.
It is too full of the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou would'st be great --
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou would'st highly,
That would'st thou holily -- would'st not play false
And yet would'st wrongly win. Thou'd'st have, great
Glamis,
That which cries, Thus thou must do if thou have it --
And that which rather thou dost fear to do

Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal. --

Enter Messenger.

What is your tidings?

Messenger. The king comes here tonight.

Lady. Thou art mad to say it.

Is not thy master with him? -- who, were it so,
Would have informed for preparation.

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

Lady. Give him tending --

He brings great news.

[Exit Messenger.]

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
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,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry, Hold, hold! --

Enter Macbeth.

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

Macbeth. My dearest love,

Duncan comes here tonight.

Lady. And when goes hence?

Macbeth. Tomorrow, as he purposes.

Lady. Oh, never

Shall sun that morrow see. --
Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time. Bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue. Look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under it. 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.
Macbeth. We will speak further.
Lady. Only look up clear.
To alter favour ever is to fear.
Leave all the rest to me. [Exeunt.]

Scene 6.

I vi

Oboes and torches. Enter King, Malcolm,
Donalbain, Banquo, Lenox, Macduff,
Ross, Angus, and Attendants.

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

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

Enter Lady.

King. See, see, our honoured hostess! --
The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid God yield us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.

Lady. All our service,
In every point twice done and then done double,
Were poor and single business, to contend
Against those honours 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.

King. Where's the thane of Cawdor?
We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose

To be his purveyor. But he rides well --
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath hold him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest tonight.

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

King. Give me your hand --
Conduct me to mine host. We love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 7.

I vii

Oboes. Torches.

Enter a Sewer, and divers Servants with Dishes and Service
over the stage. Then enter Macbeth.

Macbeth. If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly. If the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence and catch,
With his surcease, success -- that but this blow
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
To plague the inventor. This even-handed justice
Commends the ingredience of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust --
First as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed -- then as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking off --
And pity like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
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 the other ----

Enter Lady.

How now? What news?

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

Macbeth. Hath he asked for me?

Lady. Know you not he has?

Macbeth. We will proceed no further in this business.

He hath honoured me of late, and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady. Was the hope drunk

Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?
And wakes it now to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time,
Such I account thy love. Art thou afraid
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Would'st thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life --
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting I dare not wait upon I would,
Like the poor cat in the adage.

Macbeth. Prithee, peace.

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

Lady. What beast was it then

That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man --
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
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn
As you have done to this.

Macbeth. If we should fail, ----

Lady. 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
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
Their drenched 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. 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,
That they have done it?

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

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

[Exeunt.]

Scene 8.

II i

Enter Banquo, and Fleance, with a torch
before him.

Banquo. How goes the night, boy?

Fleance. I have not heard the clock.

The moon is down.

Banquo. And she goes down at twelve.

Fleance. I take it, 'tis later, sir.

Banquo. 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,
restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
gives way to in repose. -- Give me my sword. --

Enter Macbeth, and a Servant with a torch.

Who's there?

Macbeth. A friend!

Banquo. What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's abed.
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. 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 weyward sisters.

To you they have showed some truth.
Macbeth. I think not of them.
Yet, when we can intreat an hour to serve,
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.
Banquo. At your kind'st leisure.
Macbeth. If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,
It shall make honour for you,
Banquo. So I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,
I shall be counselled.
Macbeth. Good repose the while.
Banquo. Thanks, sir -- the like to you. [Exit Banquo.
Macbeth. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed. -- [Exit.
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. --
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,
And such an instrument I was to use. --
Mine eyes are made the fools of the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest. -- I see thee still,
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. -- There's no such thing.
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. -- Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates
Pale Heccat's offerings -- and withered murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing sides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. -- Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my where-about
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.
I go, and it is done. The bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell. [Exit.

Enter Lady.

Lady. 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 bell-man
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
Whether they live or die.

Enter Macbeth.

Macbeth. Who's there? What ho?

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

Macbeth. I have done the deed.

Didst thou not hear a noise?

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

Macbeth. When?

Lady. Now.

Macbeth. As I descended?

Lady. Ay.

Macbeth. Hark! -- Who lies in the second chamber?

Lady. Donalbain.

Macbeth. This is a sorry sight.

Lady. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Macbeth. There's one did laugh in his sleep, and one cried
Murder,

That they did wake each other. I stood and heard them.
But they did say their prayers and addressed them
Again to sleep.

Lady. There are two lodged together.

Macbeth. One cried God bless us, and Amen the other,
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.

Listening their fear, I could not say Amen

When they did say God bless us.

Lady. Consider it not so deeply.

Macbeth. But wherefore could not I pronounce Amen?

I had most need of blessing and Amen stuck in my throat.

Lady. These deeds must not be thought

After these ways. So, it will make us mad.

Macbeth. Methought I heard a voice cry Sleep no more!

Macbeth does murder sleep -- the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast, ----

Lady. 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. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,

You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brain-sickly of things. Go get some water
And wash this filthy witness from your hands. --
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
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 it again I dare not.

Lady. 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,
For it must seem their guilt.

[Exit.

[Knock within.

Macbeth. Whence is that knocking?

How is it 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
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Enter Lady.

Lady. My hands are of your colour, but I shame

To wear a heart so white.

[Knock.

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.

[Knock.

Hark, more knocking.

Get on your night-gown, lest occasion call us

And show us to be watchers. Be not lost

So poorly in your thoughts.

Macbeth. To know my deed, [Knock.
'Twere best not know myself.
Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou could'st.
[Exeunt.

Scene 10.

II iii 1--166

Enter a Porter.

[Knocking within.

Porter. Here's a knocking indeed. If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key. Knock. Knock, knock, knock. Who's there, in the name of Belzebub? Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty. Come in time. Have napkins enow about you. Here you'll sweat for it. Knock. Knock, knock. Who's there, in the 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. Oh, come in, equivocator. Knock. Knock, knock, knock. Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor, come hither for stealing out of a French hose. Come in, tailor. Here you may roast your goose. Knock. 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. Knocking. Anon, anon. I pray you, remember the porter.

Enter Macduff and Lenox.

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. What three things does drink especially
provoke?

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

Macduff. I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

Porter. That it did, sir, in the 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.

Enter Macbeth.

Macduff. Is thy master stirring?

Our knocking has awaked him. Here he comes.

Lenox. Good morrow, noble sir.

Macbeth. Good morrow both.

Macduff. Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

Macbeth. Not yet.

Macduff. He did command me to call timely on him.

I have almost slipped the hour.

Macbeth. I'll bring you to him.

Macduff. I know this is a joyful trouble to you,

But yet 'tis one.

Macbeth. The labour we delight in physics pain.

This is the door.

Macduff. I'll make so bold to call,

For 'tis my limited service.

[Exit Macduff.]

Lenox. Goes the king hence today?

Macbeth. He does -- he did appoint so.

Lenox. The night has been unruly. Where we lay,

Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,

Lamentings heard in the 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

Clamoured the live-long night. Some say the earth

Was feverous and did shake.

Macbeth. 'Twas a rough night.

Lenox. My young remembrance cannot parallel

A fellow to it.

Enter Macduff.

Macduff. Oh, horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart

Cannot conceive nor name thee.

Macbeth and Lenox. What's the matter?

Macduff. Confusion now hath made his master-piece.

Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope

The Lord's anointed temple and stole thence

The life of the building.

Macbeth. What is it you say -- the life?

Lenox. 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. Awake, awake!

[Exeunt Macbeth and Lenox.]

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
The great doom's image. Malcolm, Banquo,
As from your graves rise up and walk like sprights,
To countenance this horror. Ring the bell!

Bell rings. Enter Lady.

Lady. What's the business
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? Speak, speak!
Macduff. Oh, gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak.
The repetition in a woman's ear
Would murder as it fell.

Enter Banquo.

Oh, Banquo, Banquo, our royal master's murdered.
Lady. Woe, alas!
What, in our house?
Banquo. Too cruel anywhere.
Dear Duff, I pray thee, contradict thyself
And say it is not so.

Enter Macbeth, Lenox, and 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.
All is but toys. Renown and grace is dead.
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

Enter Malcolm and Donalbain.

Donalbain. What is amiss?
Macbeth. You are, and do not know it.
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?
Lenox. Those of his chamber, as it seemed, had done it.
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,
That I did kill them.
Macduff. Wherefore did you so?
Macbeth. Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral in a moment? No man.
The expedition of my violent love
Outran 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 colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breeched with gore. Who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make his love known?
Lady. Help me hence, ho!
Macduff. Look to the lady!
Malcolm. Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument for ours?
Donalbain. What should be spoken here, where our fate,
Hid in an auger-hole, may rush and seize us?
Let's away. Our tears are not yet brewed.
Malcolm. Nor our strong sorrow upon the foot of motion.
[Exeunt Malcolm and Donalbain.]
Banquo. Look to the lady --
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 pretence I fight
Of treasonous malice.
Macduff. And so do I.
All. So all.
Macbeth. Let's briefly put on manly readiness
And meet in the hall together.
All. Well contented. [Exeunt.]

Scene 11.

II iii 167--82

Enter Malcolm and Donalbain.

Malcolm. What will you do? Let's not consort with them.
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office
Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.
Donalbain. To Ireland, I. Our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer. Where we are,
There's daggers in men's smiles. The near in blood,
The nearer bloody.

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

[Exeunt.]

Scene 12.

II iv

Enter Ross with an Old Man.

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

Ross. Ha, good father,
Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threatens his bloody stage. By the clock 'tis day --
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.
Is it night's predominance, or the day's shame,
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 towering in her pride of place
Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.

Ross. And Duncan's horses -- a thing most strange and
certain! --

Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would
Make war with mankind.

Old Man. 'Tis said they eat each other.

Ross. They did so,
To the amazement of mine eyes that looked upon it.

Enter Macduff.

Here comes the good Macduff.
How goes the world, sir, now?

Macduff. Why, see you not?

Ross. Is it known who did this more than bloody deed?

Macduff. Those that Macbeth hath slain.

Ross. Alas the day!

What good could they pretend?

Macduff. They were suborned.

Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stolen away and fled -- which puts upon them

Suspicion of the deed.

Ross. 'Gainst nature still!

Thriftless ambition, that will ravin up
Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth?

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

Ross. Where is Duncan's body?

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

Ross. Will you to Scone?

Macduff. No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

Ross. Well, I will thither.

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

Ross. Farewell, father.

Old Man. God's benison go with you, and with those
That would make good of bad and friends of foes. [Exeunt.

Scene 13.

III i 1--14

Enter Banquo.

Banquo. Thou hast it now -- king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weyard women promised -- and I fear
Thou play'dst most foully for it. Yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
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
And set me up in hope? -- But hush, no more.

Sennet sounded. Enter Macbeth as king, Lady, Lenox,
Ross, Lords, and Attendants.

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. .
. .
. .
. .
. .

[Exeunt.

INTERMISSION.

Enter Macbeth, Lords, and Attendants, meeting Banquo.

Macbeth. Here's our chief guest. If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast
And all-thing unbecoming. --
Tonight we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.

Banquo. Let your highness
Command upon me -- to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever 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 --
In this day's council. But we'll take tomorrow.
Is it far you ride?

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

Macbeth. Fail not our feast.

Banquo. My lord, I will not.

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

Banquo. Ay, my good lord. Our time does call upon us.

Macbeth. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot --
And so I do commend you to their backs.

Farewell. --

[Exit Banquo.]

Let every man be master of his time
Till seven at night.

To make society the sweeter welcome,
We will keep ourself till supper time alone.

While then, God be with you. --

[Exeunt Lords.]

Sirrah, a word with you.

Attend those men our pleasure?

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

Macbeth. Bring them before us.

[Exit Servant.]

To be thus is nothing,

But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep -- and in his royalty of nature

Reigns that which would be feared. 'Tis much he dares --
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,

He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear -- and under him
My genius is rebuked, as it is said
Mark Anthony'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 prophet-like
They hailed him father to a line of kings.
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If it be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind --
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered --
Put rancours 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 seeds of Banquo kings.
Rather than so, come fate into the list
And champion me to the utterance. -- Who's there?

Enter Servant, and two Murderers.

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

[Exit Servant.]

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

Murderers. It was, so please your highness.

Macbeth. Well then, now --

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

1 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
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 for ever?

1 Murderer. We are men, my liege.

Macbeth. 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

Distinguished the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The house-keeper, 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.
Now, if you have a station in the file,
Not in the worst rank of manhood, say it --
And I will put that business in your bosoms
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us --
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

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

1 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 it.

Macbeth. Both of you \
Know Banquo was your enemy.

Murderers. True, my lord.

Macbeth. So is he mine -- and in such bloody distance
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life. And though I could
With bare-faced 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
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.

2 Murderer. We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.

1 Murderer. Though our lives ----

Macbeth. Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour \
at most,

I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
Acquaint you with the perfect spy of the time,
The moment on it -- for it must be done tonight,
And something from the palace -- always thought
That I require a clearness. And with him,
To leave no rubs nor botches in the work,
Fleance, his son, that keeps him company,
Whose absence is no less material to me
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. -- Resolve yourselves apart --

I'll come to you anon.
Murderers. We are resolved, my lord.
Macbeth. I'll call upon you straight -- abide within.
It is concluded. Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out tonight. [Exeunt.

Scene 15.

III ii

Enter Macbeth's Lady and a Servant.

Lady. Is Banquo gone from court?
Servant. Ay, madam, but returns again tonight.
Lady. Say to the king, I would attend his leisure
For a few words.
Servant. Madam, I will. [Exit.
Lady. Nought'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.

Enter Macbeth.

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. We have scorched the snake, not killed it.
She'll close, and be herself, whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things disjoint,
Both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly. Better be with the dead
Whom we to gain our peace have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave.
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. 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 apply to Banquo.
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue --
Unsafe the while that we

Must lave our honours in these flattering streams
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

Lady. You must leave this.

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

Lady. But in them nature's copy's not etern.

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

Lady. 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
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale. Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood.
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse
While night's black agents to their preys do rouse. --
Thou marvell'st at my words -- but hold thee still.
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.
So, prithee, go with me. [Exeunt.

Scene 16.

III iii

Enter three Murderers.

1 Murderer. But who did bid thee join with us?

3 Murderer. Macbeth.

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

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

3 Murderer. Hark! -- I hear horses.

Banquo within. Give us a light, there -- ho!

2 Murderer. Then 'tis he. The rest
That are within the note of expectation
Already are in the court.

1 Murderer. His horses go about.

3 Murderer. Almost a mile -- but he does usually --
So all men do -- from hence to the palace gate

Make it their walk.

Enter Banquo and Fleance with a torch.

2 Murderer. A light, a light!

3 Murderer. 'Tis he.

1 Murderer. Stand to it!

Banquo. It will be rain tonight.

1 Murderer. Let it come down!

Banquo. Oh, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!
Thou may'st revenge -- Oh, slave!

3 Murderer. Who did strike out the light?

1 Murderer. Was it not the way?

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

2 Murderer. We have lost
Best half of our affair.

1 Murderer. Well, let's away,
And say how much is done.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 17.

III iv

Banquet prepared. Enter Macbeth, Lady, Ross, Lenox,
Lords, and Attendants.

Macbeth. You know your own degrees. Sit down. At first
And last, the hearty welcome.

Lords. Thanks to your majesty.

Macbeth. Ourselves will mingle with society
And play the humble host.

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

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

Enter first Murderer.

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

There's blood upon thy face.

Murderer. 'Tis Banquo's then.

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

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

Macbeth. Thou art the best of the cut-throats. Yet he's
good
That did the like for Fleance. If thou didst it,

Thou art the non-pareil.
Murderer. Most royal sir,
Fleance is 'scaped.
Macbeth. 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?
Murderer. Ay, my good lord. Safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenched gashes on his head,
The least a death to nature.

Macbeth. Thanks for that.
There the grown serpent lies. The worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for the present. -- Get thee gone. Tomorrow
We'll hear ourselves again. [Exit Murderer.]

Lady. 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.
From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony.
Meeting were bare without it.

Enter the Ghost of Banquo and sits in Macbeth's place.

Macbeth. Sweet remembrancer! --
Now good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both.
Lenox. May it please your highness sit?
Macbeth. Here had we now our country's honour roofed,
Were the graced person of our Banquo present --
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance.
Ross. His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. -- Please it your highness
To grace us with your royal company?
Macbeth. The table's full.
Lenox. Here is a place reserved, sir.
Macbeth. Where?
Lenox. Here, my good lord. -- What is it that moves your
highness?
Macbeth. Which of you have done this?
Lords. What, my good lord?
Macbeth. Thou canst not say I did it. Never shake
Thy gory locks at me.
Ross. Gentlemen, rise. His highness is not well.
Lady. Sit, worthy friends. My lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth. Pray you, keep seat.
The fit is momentary. Upon a thought
He will again be well. If much you note him,

You shall offend him and extend his passion.
Feed, and regard him not. -- Are you a man?
Macbeth. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appal the devil.

Lady. Oh, proper stuff!

This is the very painting of your fear.
This is the air-drawn dagger which you said
Led you to Duncan. Oh, these flaws and starts --
Impostors to true fear -- would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.

Macbeth. Prithee, see there! Behold! Look! Lo! How
say you? --

Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too!
If charnel-houses and our graves must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites.

Lady. What, quite unmanned in folly?

Macbeth. If I stand here, I saw him.

Lady. Fie, for shame!

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

Lady. My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.

Macbeth. I do forget!

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

Enter Ghost.

I drink to the general joy of the 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.

Macbeth. 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. Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom. 'Tis no other.
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.
Macbeth. What man dare, I dare.
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The armed rhinoceros or the 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
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence! -- Why so, being gone,
I am a man again. -- Pray you, sit still.
Lady. You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting
With most admired disorder.
Macbeth. Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange,
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks
When mine is blanched with fear.
Ross. What sights, my lord?
Lady. I pray you, speak not. He grows worse and worse.
Question enrages him. At once, good night.
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.
Lenox. Good night, and better health
Attend his majesty.
Lady. A kind goodnight to all. [Exit Lords.
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 maggot-pies and choughs and rooks, brought forth
The secret'st man of blood. -- What is the night?
Lady. Almost at odds with morning, which is which.
Macbeth. How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?
Lady. Did you send to him, sir?
Macbeth. I hear it by the way -- but I will send.
There's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will tomorrow --
And betimes I will -- to the weyard sisters.
More shall they speak -- for now I am bent to know,
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,
Which must be acted ere they may be scanned.
Lady. You lack the season of all natures, sleep.
Macbeth. Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self abuse
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use.
We are yet but young in deed. [Exeunt.

Scene 18.

III v

Thunder. Enter the three Witches, meeting
Hecat.

1 Witch. Why, how now, Hecat? You look angerly.
Hecat. Have I not reason, beldams as you are,
Saucy and overbold? How did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth
In riddles and affairs of death --
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,
Was never called to bear my part
Or show the glory of our Art?
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,
And at the pit of Acheron
Meet me in the morning. Thither he
Will come to know his destiny.
Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms, and everything beside.
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 vaporous drop, profound.
I'll catch it ere it come to ground --
And that, distilled by magic slights
Shall raise such artificial sprights
As, by the strength of their illusion,
Shall draw him on to his confusion.
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear --
And, you all know, security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy. [Music and a Song.
Hark, I am called. My little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud and stays for me.
[Sing within. Come away, come away, etc.

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[Exit Hecat, flying.

1 Witch. Come, let's make haste. She'll soon be back
again. [Exeunt.

Scene 19.

III vi

Enter Lenox and another Lord.

Lenox. 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 --
And the right valiant Banquo walked too late,
Whom you may say, if it 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
To kill their gracious father? Damned 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,
For 'twould have angered any heart alive
To hear the men deny it. So that I say
He has borne all things well. And I do think
That had he Duncan's sons under his key --
As and it please heaven he shall not -- they should find
What 'twere to kill a father. So should Fleance.
But peace! -- for from bold words, and 'cause he failed
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear,
Macduff lives in disgrace. Sir, can you tell
Where he bestows himself?

Lord. The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
Lives in the English court, and is received
Of the most pious Edward with such grace
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff is gone,
To pray the holy king upon his aid
To wake Northumberland and warlike Seyward,
That by the help of these -- with Him above
To ratify the work -- we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,

Do faithful homage and receive free honours,
All which we pine for now. And this report
Hath so exasperate their king that he
Prepares for some attempt of war.

Lenox. Sent he to Macduff?

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

Lenox. And that well might
Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance
His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
Fly to the court of England and unfold
His message ere he come, that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our suffering country,
Under a hand accursed.

Lord. I'll send my prayers with him.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 20.

IV i

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

1 Witch. Thrice the brinded cat hath mewed.

2 Witch. Thrice -- and once the hedgepig whined.

3 Witch. Harpier cries -- 'tis time, 'tis time.

1 Witch. Round about the cauldron go.

In the poisoned entrails throw.
Toad that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Sweltered venom sleeping got --
Boil thou first in the charmed pot.

All. Double, double, toil and trouble.

Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

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

All. Double, double, toil and trouble.

Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

3 Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witch's mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravined salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digged in the 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,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-delivered by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab.
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron
For the ingredience of our cauldron.
All. Double, double, toil and trouble.
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
1 Witch. Cool it with a baboon's blood --
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter Hecat and the *Singing* Witches.

Hecat. Oh, well done. I commend your pains --
And everyone shall share in the gains.
And now about the cauldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.
[Music and a Song. Black spirits, etc.

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[*Exeunt Hecat and the Singing Witches.*

2 Witch. By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks, whoever knocks.

Enter Macbeth.

Macbeth. How now, you secret black and midnight hags!
What is it you do?

All. 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 yesty waves
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
Of nature's germens tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken -- answer me
To what I ask you.

1 Witch. Speak.

2 Witch. Demand.

3 Witch. We'll answer.
1 Witch. Say if th'hadst rather hear it from our mouths
Or from our masters.
Macbeth. Call 'em -- let me see 'em.
1 Witch. Pour in sow's blood that hath eaten
Her nine farrow. Grease that's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet, throw
Into the flame.
All. Come, high or low,
Thy self and office deftly show. [Thunder.
1 Apparition, an armed head.
Macbeth. Tell me, thou unknown power, ----
1 Witch. He knows thy thought.
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.
1 Apparition. Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth -- Beware Macduff.
Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me -- enough.
[Descends.
Macbeth. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks --
Thou hast harped my fear aright. But one word more ----
1 Witch. He will not be commanded. Here's another,
More potent than the first. [Thunder.
2 Apparition, a bloody child.
2 Apparition. Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth ----
Macbeth. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee!
2 Apparition. Be bloody, bold and resolute. Laugh to scorn
The power of man -- for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth. [Descends.
Macbeth. 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.
3 Apparition, a child crowned with a tree in his hand.
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 it.
3 Apparition. Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are.
Macbeth shall never vanquished be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him. [Descends.
Macbeth. That will never be!
Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements -- good!
Rebellious dead rise never till the wood
Of Birnam rise -- and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
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. 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.

1 Witch. Shew.

2 Witch. Shew.

3 Witch. Shew.

All. Show his eyes and grieve his heart.
Come like shadows, so depart.

A show of eight kings, **the** last with a glass
in his hand. **The Ghost of Banquo follows.**

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

1 Witch. Ay, sir, all this is so. But why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?

Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprights
And show the best of our delights.

I'll charm the air to give a sound
While you perform your antic round --

That this great king may kindly say

Our duties did his welcome pay.

[Music.

[The Witches dance, and vanish.

Where are they? -- Gone? -- Let this pernicious hour
Stand aye accursed in the calendar!
Come in, without there!

Enter Lenox.

Lenox. What's your grace's will?

Macbeth. Saw you the weyard sisters?

Lenox. No, my lord.

Macbeth. Came they not by you?

Lenox. No indeed, my lord.

Macbeth. Infected be the air whereon they ride,
And damned all those that trust them. -- I did hear

The galloping of horse. Who was it came by?
Lenox. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
Macduff is fled to England.
Macbeth. Fled to England?
Lenox. Ay, my good lord.
Macbeth. 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,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done.
The castle of Macduff I will surprise,
Seize upon Fife, give to the edge of the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
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. [Exeunt.]

Scene 21.

IV ii

Enter Macduff's Wife, her Son, and Ross.

Wife. What had he done, to make him fly the land?
Ross. You must have patience, madam.
Wife. He had none.
His flight was madness. When our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors.
Ross. You know not
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.
Wife. Wisdom? To leave his wife, to leave his babes,
His mansion and his titles in a place
From whence himself does fly? He loves us not.
He wants the natural touch. For the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
All is the fear, and nothing is the love.
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.
Ross. My dearest coz,
I pray you, school yourself. But, for your husband,
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits of the season. I dare not speak much further --
But cruel are the times when we are traitors
And do not know ourselves -- when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear --
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way and move. -- 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.

Wife. 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. [Exit.

Wife. Sirrah, you father's dead. And what will you do
now? How will you live?

Son. As birds do, mother.

Wife. What, with worms and flies?

Son. With what I get, I mean, and so do they.

Wife. Poor bird, thou'd'st never fear the net nor lime,
the pitfall nor the gin.

Son. Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not set
for. My father is not dead, for all your saying.

Wife. Yes, he is dead. How wilt thou do for a father?

Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband?

Wife. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

Son. Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

Wife. Thou speak'st with all thy wit -- and yet, i'faith,
with wit enough for thee.

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?

Wife. Ay, that he was.

Son. What is a traitor?

Wife. Why, one that swears and lies.

Son. And be all traitors, that do so?

Wife. Everyone that does so is a traitor, and must be
hanged.

Son. And must they all be hanged, that swear and lie?

Wife. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them?

Wife. Why, the honest men.

Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools -- for there
are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men and
hang up them.

Wife. Now God help thee, poor monkey. But how wilt thou
do for a father?

Son. If he were dead, you'd weep for him. If you would
not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have
a new father.

Wife. Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

Enter a [passing Peasant](#).

[Peasant](#). Bless you, fair dame -- I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.
I doubt some danger does approach you nearly.
If you will take a homely man's advice,
Be not found here. Hence with your little ones.

To fright you thus methinks I am too savage.
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you,
I dare abide no longer. [Exit Peasant.]

Wife. Whether should I fly?

I have done no harm. But I remember now,
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 defence,
To say, I have done no harm? -- What are these faces?

Enter several Thugs.

Thug. Where is your husband?

Wife. I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou may'st find him.

Thug. He's a traitor.

Son. Thou liest, thou shag-haired villain.

Thug. What, you egg? [Stabbing him.]
Young fry of treachery? [Stabbing him again.]

Son. He has killed me, mother.

Run away, I pray you.

Wife. Murder! [Exit pursued by the Thugs.]

Scene 22.

IV iii

Enter Malcolm and Macduff.

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

Macduff. Let us rather

Hold fast the mortal sword and like good men
Bestride our downfallen 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 dolour.

Malcolm. 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.

This tyrant whose sole name blisters our tongues
Was once thought honest. You have loved him well.

He hath not touched you yet. I am young -- but something
You may discern of him through me -- and wisdom

To offer up a weak poor innocent lamb

To appease an angry god.

Macduff. 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.
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 dishonours,
But mine own safeties. You may be rightly just,
Whatever I shall think.

Macduff. Bleed, bleed, poor country!

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

Malcolm. Be not offended --

I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
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
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,
By him that shall succeed.

Macduff. What should he be?

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

Macduff. Not in the legions

Of horrid hell can come a devil more damned
In evils, to top Macbeth.

Malcolm. I grant him bloody,

Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name. But there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness. Your wives, your daughters,

Your matrons and your maids could not fill up
The cistern of my lust -- and my desire
All continent impediments would o'erbear
That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth
Than such a 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
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
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
Finding it so inclined.

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

Macduff. This avarice
Sticks deeper -- grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming lust -- and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings. Yet do not fear.
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,
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
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.

Macduff. Oh, Scotland, Scotland, ----

Malcolm. 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-sceptred,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne

By his own interdiction stands accursed
And does blaspheme his breed? -- The royal father
Was a most sainted king. The queen that bore thee,
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she lived. -- Fare thee well.
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Hath banished me from Scotland. Oh, my breast,
Thy hope ends here.

Malcolm. Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power -- and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste. But God above
Deal between thee and me. For even now
I put myself to thy direction and
Unspeak my own detraction -- here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself
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
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 Seyward with ten thousand warlike men
Already at a point was setting forth.
Now we'll together, and the chance of goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel. Why are you silent?
Macduff. Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor.

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

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

[Exit.]

Malcolm. I thank you, doctor.

Macduff. What's the disease he means?

Malcolm. 'Tis called the Evil --

A most miraculous work in this good king
Which often since my here remain in England
I've seen him do. How he solicits heaven

Himself best knows -- but strangely visited people,
All swollen and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers -- and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne
That speak him full of grace.

Enter Ross.

Macduff. See who comes here!

Malcolm. My countryman, but yet I know him not.

Macduff. My ever gentle cousin, welcome hither.

Malcolm. I know him now. -- Good God betimes remove
The means that makes us strangers.

Ross. Sir, amen.

Macduff. Stands Scotland where it did?

Ross. Alas, poor country,
Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot
Be called our mother, but our grave -- where nothing
But who knows nothing is once seen to smile --
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rent the air
Are made, not marked -- where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy. The dead-man's knell
Is there scarce asked for who -- and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or e'er they sicken.

Macduff. Oh, relation
Too nice and yet too true.

Malcolm. What's the newest grief?

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

Macduff. How does my wife?

Ross. Why, well.

Macduff. And all my children?

Ross. Well too.

Macduff. The tyrant has not battered at their peace?

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

Macduff. Be not a niggard of your speech. How goes it?

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

Malcolm. Be it their comfort

We are coming thither. Gracious England hath
Lent us good Seyward and ten thousand men --
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.

Ross. Would I could answer

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

Macduff. What concern they?

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

Ross. No mind that's honest

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

Macduff. If it be mine,

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

Ross. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,

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

Macduff. Hmm -- I guess at it.

Ross. Your castle is surprised -- your wife and babes

Savagely slaughtered. To relate the manner
Were, on the quarry of these murdered deer,
To add the death of you.

Malcolm. Merciful heaven!

What, man, ne'er pull your hat upon your brows.
Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break.

Macduff. My children too?

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

Macduff. And I must be from thence. My wife killed too?

Ross. I have said.

Malcolm. Be comforted.

Let's make us medicines of our great revenge
To cure this deadly grief.

Macduff. He has no children. All my pretty ones?

Did you say all? Oh, hell-kite! All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop.

Malcolm. Dispute it like a man.

Macduff. I shall do so.

But I must also feel it as a man.

I cannot but remember such things were
That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee. Naught that I am,
Not for their own demerits but for mine
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now.

Malcolm. Be this the whetstone of your sword. Let grief

Convert to anger -- blunt not the heart, enrage it.
Macduff. Oh, I could play the woman with mine eyes
And braggart with my tongue. But, gentle heavens,
Cut short all intermission. Front to front
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself.
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
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may --
The night is long that never finds the day. [Exeunt.]

Scene 23.

V i

Enter a Doctor of Physic and a Waiting
Gentlewoman.

Doctor. I have two nights watched with you, but can
perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last
walked?

Gentlewoman. Since his majesty went into the field, I have
seen her rise from her bed, throw her night-gown
upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it,
write upon it, 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 this slumbry agitation, beside her walking and other
actual performances, what at any time have you heard
her say?

Gentlewoman. That, sir, which I will not report after her.

Doctor. You may, to me -- and 'tis most meet you should.

Gentlewoman. Neither to you nor anyone, having no witness
to confirm my speech.

Enter Lady, with a taper.

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. 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 she does now?

Look how she rubs her hands.

Gentlewoman. 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. Yet here's a spot.

Doctor. Hark, she speaks. I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady. Out, damned spot -- out, I say. One -- two -- why, then 'tis time to do it. 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. The thane of Fife had a wife -- where is she now? What, will these hands ne'er be clean? No more of that, my lord, no more of that -- you mar all with this starting.

Doctor. Go to, go to -- you have know what you should not.

Gentlewoman. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that. Heaven knows what she has known.

Lady. 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 would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Doctor. Well, well, well.

Gentlewoman. Pray God it be, sir.

Doctor. This disease is beyond my practice -- yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

Lady. Wash your hands -- put on your night-gown -- look not so pale. I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried -- he cannot come out on his grave.

Doctor. Even so?

Lady. To bed, to bed. There's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed.

[Exit Lady.]

Doctor. Will she go now to bed?

Gentlewoman. Directly.

Doctor. Foul whisperings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God forgive us all! Look after her.
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night.
My mind she has mated and amazed my sight.
I think, but dare not speak.

Gentlewoman. Good night, good doctor.

[Exeunt.]

Scene 24.

V ii

Drum and colours. Enter Menteith, Caithness,
Angus, Lenox, Soldiers.

Menteith. The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Seyward, and the good Macduff.
Revenues burn in them -- for their dear causes
Would, to the bleeding and the grim alarm,
Excite the mortified man.

Angus. Near Birnam wood

Shall we well meet them. That way are they coming.

Caithness. Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?

Lenox. For certain, sir, he is not. I have a file
Of all the gentry. There is Seyward'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.

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

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
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. 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.

Lenox. Or so much as it needs

To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.
Make we our march towards Birnam. [Exeunt, marching.]

Scene 25.

V iii

Enter Macbeth, Doctor, and Attendants.

Macbeth. Bring me no more reports. Let them fly all.
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane,
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus --
Fear not, Macbeth, no man that's born of woman
Shall e'er have power upon thee. Then fly, false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures.
The mind I sway by and the heart I bear
Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.

Enter Servant.

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!
Where gott'st thou that goose look?
Servant. There is ten thousand ----
Macbeth. 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
Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?
Servant. The English force, so please you.
Macbeth. Take thy face hence. -- Seyton! -- I am sick at
heart
When I behold ---- Seyton, I say! -- This push
Will cheer me ever or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough. My way of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf --
And that which should accompany old age --
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends --
I must not look to have -- but in their stead
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath
Which the poor heart would fain deny and dare not. --
Seyton!

Enter Seyton.

Seyton. What's your gracious pleasure?
Macbeth. 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 armour.
Seyton. 'Tis not needed yet.
Macbeth. I'll put it on.
Send out more horses, skir the country round,
Hang those that talk of fear. -- Give me my armour. --
How does your patient, doctor?
Doctor. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies

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,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?
Doctor. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.
Macbeth. Throw physic to the dogs -- I'll none of it. --
Come, put my armour on -- give my my staff. --
Seyton, send out! -- Doctor, the thanes fly from me. --
Come, sir, despatch. -- If thou could'st, doctor, cast
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 it off, I say. --
What rhubarb, cynne, or what purgative drug
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
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.
Doctor. Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. [Exeunt.]

Scene 26.

V iv

Drum and colours. Enter Malcolm, Seyward, Macduff,
Seyward's Son, Menteith, Caithness, Angus,
and Soldiers, marching.

Malcolm. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.
Menteith. We doubt it nothing.
Seyward. What wood is this before us?
Menteith. The wood of Birnam.
Malcolm. Let every soldier hew him down a bough
And bear it before him. Thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host and make discovery
Err in report of us.
Soldiers. It shall be done.
Seyward. We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane and will endure
Our setting down before it.
Malcolm. 'Tis his main hope --
For where there is advantage to be given

Both more and less have given him the revolt,
And none serve with him but constrained things
Whose hearts are absent too.

Macduff. Let our just censures
Attend the true event -- and put we on
Industrious soldiership.

Seyward. The time approaches
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have and what we owe.
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate.
Towards which, advance the war. [Exeunt, marching.]

Scene 27.

V v

Enter Macbeth, Seyton, and Soldiers, with
drum and colours.

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.
Were they not forced with those that should be ours,
We might have met them darest, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home. -- What is that noise?
[A cry within of women.]

Seyton. It is the cry of women, my good lord.

Macbeth. 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
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir,
As life were in it. I have supped full with horrors.
Direness familiar to my slaughterous thoughts
Cannot once start me. -- Wherefore was that cry?

Seyton. The queen, my lord, is dead.

Macbeth. She should have died hereafter.
There would have been a time for such a word. --
Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
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.

Enter a Messenger.

Thou comest to use thy tongue. Thy story quickly.
Messenger. Gracious my lord,
I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do it.
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. Liar and slave!
Messenger. Let me endure your wrath if it be not so.
Within this three mile may you see it coming.
I say, a moving grove.
Macbeth. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt 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 the equivocation of the fiend
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.
I 'gin to be aweary of the sun
And wish the estate of the world were now undone.
Ring the alarum bell! -- Blow wind, come wrack,
At least we'll die with harness on our back. [Exeunt.]

Scene 28.

V vi

Drum and colours.
Enter Malcolm, Seyward, Macduff, and their army,
with boughs.
Malcolm. Now near enough. Your leavy screens throw down
And show like those you are. -- You, worthy uncle,
Shall with my cousin your right noble son
Lead out first battle. Worthy Macduff and we
Shall take upon us what else remains to do,
According to our order.
Seyward. Fare you well.
Do we but find the tyrant's power tonight,
Let us be beaten if we cannot fight.
Macduff. Make all our trumpets speak -- give them all
breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death. [Exeunt.
[Alarums continued.]

Scene 29.

V vii 1--21

Enter Macbeth.

Macbeth. They have tied me to a stake. I cannot fly,
But bear-like I must fight the course. What's he
That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter Young Seyward.

Young Seyward. What is thy name?

Macbeth. Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

Young Seyward. No, though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
Than any is in hell.

Macbeth. My name's Macbeth.

Young Seyward. The devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.

Macbeth. No, nor more fearful.

Young Seyward. Thou liest, abhorred tyrant. With my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

[Fight, and Young Seyward is slain.

Macbeth. Thou wast born of woman --

But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,

Brandished by man that's of a woman born. [Exit.

Scene 30.

V vii 22--32

Alarums. Enter Macduff.

Macduff. That way the noise is. -- Tyrant, show thy face!

If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,

My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.

I cannot strike at wretched kerns whose arms

Are hired to bear their staves. Either thou, Macbeth,

Or else my sword with an unbattered edge

I sheathe again undeeded. -- There thou should'st be.

By this great clatter one of greatest note

Seems bruted. Let me find him, fortune,

And more I beg not. [Exit. Alarums.

Scene 31.

V vii 33--41

Enter Malcolm and Seyward.

Seyward. This way, my lord. The castle's gently rendered.

The tyrant's people on both sides do fight,

The noble thanes do bravely in the war,
The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.
Malcolm. We have met with foes
That strike beside us.
Seyward. Enter, sir, the castle. [Exeunt. Alarums.

Scene 32.

V vii 42--84

Enter Macbeth.

Macbeth. Why should I play the Roman fool and die
On mine own sword? Whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

Enter Macduff.

Macduff. Turn, hell-hound, turn!
Macbeth. Of all men else I have avoided thee.
But get thee back. My soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.
Macduff. I have no words.
My voice is is my sword, thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out. [Fight. Alarums.
Macbeth. Thou lovest labour.
As easy may'st thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed.
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests.
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.
Macduff. Despair thy charm --
And let the angel whom thou still hast served
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripped.
Macbeth. Accursed 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 --
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 shew and gaze of the time.
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon 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.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,

And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last. Before my body
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff,
And damned be him that first cries Hold, enough.
[Exeunt fighting. Alarums.]

Scene 33.

V vii 85--136

Retreat and flourish. Enter with drum and colours
Malcolm, Seyward, Ross, Thanes, and Soldiers.

Malcolm. I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.
Seyward. 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.
He only lived but till he was a man --
The which no sooner had his prowess confirmed,
In the unshrinking station where he fought,
Than like a man he died.
Seyward. Then he is dead?
Ross. Ay, and brought off the field. Your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.
Seyward. Had he his hurts before?
Ross. Ay, on the front.
Seyward. Why then, God's soldier be he.
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death --
And so his knell is knolled.
Malcolm. He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.
Seyward. He's worth no more.
They say he parted well and paid his score --
And so God be with him. Here comes newer comfort.

Enter Macduff, with Macbeth's head.

Macduff. Hail, king! for so thou art. Behold where stands
The usurper's cursed 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. Hail, king of Scotland. [Flourish.]
Malcolm. We shall not spend a large expense of time
Before we reckon with your several loves
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland

In such an honour 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
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like 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.
So thanks to all at once, and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone.
[Flourish. Exeunt omnes.

THE END.

Notes

I.i (scene 1). It hardly needs to be said -- though many people have said it -- that this is a powerful little scene. Suitably staged, it will put the audience into a suitable mood.

The scene is problematic nevertheless, because it conflicts with the beginning of scene 3. If scene 1 did not exist, that would be our first encounter with the Witches. Three men dressed as dishevelled old women -- withered and wild in their attire -- come bounding onto the stage. We laugh. Shakespeare wants us to laugh. Thirty lines later, we are wishing that we hadn't laughed. Within that lapse of time, the Witches have transformed themselves from figures of fun into monsters of malevolence. How successfully the transformation is made will largely depend on the performance of First Witch; but Shakespeare has provided some carefully contrived material for the actor to work with. Just from reading the script, just from catching the rhythm of the lines, it is possible to get some sense of what Shakespeare had in mind for this scene. There is a crucial moment at line 17, where First Witch shifts into a type of incantatory verse -- rhymed couplets of four-beat lines, tum ti tum ti tum ti tum, tum ti tum ti tum ti tum -- which from here onwards becomes the Witches' normal way of talking to one another. I call it witchspeak.

If scene 1 is included -- if we have already met the Witches in their transformed state, if we have already heard them talking witchspeak -- the beginning of scene 3 becomes pointless. Worse, it becomes confusing, because the witches who come bounding onto the stage at the beginning of this scene seem to be different characters from the witches that we met in scene 1. And indeed they are different characters: they only become the same later, after the transformation has taken place.

The actors, I assume, will choose to retain this scene. I am not going to say that they are wrong. But I do think that they should ask themselves whether the beginning of scene 3 does not need to be cut.

And then there is another question. If the play begins with this scene, ought it not to end in a similar way? The ending of the play, as it was printed, is understood by everyone to be unsatisfactory. It resembles the

ending of a history, with Macbeth as Richard III and Malcolm as Henry Tudor. Malcolm, so to speak, believes that the play is a history, and that he is the hero of it. We know better. The play is a tragedy, and Malcolm is merely one instrument made use of by the forces of darkness to bring about the destruction -- defeat, death and eternal damnation -- of their chosen victim. The Witches, surely, need to be brought back onto the stage, to exult over their success. They have to have a chance to gloat. Should one think of repeating scene 1 at the end of the play?

I.ii.64--5 (scene 2). This scene has been cut about in an astonishingly incompetent manner. Though the damage is mostly irreparable, I hope to have a chance to suggest how some mending might be done. For the moment, however, I mention just the worst blunder, the lines

Assisted by that most disloyal traitor,
The thane of Cawdor,

which make nonsense of the scene. On the face of it, they mean that Cawdor was accompanying the Norwegian army. But that is absurd. In scene 3, despite having just defeated the Norwegian army, Macbeth and Banquo are unaware of any misconduct on Cawdor's part: it is dramatically necessary for them to be ignorant (since otherwise the Second Witch's prophecy will fall flat), and ignorant is what they are. The king, conversely, knows more than he should. He knows that Cawdor is under arrest -- and nothing that we have heard him being told will justify him in assuming that Cawdor was taken prisoner, rather than being killed or making his escape. Before the scene was mutilated, therefore, it must have been clear to the audience that Cawdor's treason was known about first by the king, and that the news of it was carried to Macbeth and Banquo by the king's envoys.

I.iv.46--53 (scene 4). The king cannot be allowed to utter these words. If they are spoken, they give the audience an altogether wrong idea. The title "prince of Cumberland" is supposed to be a courtesy title (parallel to "prince of Wales") conferred upon the heir to the throne. People who have read Holinshed will know that; people who have not read Holinshed can be relied on to get the message, with a little help from the actors. (To make sure that the audience understands, "All bow to Malcolm" -- a piece of stage business reported by Oxberry (1821:13).) Duncan is designating Malcolm as his successor.

But obviously that does not happen. If it did, Macbeth would immediately mention the fact to his wife in the following scene. There is, he would say, no longer any point in murdering the king, because that would just put Malcolm on the throne. They never have that conversation. For Macbeth and his wife, Duncan's sons (which is which?) are of no political account. In scene 10, similarly, after the murder has been discovered, nobody thinks of Malcolm as the new king, nor even as a candidate for the kingship. He and his brother (which is which?) are told that their father is dead -- and then they are ignored and forgotten, while the grown-ups talk among themselves.

This passage in scene 4 is the clearest indication that the play has undergone some serious distortion, in response, I suppose, to expressions of annoyance from on high. In Holinshed's account of Scottish history, Macbeth reigns for seventeen years. He starts out well, but finally degenerates into a tyrant. His people turn against him and revolt. He is pursued and done to death by one of his own subjects. Shakespeare's play, as it was originally written, told a similar story. But that story did not harmonize with the king's conception of kingship. For James VI and I,

there were no circumstances -- none whatever -- in which a king's subjects were justified in rising up against him. Apprised of the king's displeasure, so I imagine, Shakespeare made some adjustments to the script, the sense of which is that Macbeth was never rightfully the king. When Duncan breathed his last, his eldest son became king at the same instant. Macbeth was a usurper, rightfully overthrown and rightfully killed. The script was not revised systematically, however, just retouched here and there. Throughout the second half of the play, Macbeth is referred to repeatedly as "the tyrant". Only once is he called "the usurper" (V.vii. 114).

I.iv.60--2 (scene 4). These lines have to be omitted, not because they are dismally flat (though they are), but because they are consequential on the previous passage. Is this speech of Macbeth's not very much more effective if it starts with the words "Stars, hide your fires!"?

I.v.1--14 (scene 5). This is the scene where Lady Macbeth makes her first appearance. As she enters, she is reading a letter. The printed text makes her read it aloud, but there is no need for her to do that, and the gee-whiz tone of the letter is altogether wrong. (By the way, what do we think was said in the first part of the letter -- the part she had read before coming onto the stage?) It is, of course, not true that Macbeth has made inquiries about the Witches. Even if he and Banquo had not agreed to keep the whole business secret, he would not have had any opportunity to ask around.

We discover later what the letter says: Macbeth tells her that he has made up his mind to go through with the plan that they have discussed, as soon as he can contrive an opportunity.

When you durst do it, then you were a man --
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. (I.vii.58--61)

He promises her that he will not change his mind -- or at least his wife chooses to understand him in that way.

If the lady enters reading the letter to herself and then bursts out with

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised.

is not that much more effective?

II.iii.27--43 (scene 10). This speech of the Porter's should certainly be cut, not because it is unfunny (teenage boys have been known to snigger) but because it interferes with the action. Macduff is under orders to awaken the king. After having to knock repeatedly on the door, he is worried that he may be too late. He is not going to let the porter engage him in some idle conversation.

III.v (scene 18). The less said about this scene the better. It is an obvious interpolation, obviously not by Shakespeare. It exists only to serve as some justification for the musical extravaganza at the end of this scene, and for a superfluous song in scene 20 (see below). I have said all I want to say about these musical interludes in a separate paper.

III.vi.26--43 (scene 19). Something has gone badly wrong here. The

character to whom this question is put possesses knowledge which he cannot possibly possess. He cannot know that Macduff has made a run for it; still less can he know that an English army is about to make its move. But that is only the first of three difficulties. Even if we could think it possible for this character to know these things, it would still be wrong for him to share his knowledge with us. The news that Macduff has fled to England should come as a surprise to us, just as it does to Macbeth, at the end of scene 20. The news that an English army is ready to march towards Scotland should come as a surprise to us, just as it does to Macduff (and then to Ross) in scene 22. If we have been told those things in scene 19, those surprises both fall flat. And thirdly an odd thing happens. By the end of this scene, both characters have forgotten the news. The character who hopes that Macduff will keep his distance is plainly not aware that he has left the country. The character who hopes that an angel will fly to England is plainly not aware that Macduff has made the journey already. They are, that is, just as ignorant as they ought to be: the surprises that should lie in wait for us lie in wait for them as well.

Without doubt, the whole of this speech needs to be excised. (If it is, the dialogue which follows will need to be redistributed, but I have not done that here.) The only question is why this -- seemingly unnecessary -- addition was ever made in the first place. (My guess is that this short scene, coming as it does between the banquet scene and the cauldron scene, had to be stretched, in some more than usually elaborate production of the play, to allow more time for the stage to be rearranged. But I do not insist on that.)

IV.i.41--7 (scene 20). More music which does not belong. (It belongs in a different play, not this one.) To be deleted along with scene 18 (see above).

IV.i.115--46 (scene 20). From this speech onwards, scene 20 goes off the rails. We know what the Witches' intention is: they aim to lull Macbeth into a false sense of security, letting him think that he can act on impulse, without regard for the consequences. With the help of the apparitions, who warn him against Macduff, and then promise him that he is (on certain conditions) invincible and invulnerable, they goad him into committing the atrocity which will bring about his death. At this point, the Witches have achieved their aim. Having said what they meant to say, no more, no less, they should vanish without further ado. That is what they did in scene 3; that is what they ought to do here.

But no. Macbeth has a question for them: "Shall Banquo's issue ever reign in this kingdom?" The Witches know the answer, because, being witches, they can see more than 600 years into the future. (Even for witches, that seems a bit of a stretch.) They do not pretend to be ignorant, though Macbeth had more or less offered them that option ("Tell me, if your art can tell so much"); they invite him to withdraw the question ("Seek to know no more"). They do not laugh at him when -- as if they have not already sold their souls to the devil -- he threatens them with damnation ("Deny me this and an eternal curse fall on you"). They let themselves be browbeaten into giving Macbeth an answer, even though they realize that it will frustrate their purpose. (They are, it seems, not permitted to tell outright lies, and they cannot think of a suitable half-truth.) So they let him see the "show of kings", conscious before it even begins that it will "grieve his heart".

IV.i.147--55 (scene 20). With Macbeth now reduced to a state of utter despondency, the Witches decide that something will have to be done to

retrieve the situation ("Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprights"). Weirdly, they perform a dance -- and after that, finally, they vanish. More weirdly still, the dance has the desired effect. As soon as he hears that Macduff has run away, Macbeth reverts to the euphoric mood which the Witches had been aiming to induce in him. By the end of the scene, he has forgotten all about the show of kings. We should certainly do the same. (There is a bonus: the money which might have been spent on costumes for the eight kings can be put to better use elsewhere.)

IV.ii (scene 21). A dreadful scene, so bad that I refuse to itemize all the ways in which it is bad. (When Francis Gentleman was trying to find some way of saying how bad it was, "farcically horrid" was the expression that occurred to him (Gentleman 1770:97).) Most acting editions have the good sense to omit it. Two characters whom we have not met before are brought on to the stage to be gruesomely done to death for our entertainment. They are supposed to endear themselves to us before they meet their fate, but they do not even do that. Macduff's wife whines and whines; her child is insufferably cute; after a few minutes of their company we are glad to see the murderers arrive and put us out of our misery.

Even for a less jaded audience, the scene is all wrong. It gives a false account. Macduff's wife and child (or children) are not murdered by a few nameless thugs. Far from it. In the preceding scene Macbeth tells us what is going to happen:

The castle of Macduff I will surprise,
Seize upon Fife, give to the edge of the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line.

In the following scene Ross tells us what has happened:

Your castle is surprised -- your wife and babes
Savagely slaughtered. ...
Wife, children, servants, all that could be found.

The point is that Macbeth no longer cares who knows that he is responsible for the atrocity. When he was plotting the murder of Banquo, we saw him taking elaborate precautions to avoid incurring suspicion ("always thought, that I require a clearness"). Now, deluded by the Witches' promises, he thinks he can safely come out into the open, drop the disguise, and perform whatever evil deed he likes, on the spur of the moment. We are meant to understand that the attack on Macduff's castle is carried out by Macbeth's household troops, under his personal command. He is suspected of other crimes -- but in the end he is only suspected of them. Of this crime he is known for certain to be guilty because he has made no effort to hide his guilt.

IV.iii.157--80 (scene 22). An obvious interpolation, designed to titillate the vanity of James VI and I. It is generally supposed that this addition was made with a view to a performance at court. Perhaps so. We do not need to meet this doctor in any other setting.

V.i (scene 23). This is one of the most famous scenes that Shakespeare ever wrote; "Out, damned spot!" is one of his most famous lines. And yet, rather obviously, the scene does not really belong. If it is omitted, the last we see of Lady Macbeth is at the end of scene 17. In scene 25 we learn that she is under a doctor's care because she is suffering from

insomnia. In scene 27 we are told that she is dead. In scene 33 we hear that she is believed to have committed suicide. It may well be the case that Shakespeare, rather than letting the lady just fade away, decided to write this farewell scene for her; it may well be the case that we approve of his decision. But it remains true that this scene fails to articulate properly with the rest of the play.

I am not going to suggest that this scene should be omitted in performance. Lady Macbeth will mutiny if she is not allowed to do her imitation of Mrs Siddons. The audience, if it has the slightest knowledge of the play, will riot if it does not hear her say "Out, damned spot!" But I do have one suggestion. I suggest that this scene should be put before scene 22, rather than after it. If the actors are prepared to make the experiment, I think they will find that the denouement works much better. Instead of being dissipated during scene 23, the momentum built up towards the end of scene 22 will carry forward into scene 24 and beyond.

V.vii.7--21 (scene 29). Unnecessary, and in contradiction with scene 33, where we are given to understand that Seyward's son died in the thick of the battle -- not as he does here, in single combat with the enemy commander. But I do not mean to sound puritanical. If the actors think that the audience might enjoy seeing an extra sword-fight at this point, let them retain this passage. If they do that, however, I hope they will drop the bombast from the end ("But swords ... woman born"); and they may also wish to drop one line from Ross's speech in scene 33 -- "In the unshrinking station where he fought" -- which conflicts with what the audience sees happening here.