

The Tragedy of Macbeth

Act III

William Shakespeare

REVIEW AND ANTICIPATE

In Act II, Lady Macbeth drugs Duncan's guards, enabling Macbeth to kill the king. Macbeth subsequently kills the guards so that he can more easily blame them for the king's murder. Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, flee, afraid that they will be assassinated by a kinsman eager to claim the throne. Because they run away, some suspect them of killing their father. As the act closes, it seems that Macbeth will be named king. Act III begins with Macbeth on the throne—as the witches had predicted. All seems to be going well for him, but he feels threatened by Banquo.

36:24
Scene i • Forres. The palace.

[Enter Banquo.]

Still referencing the prophecy
Banquo. Thou hast it now: King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,

As the **weird women** promised, and I fear

RQ1 Thou play'st most **foully** for 't. Yet it was said *suspicious that Macbeth had something to do with*
It should not stand¹ in thy posterity,

5 But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them—

As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine—

Why, by the verities on thee made good,

May they not be my oracles as well *starts reflecting on his own prophecy and tells himself to stop thinking about it.*

10 And set me up in hope? But hush, no more!

NOTES

foully (FOWL lee) *adv.* wrongly; in an evil way

1. **stand** continue.

NOTES

2. **Sennet** trumpet call.

3. **all-thing** altogether.

4. **solemn** ceremonious.

5. **grave and prosperous** weighty and profitable.

6. **Go not . . . better** unless my horse goes faster than I expect.

7. **invention** lies.

8. **cause . . . jointly** matters of state demanding our joint attention.

9. **While** until.

10. **Sirrah** common address to an inferior.

trumpet; announcement of king

[**Sennet**² sounded. Enter Macbeth as King, Lady Macbeth, Lennox, Ross, Lords, and Attendants.]

Macbeth. Here's our chief guest. *most important guest*

Lady Macbeth. If he had been forgotten, It had been as a gap in our great feast, *our celebration wouldn't be the same*
And all-thing³ unbecoming. *w/out him*

Macbeth. Tonight we hold a solemn⁴ supper, sir, *we're having a ceremony.*
And I'll request your presence. *please be there.*

15 **Banquo.** Let your Highness *whatever your highness commands, it is my duty to do so.*
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.

20 **Macbeth.** We should have else desired your good advice *we wanted your counsel*
(Which still hath been both *weighty* and *profitable*)
In this day's council; but we'll take tomorrow. *we'll wait for you to get back*
Is't far you ride? *As far as from now until dinner*

Banquo. As far, my lord, as will fill up the time

25 'Twillt this and supper. Go not my horse the better.⁶
I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain. *I'll be back an hour or two after sunset*

Macbeth. Fail not our feast.

Banquo. My lord, I will not. *friends; malcolm / donalbain*

30 **Macbeth.** We hear our **bloody** cousins are bestowed
In England and in Ireland, not confessing *They haven't confessed to murdering the king; they're making*
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers *up lies.*
With strange invention. ⁷ But of that tomorrow,
When therewithal we shall have cause of state *we'll talk about it more*
Craving us jointly.⁸ Hie you to horse. Adieu, *tomorrow when we need to*
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you? *discuss matters of the state.*

Banquo. Ay, my good lord: our time does call upon 's. *yes, we should go*

Macbeth. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot.
And so I do commend you to their backs.
Farewell. *Have a good ride, be safe.*

[Exit Banquo.]

40 Let every man be master of his time *Everyone, do your own thing until*
Till seven at night. To make society *dinnertime so we can just relax / enjoy tonight*
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till suppertime alone. While⁹ then, God be with you!

[Exit Lords and all but Macbeth and a Servant.]

Sirrah,¹⁰ a word with you: attend those men

45 Our pleasure? *Are those men waiting for me?*

Attendant. They are, my lord, without the palace gate. *yes, outside the gate*

Macbeth. Bring them before us. *bring them to me.* [Exit Servant.]

soliloquy ; macbeth is paranoid

To be king means nothing if I am not king safely

RQ2

To be thus¹¹ is nothing, but¹² to be safely thus—

Our fears in Banquo stick deep, *I am deeply afraid of Banquo*

50 And in his royalty of nature reigns that *His nobleness and nature make me fear him.*
Which would be feared. 'Tis much he dares;

And, to¹³ that dauntless temper of his mind, *He took risks; his mind never stops. He is brave and wise.*

He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor

To act in safety. There is none but he *There's no one I'm more afraid of,*

55 Whose being I do fear: and under him

My genius is rebuked,¹⁴ as it is said *Even my guardian angel is frightened.*

Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid¹⁵ the sisters,

When first they put the name of King upon me. *when they gave me my prophecy, he asked for his*

And bade them speak to him; then prophetlike

60 They hailed him father to a line of kings.

Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown *They gave me a crown I can't pass on*

And put a barren scepter in my gripe,¹⁶

Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand.

No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so, *if this is true, I've tortured my*

65 For Banquo's issue have I filed¹⁷ my mind; *conscious and murdered a gracious king*

For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered; *all for Banquo's favor.*

guilt

Put rancors in the vessel of my peace *I've upset my peace and gave*

Only for them, and mine eternal jewel¹⁸ *my soul to the devil for*

Given to the common enemy of man,¹⁹ *Banquo's sons.*

70 To make them kings, the seeds of Banquo kings!

Rather than so, come, fate, into the list, *I'm not going to watch that*

And champion me to th' utterance!²⁰ Who's there? *happen. I'll fight*

[Enter Servant and Two Murderers.] *fate to the death.*

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call. *fate v. free will*

[Exit Servant.]

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

Murderers. It was, so please your Highness.

75 **Macbeth.**

what I said?

Well then, now

Have you considered of my speeches? Know

That it was he in the times past, which held you *Kept you from fortune*

So under fortune,²¹ which you thought had been

Our innocent self: this I made good to you *I was innocent + showed you*

80 In our last conference; passed in probation²² with you. *proof of how you*

How you were born in hand,²³ how crossed, the instruments, *were deceived and*

Who wrought with them, and all things else that might *thwarted and*

To half a soul²⁴ and to a notion²⁵ crazed *who was against you. Even a crazy person*

Say "Thus did Banquo." *would be able to say it was Banquo.*

First Murderer.

You made it known to us.

85 **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,²⁶

To pray for this good man and for his issue,

90 Whose heavy hand hath bowed you to the grave

Are you so patient and kind that you're willing to let it go? Are you so forgiving you'll pray for this man who has pushed you to an early grave and left your family in poverty forever?

NOTES

11. thus king.

12. but unless.

13. to added to.

14. genius is rebuked guardian spirit is cowed.

15. chid scolded.

16. gripe grip.

17. filed defiled.

rancors (RANG kuhrz) *n.* angry feelings *resentment*

18. eternal jewel soul.

19. common . . . man the Devil.

20. champion me to th' utterance Fight against me to the death.

21. held . . . fortune kept you from good fortune.

22. passed in probation reviewed the proofs.

23. born in hand deceived.

24. half a soul halfwit.

25. notion mind.

26. gospelled ready to forgive.

NOTES

27. **go for** pass as.

28. **Shoughs, water-rugs** shaggy dogs, long-haired dogs

29. **clept** called.

30. **valued file** classification by valuable traits.

31. **closed** enclosed.

32. **addition** distinction (to set it apart from other dogs).

33. **file** ranks.

34. **wear . . . life** are sick as long as he lives.

incensed (ihn SEHNST) v. made angry

35. **set** risk.

36. **distance** disagreement.

37. **near'st of life** most vital parts.

38. **avouch** justify.

39. **wail his fall** (I must) bewail his death.

And beggared yours for ever?

First Murderer.

We are men, my liege.

Macbeth. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for²⁷ men;

As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,

Shoughs, water-rugs²⁸ and demi-wolves, are clept²⁹

All by the name of dogs: the valued file³⁰

Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,

The housekeeper, the hunter, every one

According to the gift which bounteous nature

Hath in him closed,³¹ whereby he does receive

Particular addition,³² from the bill

That writes them all alike: and so of men.

Now if you have a station in the file.³³

Not i' th' worst rank of manhood, say 't,

And I will put that business in your bosoms

Whose execution takes your enemy off,

Grapples you to the heart and love of us,

Who wear our health but sickly in his life,³⁴

Which in his death were perfect.

Second Murderer.

I am one, my liege,

Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world

Hath so **incensed** that I am reckless what

I do to spite the world.

First Murderer.

And I another

So weary with disasters, tugged with fortune,

That I would set³⁵ my life on any chance,

To mend it or be rid on 't.

Macbeth.

Both of you

Know Banquo was your enemy.

Both Murderers.

True, my lord.

Macbeth. So is he mine, and in such bloody distance³⁶

That every minute of his being thrusts

Against my near'st of life:³⁷ and though I could

With barefaced power sweep him from my sight

And bid my will avouch³⁸ it, yet I must not.

For certain friends that are both his and mine.

Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall³⁹

Who I myself struck down: and thence it is

That I to your assistance do make love,

Masking the business from the common eye

For sundry weighty reasons.

Second Murderer.

We shall, my lord

Perform what you command us.

First Murderer.

Though our lives—

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

I will advise you where to plant yourselves,

within the hour, I'll tell you where

to go and when to strike.

- 130 Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' th' time,
The moment on 't;⁴⁰ for 't must be done tonight,
And something⁴¹ from the palace: always thought⁴²
That I require a clearness⁴³ and with him—
!! To leave no rubs⁴⁴ nor botches in the work—
135 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.⁴⁵
I'll come to you anon.
- Murderers.** We are resolved, my lord.
- 140 **Macbeth.** I'll call upon you straight.⁴⁶ Abide within.
It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul's flight.
If it find heaven, must find it out tonight.

Scene ii • The palace.

[Enter Lady Macbeth and a Servant.]

Lady Macbeth. Is Banquo gone from court?

Servant. Ay, madam, but returns again tonight.

Lady Macbeth. Say to the King, I would attend his leisure
For a few words.

Servant. Madam, I will.

Lady Macbeth. Nought's had, all's spent.

- 5 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,
10 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 scotched¹ the snake, not killed it:
She'll close² and be herself, whilst our poor
15 Remains in danger of her former tooth.³
But let the frame of things disjoint,⁴ both the worlds⁵ 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,
20 Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie

NOTES

40. **the perfect . . . on 't** exact information of the exact time.
41. **something** some distance.
42. **thought** remembered.
43. **clearness** freedom from suspicion.
44. **rubs** flaws.
45. **Resolve yourselves apart** Make your own decision.
46. **straight** immediately.

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: Mark the rhyming words in lines 4–7.

QUESTION: Why does Shakespeare have Lady Macbeth speak in rhyming verse rather than in blank verse?

CONCLUDE: What is the effect of the use of rhyme in this speech?

malice (MAL ihs) *n.* desire to hurt another person

1. **scotched** wounded.
2. **close** heal.
3. **in . . . tooth** in as much danger as before.
4. **frame of things disjoint** universe collapse.
5. **both the worlds** heaven and earth.

NOTES

6. **ecstasy** frenzy.

7. **Malice . . . levy** civil and foreign war.

8. **Present him eminence** Honor him.

9. **Unsafe . . . lave** We are unsafe as long as we have to wash.

10. **vizards** (VIHZ uhrdz) masks.

11. **nature's . . . eterne** Nature's lease is not eternal.

12. **jocund** (JOK uhnd) cheerful; jovial.

13. **shard-borne** borne on scaly wings.

14. **chuck** term of endearment.

15. **seeling** eye-closing. Falconers sometimes sewed a hawk's eyes closed in order to train it.

16. **Scarf up** blindfold.

17. **great bond** between Banquo and fate.

18. **rooky** full of rooks, or crows.

In restless ecstasy.⁶ Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.

Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
25 Malice domestic, foreign levy,⁷ nothing,
Can touch him further.

Lady Macbeth.

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:

30 Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;

Present him eminence,⁸ both with eye and tongue:

Unsafe the while, that we must lave⁹

Our honors in these flattering streams

And make our faces vizards¹⁰ to our hearts.

Disguising what they are.

35 **Lady Macbeth.**

You must leave this.

Macbeth. O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!

Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

Lady Macbeth. But in them nature's copy's not eterne.¹¹

Macbeth. There's comfort yet; they are assailable.

40 Then be thou jocund.¹² Ere the bat hath flown

His cloistered flight, ere to black Hecate's summons

The shard-borne¹³ beetle with his drowsy hums

Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done

A deed of dreadful note.

Lady Macbeth.

What's to be done?

45 **Macbeth.** Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,¹⁴

Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling¹⁵ night,

Scarf up¹⁶ the tender eye of pitiful day,

And with thy bloody and invisible hand

Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond¹⁷

50 Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the crow

Makes wing to th' rooky¹⁸ wood.

Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,

Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.

Thou marvel'st at my words: but hold thee still;

55 Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill:

So, prithee, go with me.

[Exit.]

✱ ✱ ✱

Scene iii • **Near the palace.**

[Enter Three Murderers.]

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

Macbeth is still loving toward his wife.

RRS
Banquo is a threat.

Similar to when Lady Macbeth calls on evil spirits.

We have already done the worst w/our treason. Nothing can hurt him further.

Look happy tonight
Appearance v. Reality

I will, my love, and I will do the same to Banquo

We're in a dangerous situation where we have to flatter him.

Honor Banquo and speak well to him.

It's comforting they can be killed. They can't live forever.

A dreadful deed shall be done (Banquo's death)

It's better you don't know.

Guilt—self punishment (bad keeps on being bad)

Third Murderer.

Macbeth.

Second Murderer. He needs not our mistrust; since he delivers
Our offices¹ and what we have to do *we can trust him - he was
given the same exact orders.*
To the direction just.²

First Murderer. *stop* Then stand with us.

5 The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day. *still some daylight*
Now spurs the lated traveler apace
To gain the timely inn, and near approaches
The subject of our watch. *Banquo is close*

Third Murderer. *shh!* Hark! I hear horses.

Banquo. *[Within]* Give us a light there, ho! *There he is*

Second Murderer. Then 'tis he. The rest

10 That are within the note of expectation³ *all of the guests are inside
the palace.*
Already are i' th' court.

First Murderer. His horses go about.⁴

Third Murderer. Almost a mile: but he does usually—
So all men do—from hence to th' palace gate *He's walking the mile back to the castle.*
Make it their walk.

[Enter Banquo and Fleance, with a torch]

Second Murderer. A light, a light!

Third Murderer. 'Tis he.

15 **First Murderer.** *foreshadow; mood* Stand to 't.

Banquo. It will be rain tonight.

First Murderer. Let it come down.

attack *[They set upon Banquo.]*

Banquo. O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!

one day, you'll get revenge. *[Exit Fleance.]*

who put out the light? Thou mayst revenge. O slave! *[Dies.]*

Third Murderer. Who did strike out the light?

First Murderer. Was't not the way?⁵ *wasn't that the plan?*

Third Murderer. There's but one down; the son is fled.

20 **Second Murderer.** We have lost best half of our affair. *we failed half the mission.*

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

How is Macbeth going to react?

[Exit.]

❖ ❖ ❖

Scene iv • *The palace.*

*[Banquet prepared. Enter Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Ross, Lennox,
Lords, and Attendants.]*

Macbeth. You know your own degrees.¹ sit down:

NOTES

1. **offices** duties.

2. **direction just** exact detail.

3. **within . . . expectation** on the
list of expected guests.

4. **His . . . about** His horses have
been taken to the stable.

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: Mark the short
statements in lines 15–18.

QUESTION: What is happening
in these lines—what action
accompanies this minimal
dialogue?

CONCLUDE: How does the quick,
almost wordless presentation of
this scene add to its effect?

5. **way** thing to do.

1. **degrees** ranks. At state
banquets, guests were seated
according to rank.

NOTES

2. **society** company.
3. **keeps her state** remains seated on her throne.
4. **require** request.
5. **measure** toast.

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: Mark the words and phrases Macbeth uses to describe himself in lines 22–24. Mark a separate set of words he uses to describe himself in lines 25–26.

QUESTION: How are the two sets of words different?

CONCLUDE: How do these descriptive details define the changes that have occurred in Macbeth?

6. **thee** . . . **within** you outside than he inside.
7. **nonpareil** without equal.
8. **as** . . . **casing** as unrestrained as the surrounding.
9. **saucy** insolent.
10. **trenchèd** trenchlike.
11. **nature** natural life.

12. **hear ourselves** talk it over.
13. **give the cheer** make the guests feel welcome.
14. **The feast** . . . **welcome** The feast at which the host fails to make the guests feel welcome while the food is being prepared is no more than a bought dinner.
15. **From** . . . **ceremony** Ceremony adds a pleasant flavor to the food.

At first and last, the hearty welcome.

Lords. Thanks to your Majesty.

Macbeth. Ourselves will mingle with society²

5 And play the humble host.

Our hostess keeps her state,³ but in best time
We will require⁴ her welcome.

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

[Enter First Murderer.]

10 **Macbeth.** See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.
Both sides are even: here I'll sit i' th' midst:

Be large in mirth; anon we'll drink a measure⁵
The table round. [Goes to Murderer.] There's blood upon
thy face.

Murderer. 'Tis Banquo's then. *It's Banquo's.*

15 **Macbeth.** 'Tis better thee without than he within.⁶ I'd rather see it on your
Is he dispatched? *face than in his veins. Is he dead?*

Murderer. My lord, his throat is cut: that I did for him. *yes, I slit his throat.*

Macbeth. Thou art the best o' th' cutthroats. *you are the best of the cutthroats.*

Yet he's good that did the like for Fleance: *Hopefully the one who did it to*

20 If thou didst it, thou art the nonpareil.⁷ *Fleance is good, too, unless it was also you.*

Murderer. Most royal sir, Fleance is ^{escaped} 'scaped.

Macbeth. [Aside] Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect. *I'm scared again.*

Whole as the marble, founded as the rock, *I could have been solid as a rock*
As broad and general as the casing⁸ air:

25 But now I am cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in *But now I'm stressed again*
To saucy⁹ doubts and fears — But Banquo's safe? *Taken care of?*

Murderer. Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides, *He's laying in a ditch*
With twenty trenchèd¹⁰ gashes on his head,
The least a death to nature.¹¹ *Enough to take his life*

Macbeth. *Banquo* Thanks for that. *Fleance*

30 [Aside] There the grown serpent lies: the worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for th' present. Get thee gone. Tomorrow
We'll hear ourselves¹² again. *We'll talk tomorrow.*

Lady Macbeth.

My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer¹³ The feast is sold
That is not often vouched, while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome¹⁴ To feed were best at home;
From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony;¹⁵
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. *Thank you for the reminder*

40 And health on both!

Lennox. May't please your Highness sit.

Macbeth. Here had we now our country's honor roofed¹⁶ Were the graced person of our Banquo present— Who may I rather challenge for unkindness Than pity for mischance!¹⁷

Ross. His absence, sir.

45 Lays blame upon his promise. Please 't your Highness To grace us with your royal company?

Macbeth. The table's full.

Lennox. Here is a place reserved, sir.

Macbeth. Where?

50 **Lennox.** Here, my good lord. What is 't that moves your Highness?

Macbeth. Which of you have done this?

Lords. What, my good lord?

Macbeth. Thou canst not say I did it. Never shake

Thy gory locks at me.

Ross. Gentlemen, rise, his Highness is not well.

55 **Lady Macbeth.** Sit, worthy friends. My lord is often thus,

And hath been from his youth. Pray you, keep seat.

The fit is momentary; upon a thought¹⁸

He will again be well. If much you note him,

You shall offend him and extend his passion.¹⁹

60 Feed, and regard him not. — Are you a man?

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

Lady Macbeth. O proper stuff! O proper stuff!

This is the very painting of your fear. This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,

Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws²⁰ and starts,

Impostors to true fear, would well become

A woman's story at a winter's fire,

Authorized²¹ by her grandam. Shame itself!

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

You look but on a stool.

70 **Macbeth.** Prithee, see there!

Behold! Look! Lo! How say you?

Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.

If charnel houses²² and our graves must send

Those that we bury back, our monuments

Shall be the maws of kites.²³

75 **Lady Macbeth.** What, quite unmanned in folly?

Macbeth. If I stand here, I saw him.

As sure as I'm standing here,

I saw him.

NOTES

16. **our . . . roofed** the most honorable men in the country under one roof.

17. **Who . . . mischance** whom I hope I may reproach for being absent due to discourtesy rather than pity because he has had an accident.

18. **upon a thought** in a moment.

19. **passion** suffering.

20. **flaws** gusts of wind; outbursts of emotion.

21. **Authorized** vouched for.

22. **charnel houses** vaults containing human bones dug up in making new graves.

23. **our . . . kites** Because the dead will be devoured by birds of prey, our tombs will be the bellies of those birds.



Macbeth confides his fears to Lady Macbeth.

NOTES

24. **Ere . . . weal** before humane laws civilized the state and made it gentle.

25. **mortal . . . crowns** deadly wounds on their heads.

26. **infirmity** (ihn FUR muh tee) physical or mental defect; illness.

27. **thirst** drink.

28. **Avaunt** Be gone!

29. **speculation** sight.

Nonsense!

Lady Macbeth. Fie, for shame!

Macbeth. Blood hath been shed ere now, i' th' olden time,
Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal;²⁴

80 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,²⁵
85 And push us from our stools. This is more strange
Than such a murder is.

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

Macbeth. I do forget.
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity,²⁶ which is nothing
90 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 th' general joy o' th' whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
Would he were here! To all and him we thirst,²⁷
And all to all.

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

Macbeth. Avaunt²⁸ and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation²⁹ in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with.

Lady Macbeth. Think of this, good peers,
100 But as a thing of custom, 'tis no other.

Blood has spilled since the beginning of time before, a man would just die now, they rise from the dead w/ 20 gashes on their heads. This haunting business is stranger than murder.

guilt? self-inflicting pain

Toasts to Banquo

Appearance vs. Reality

Go back to your grave!

Friends, this is nothing but a strange habit.

Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

Macbeth. What man dare. I dare. *I am as brave as any man*

Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear. *come at me as...*

The armed rhinoceros, or th' Hyrcan³⁰ tiger:

105 Take any shape but that³¹ and my firm nerves *and I won't tremble*

Shall never tremble. Or be alive again,

And dare me to the desert³² with thy sword. *and challenge me to a duel*

If trembling I inhabit³³ then, protest me *if I tremble then, you*

The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow! *can call me a girl*

Unreal mock'ry, hence! *Get out you ghost!* [Exit Ghost.]

110 Why, so: being gone,

I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.

Lady Macbeth. You have displaced the mirth, broke the
good meeting. *you've ruined the vibe.*

With most admired³⁴ disorder.

Macbeth. Can such things be.

And overcome us³⁵ like a summer's cloud,

115 Without our special wonder? You make me strange *you act like I don't*

Even to the disposition that I owe,³⁶ *know myself - how can you all act*

When now I think you can behold such sights, *so normal when you*

And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks, *see what I see?*

When mine is blanched with fear.

Ross. What sights, my lord?

120 **Lady Macbeth.** I pray you, speak not: He grows worse and
worse;

Question **enrages** him: at once, good night.

Stand not upon the order of your going,³⁷

But go at once. *get well soon*

Lennox. Good night; and better health
Attend his Majesty!

Lady Macbeth. A kind good night to all!

[Exit Lords.]

125 **Macbeth.** It will have blood, they say: blood will have blood. *They say the*

Stones have been known to move and trees to speak; *dead will have their revenge*

Augures and understood relations³⁸ have

By maggot-pies and choughs³⁹ and rooks brought forth

The secret'st man of blood.⁴⁰ What is the night? *How late is it?*

130 **Lady Macbeth.** Almost at odds⁴¹ with morning, which is which.

Macbeth. How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person

At our great bidding? *what do you think about Macduff ignoring*

Lady Macbeth. Did you send to him, sir? *me when I call him?*

Macbeth. I hear it by the way, but I will send:

There's not a one of them but in his house

135 I keep a servant fee'd.⁴² I will tomorrow,

And betimes⁴³ I will, to the weird sisters: *RQ11*

NOTES

30. **Hyrcan** (HUHR kuhn) from Hyrcania, a province of the ancient Persian and Macedonian empires south of the Caspian Sea.

31. **that** Banquo's shape.

32. **desert** place where neither of us could escape.

33. **inhabit** remain indoors.

34. **admired** amazing.

35. **overcome us** come over us.

36. **disposition . . . owe** my own nature.

enrages (ehn RAY juhzh) v. causes to become very angry

37. **Stand . . . going** Do not wait to depart in order of rank.

38. **Augures and understood relations** omens and the relationship between the omens and what they represent.

39. **maggot-pies and choughs** (chuhfs) magpies and crows.

40. **man of blood** murderer.

41. **at odds** disputing.

42. **fee'd** paid to spy.

43. **betimes** quickly.

NOTES

44. **bent** determined.
45. **scanned** examined.
46. **season . . . natures** preservative of all living creatures.
47. **My . . . self-abuse** my strange delusion.
48. **initiate . . . use** beginner's fear that will harden with experience.

1. **beldams** hags.

2. **close contriver** secret inventor.

3. **Acheron** (AK uh ron) hell; in Greek mythology the river of Hades.

chell allusion

4. **sleights** devices.

5. **artificial sprites** spirits created by magic.

6. **confusion** ruin.

More shall they speak, for now I am bent⁴⁴ to know

By the worst means the worst. For mine own good *My safety is the most important.*

140 Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more, *I'm steeped in a river of blood*

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.⁴⁵

you haven't slept.
Lady Macbeth. You lack the season of all natures,⁴⁶ sleep.

145 **Macbeth.** Come, we'll to sleep. *My strange and self-abuse⁴⁷*

Is the initiate fear that wants hard use.⁴⁸

We are yet but young in deed.

guilt.
[Exit.]

✂ ✂ ✂

Scene v • **A witches' haunt.**

goddess of witchcraft.

[Thunder.] Enter the Three Witches, meeting Hecate.]

why do you look angry?
First Witch. Why, how now, Hecate! you look angrily.

Don't I have reason to be, you hags?
Hecate. Have I not reason, beldams¹ as you are.

Saucy and overbold? How did you dare

To trade and traffic with Macbeth

5 In riddles and affairs of death;

And I, the mistress of your charms,

The close contriver² of all harms,

Was never called to bear my part,

Or show the glory of our art? *plus, you never called me to take part*

10 And, which is worse, all you have done

Hath been but for a wayward son.

Spiteful and wrathful; who, as others do,

Loves for his own ends, not for you.

But make amends now: get you gone,

15 And at the pit of Acheron.³

AND the worst part is that you've done all this for a spoiled brat who is angry and hateful.
Like all spoiled sons, he chased after what he wants and doesn't care about you.
Meet me i' th' morning: thither he

Will come to know his destiny.

Your vessels and your spells provide, *Bring your supplies.*

Your charms and everything beside.

20 I am for th' air; this night I'll spend

Unto a dismal and a fatal end:

Great business must be wrought ere noon.

Upon the corner of the moon

There hangs a vap'rous drop profound;

25 I'll catch it ere it come to ground:

And that distilled by magic sleights⁴

Shall raise such artificial sprites⁵

As by the strength of their illusion

Shall draw him on to his confusion.⁶

I will produce magical spirits that will trick Macbeth with illusions.

He will think he's greater than fate, mock death and think he is above wisdom, grace and fear.

- 30 He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear:

And you all know security⁷
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

[Music and a song.]

Hark! I am called; my little spirit, see.

- 35 Sits in a foggy cloud and stays for me.

[Exit.]

[Sing within, "Come away, come away," etc.]

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

[Exit.]

❧ ❧ ❧

Scene vi • The palace.

[Enter Lennox and another Lord.]

Lennox. My former speeches have but hit¹ your thoughts.

Which can interpret farther.² Only I say

Things have been strangely borne.³ The gracious Duncan

Was pitied of Macbeth: marry, he was dead.

- 5 And the right-valiant Banquo walked too late:

Whom, you may say, if 't please you. Fleance killed.

For Fleance fled. Men must not walk too late.

Who cannot want the thought,⁴ how monstrous

It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain

- 10 To kill their gracious father? Damnèd fact!⁵

How it did grieve Macbeth! Did he not straight,

In pious rage, the two delinquents tear,

That were the slaves of drink and thralls⁶ of sleep?

Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too;

- 15 For 'twould have angered any heart alive

To hear the men deny 't. So that I say

He has borne all things well: and I do think

That, had he Duncan's sons under his key—

As, an 't⁷ please heaven, he shall not—they should find

- 20 What 'twere to kill a father. So should Fleance.

But, peace! for from broad⁸ words, and cause he failed

His presence at the tyrant's feast. I hear,

Macduff lives in disgrace. Sir, can you tell

Where he bestows himself?

Lord. The son of Duncan.

- 25 From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth.⁹

Lives in the English court, and is received

Of the most pious Edward¹⁰ with such grace

That the malevolence of fortune nothing

Takes from his high respect.¹¹ Thither Macduff

- 30 Is gone to pray the holy King, upon his aid¹²

NOTES

7. **security** overconfidence.

1. **hit** coincided with.

2. **Which . . . farther** from which you can draw your own conclusions.

3. **borne** managed.

4. **cannot . . . thought** can fail to think.

5. **fact** deed.

6. **thralls** slaves.

8. **broad** unguarded.

9. **due of birth** birthright; claim to the throne.

10. **Edward** Edward the Confessor, King of England (1042–1066).

malevolence (muh LEHV uh luhns) *n.* desire to do evil

11. **with . . . respect** does not diminish the high respect he is given.

12. **upon his aid** to aid Malcolm.

NOTES

13. **To . . . Siward** to call to arms the commander of the English forces, the Earl of Northumberland, and his son, Siward.

14. **free honors** honors given to freemen.

15. **cloudy** disturbed.

16. **clogs** burdens.

RQ13

To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward,¹³
That by the help of these, with Him above
To ratify the work, we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
35 Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,

Do faithful homage and receive free honors.¹⁴

All which we pine for now. And this report

Hath so exasperate the King that he
Prepares for some attempt of war.

Lennox.

Sent he to Macduff?

40 **Lord.** He did: and with an absolute "Sir, not I,"
The cloudy¹⁵ messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who should say "You'll rue the time
That clogs¹⁶ me with this answer."

Lennox.

And that well might

Advise him to a caution, t' hold what distance

45 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.

[Exit.]

Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you finish your first read.

1. In what part of Macbeth's plan do the two murderers succeed, and in what part do they fail?

2. In the banquet scene, what causes Macbeth to behave so strangely?

3.  **Notebook** Confirm your understanding of the text by writing a summary.

RESEARCH

Research to Clarify Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the play?