

## Original Text

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

**FIRST WITCH**

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

**ALL**

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

**SECOND WITCH**

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

**ALL**

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

## Act 4, Scene 1, Page 2

**THIRD WITCH**

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

**ALL**

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

**SECOND WITCH**

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

*Enter HECATE and the other three WITCHES*

**HECATE**

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

## Modern Text

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

**FIRST WITCH**

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

**ALL**

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

**SECOND WITCH**

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

**ALL**

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

**THIRD WITCH**

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

**ALL**

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

**SECOND WITCH**

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

*HECATE enters with three other WITCHES.*

**HECATE**

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

## Original Text

Enchanting all that you put in.

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

**SECOND WITCH**

By the pricking of my thumbs,

45 Something wicked this way comes.

Open, locks,

Whoever knocks.

## Act 4, Scene 1, Page 3

*Enter **MACBETH***

**MACBETH**

How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags?

What is 't you do?

**ALL**

A deed without a name.

**MACBETH**

50 I conjure you by that which you profess—

Howe'er you come to know it—answer me.

Though you untie the winds and let them fight

Against the churches, though the yeasty waves

Confound and swallow navigation up,

55 Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down,

Though castles topple on their warders' heads,

Though palaces and pyramids do slope

Their heads to their foundations, though the treasure

60 Of nature's germens tumble all together,

Even till destruction sicken, answer me

To what I ask you.

**FIRST WITCH**

Speak.

**SECOND WITCH**

Demand.

**THIRD WITCH**

We'll answer.

**FIRST WITCH**

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

Or from our masters'.

**MACBETH**

Call 'em. Let me see 'em.

**FIRST WITCH**

65 Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten

Her nine farrow; grease that's sweaten

From the murderer's gibbet throw

Into the flame.

## Act 4, Scene 1, Page 4

**ALL**

Come, high or low;

## Modern Text

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

**SECOND WITCH**

I can tell that something wicked is coming by the

tingling in my thumbs. Doors, open up for

whoever is knocking!

***MACBETH** enters.*

**MACBETH**

What's going on here, you secret, evil, midnight

hags? What are you doing?

**ALL**

Something there isn't a word for.

**MACBETH**

I don't know how you know the things you do, but

I insist that you answer my questions. I command

you in the name of whatever dark powers you

serve. I don't care if you unleash violent winds

that tear down churches, make the foamy waves

overwhelm ships and send sailors to their deaths,

flatten crops and trees, make castles fall down on

their inhabitants' heads, make palaces and

pyramids collapse, and mix up everything in

nature. Tell me what I want to know.

**FIRST WITCH**

Speak.

**SECOND WITCH**

Demand.

**THIRD WITCH**

We'll answer.

**FIRST WITCH**

Would you rather hear these things from our

mouths or from our master's?

**MACBETH**

Call them. Let me see them.

**FIRST WITCH**

Pour in the blood of a sow who has eaten her

nine offspring. Take the sweat of a murderer on

the gallows and throw it into the flame.

**ALL**

Come, high or low spirits. Show yourself and

## Original Text

70 Thyself and office deftly show!

*Thunder. FIRST APPARITION : an armed head*

**MACBETH**

Tell me, thou unknown power—

**FIRST WITCH**

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

**FIRST APPARITION**

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

*Descends*

**MACBETH**

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

**FIRST WITCH**

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

*Thunder. SECOND APPARITION : a bloody child*

**SECOND APPARITION**

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!—

**MACBETH**

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

**SECOND APPARITION**

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

*Descends*

## Act 4, Scene 1, Page 5

**MACBETH**

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

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

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

**ALL**

Listen but speak not to 't.

**THIRD APPARITION**

Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care  
95 Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are.

## Modern Text

what you do.

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

**MACBETH**

Tell me, you unknown power—

**FIRST WITCH**

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

**FIRST APPARITION**

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

*The FIRST APPARITION descends.*

**MACBETH**

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

**FIRST WITCH**

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

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

**SECOND APPARITION**

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

**MACBETH**

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

**SECOND APPARITION**

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

*The SECOND APPARITION descends.*

**MACBETH**

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

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

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

**ALL**

Listen but don't speak to it.

**THIRD APPARITION**

Be brave like the lion and proud. Don't even  
worry about who hates you, who resents you,

## Original Text

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

## Act 4, Scene 1, Page 6

**ALL**

Seek to know no more.

**MACBETH**

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

*Hautboys*

**FIRST WITCH**

Show.

**SECOND WITCH**

Show.

**THIRD WITCH**

Show.

**ALL**

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

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

**MACBETH**

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

## Modern Text

and who conspires against you. Macbeth will  
never be defeated until Birnam Wood marches to  
fight you at Dunsinane Hill.

*The **THIRD APPARITION** descends.*

**MACBETH**

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

**ALL**

Don't try to find out more.

**MACBETH**

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

*Hautboys play music for a ceremonial  
procession.*

**FIRST WITCH**

Show.

**SECOND WITCH**

Show.

**THIRD WITCH**

Show.

**ALL**

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

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

**MACBETH**

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

## Original Text

## Modern Text

Horrible sight! Now I see it is true, they are Banquo's descendants. Banquo, with his blood-clotted hair, is smiling at me and pointing to them as his.

## Act 4, Scene 1, Page 7

*Apparitions vanish*

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

What, is this so?

What? Is this true?

**FIRST WITCH****FIRST WITCH**

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

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

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

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

**MACBETH****MACBETH**

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

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

*Enter **LENNOX***

***LENNOX** enters.*

**LENNOX****LENNOX**

What's your grace's will?

What does your grace want?

**MACBETH****MACBETH**

Saw you the weird sisters?

Did you see the weird sisters?

**LENNOX****LENNOX**

No, my lord.

No, my lord.

**MACBETH****MACBETH**

Came they not by you?

Didn't they pass by you?

**LENNOX****LENNOX**

No, indeed, my lord.

No, indeed, my lord.

**MACBETH****MACBETH**

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

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

## Act 4, Scene 1, Page 8

**LENNOX****LENNOX**

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

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

**MACBETH****MACBETH**

Fled to England?

Fled to England?

**LENNOX****LENNOX**

Ay, my good lord.

Yes, my good lord.

**MACBETH****MACBETH**

150 Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits.

Time, you thwart my dreadful plans. Unless a

## Original Text

The flighty purpose never is o'ertook  
 Unless the deed go with it. From this moment  
 The very firstlings of my heart shall be  
 The firstlings of my hand. And even now,  
 155 To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and  
 done:  
 The castle of Macduff I will surprise,  
 Seize upon Fife, give to th' edge o' th' sword  
 His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls  
 160 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*

## Modern Text

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

*They exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 2

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

What had he done to make him fly the land?

**ROSS**

You must have patience, madam.

**LADY MACDUFF**

He had none.

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

You know not

5 Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

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

My dearest coz,

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

What did he do that made him flee this land?

**ROSS**

You have to be patient, madam.

**LADY MACDUFF**He had no patience. He was crazy to run away.  
 Even if you're not a traitor, you're going to look  
 like one if you run away.**ROSS**You don't know whether it was wisdom or fear  
 that made him flee.**LADY MACDUFF**How could it be wisdom! To leave his wife, his  
 children, his house, and his titles in a place so  
 unsafe that he himself flees it! He doesn't love us.  
 He lacks the natural instinct to protect his family.  
 Even the fragile wren, the smallest of birds, will  
 fight against the owl when it threatens her young  
 ones in the nest. His running away has everything  
 to do with fear and nothing to do with love. And  
 since it's so unreasonable for him to run away, it  
 has nothing to do with wisdom either.**ROSS**My dearest relative, I'm begging you, pull yourself  
 together. As for your husband, he is noble, wise,  
 and judicious, and he understands what the times  
 require. It's not safe for me to say much more  
 than this, but times are bad when people get  
 denounced as traitors and don't even know why.  
 In times like these, we believe frightening rumors  
 but we don't even know what we're afraid of. It's  
 like being tossed around on the ocean in every  
 direction, and finally getting nowhere. I'll say  
 good-bye now. It won't be long before I'm back.  
 When things are at their worst they have to stop,  
 or else improve to the way things were before. My

## Original Text

## Modern Text

young cousin, I put my blessing upon you.

## Act 4, Scene 2, Page 2

**LADY MACDUFF**

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.

30 I take my leave at once.

**LADY MACDUFF**

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

**SON**

As birds do, Mother.

**LADY MACDUFF**

What, with worms and flies?

**SON**

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

**LADY MACDUFF**

35 Poor bird! Thou 'dst never fear the net nor lime,  
The pitfall nor the gin.

**SON**

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

**LADY MACDUFF**

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

**SON**

40 Nay, how will you do for a husband?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

## Act 4, Scene 2, Page 3

**SON**

Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

**LADY MACDUFF**

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

**SON**

45 Was my father a traitor, Mother?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Ay, that he was.

**SON**

What is a traitor?

**LADY MACDUFF**

**LADY MACDUFF**

He has a father, and yet he is fatherless.

**ROSS**

I have to go. If I stay longer, I'll embarrass you  
and disgrace myself by crying. I'm leaving now.

*Exit*

*ROSS exits.*

**LADY MACDUFF**

Young man, your father's dead. What are you  
going to do now? How are you going to live?

**SON**

I will live the way birds do, Mother.

**LADY MACDUFF**

What? Are you going to start eating worms and  
flies?

**SON**

I mean I will live on whatever I get, like birds do.

**LADY MACDUFF**

You'd be a pitiful bird. You wouldn't know enough  
to be afraid of traps.

**SON**

Why should I be afraid of them, Mother? If I'm a  
pitiful bird, like you say, hunters won't want me.  
No matter what you say, my father is not dead.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Yes, he is dead. What are you going to do for a  
father?

**SON**

Maybe you should ask, what will you do for a  
husband?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Oh, I can buy twenty husbands at any market.

**SON**

If so, you'd be buying them to sell again.

**LADY MACDUFF**

You talk like a child, but you're very smart  
anyway.

**SON**

Was my father a traitor, Mother?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Yes, he was.

**SON**

What is a traitor?

**LADY MACDUFF**

## Original Text

Why, one that swears and lies.

**SON**

And be all traitors that do so?

**LADY MACDUFF**

50 Every one that does so is a traitor and must be hanged.

**SON**

And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Every one.

**SON**

Who must hang them?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Why, the honest men.

**SON**

55 Then the liars and swearers are fools, for there are liars and swearers enough to beat the honest men and hang up them.

**LADY MACDUFF**

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

**SON**

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

**LADY MACDUFF**

Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

## Modern Text

Someone who makes a promise and breaks it.

**SON**

And is everyone who swears and lies a traitor?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Everyone who does so is a traitor and should be hanged.

**SON**

And should everyone who makes promises and breaks them be hanged?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Everyone.

**SON**

Who should hang them?

**LADY MACDUFF**

The honest men.

**SON**

Then the liars are fools, for there are enough liars in the world to beat up the honest men and hang them.

**LADY MACDUFF**

(*laughing*) Heaven help you for saying that, boy! (*sad again*) But what will you do without a father?

**SON**

If he were dead, you'd be weeping for him. If you aren't weeping, it's a good sign that I'll soon have a new father.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Silly babbler, how you talk!

## Act 4, Scene 2, Page 4

*Enter a MESSENGER*

**MESSENGER**

Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,  
60 Though in your state of honor I am perfect.  
I doubt some danger does approach you nearly.  
If you will take a homely man's advice,  
Be not found here. Hence with your little ones.  
To fright you thus methinks I am too savage;  
65 To do worse to you were fell cruelty,  
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!  
I dare abide no longer.

**LADY MACDUFF**

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

*Exit*

*A MESSENGER enters.*

**MESSENGER**

Bless you, fair lady! You don't know me, but I know you're an important person. I'm afraid something dangerous is coming toward you. If you'll take a simple man's advice, don't be here when it arrives. Go away and take your children. I feel bad for scaring you like this, but it would be much worse for me to let you come to harm. And harm is getting close! Heaven keep you safe!

*The MESSENGER exits.*

**LADY MACDUFF**

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



## Original Text

*Enter **MURDERERS***

What are these faces?

**FIRST MURDERER**

75 Where is your husband?

**LADY MACDUFF**I hope, in no place so unsanctified  
Where such as thou mayst find him.**FIRST MURDERER**

He's a traitor.

**SON**

Thou liest, thou shag-haired villain!

## Act 4, Scene 2, Page 5

**FIRST MURDERER***(Stabbing him)*

What, you egg?

Young fry of treachery!

**SON**

80 He has killed me, mother.

Run away, I pray you!

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

## Act 4, Scene 3

*Enter **MALCOLM** and **MACDUFF*****MALCOLM**Let us seek out some desolate shade and there  
Weep our sad bosoms empty.**MACDUFF**

Let us rather

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

What I believe I'll wail;

What know believe, and what I can redress,

10 As I shall find the time to friend, I will.

What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.

This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,  
Was once thought honest. You have loved him well.  
He hath not touched you yet. I am young, but

15 something

You may deserve of him through me, and wisdom  
To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb  
T' appease an angry god.**MACDUFF**

I am not treacherous.

## Modern Text

*The **MURDERERS** enter.*

Who are these men?

**FIRST MURDERER**

Where is your husband?

**LADY MACDUFF**I hope he's not anywhere so disreputable that  
thugs like you can find him.**FIRST MURDERER**

He's a traitor.

**SON**

You're lying, you shaggy-haired villain!

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

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

*The **SON** dies. **LADY MACDUFF** exits, crying  
"Murder!" The **MURDERERS** exit, following her.****MALCOLM** and **MACDUFF** enter.***MALCOLM**Let's seek out some shady place where we can  
sit down alone and cry our hearts out.**MACDUFF**Instead of crying, let's keep hold of our swords  
and defend our fallen homeland like honorable  
men. Each day new widows howl, new orphans  
cry, and new sorrows slap heaven in the face,  
until it sounds like heaven itself feels Scotland's  
anguish and screams in pain.**MALCOLM**I will avenge whatever I believe is wrong. And I'll  
believe whatever I'm sure is true. And I'll put right  
whatever I can when the time comes. What you  
just said may perhaps be true. This tyrant, whose  
mere name is so awful it hurts us to say it, was  
once considered an honest man. You were one of  
his favorites. He hasn't done anything to harm  
you yet. I'm inexperienced, but maybe you're  
planning to win Macbeth's favor by betraying me  
to him. It would be smart to offer someone poor  
and innocent like me as a sacrificial lamb to  
satisfy an angry god like Macbeth.**MACDUFF**

I am not treacherous.

## Original Text

**MALCOLM**

But Macbeth is.

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

## Act 4, Scene 3, Page 2

**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,  
30 Let not my jealousies be your dishonors,  
But mine own safeties. You may be rightly just,  
Whatever I shall think.

**MACDUFF**

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

**MALCOLM**

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

**MACDUFF**

What should he be?

## Act 4, Scene 3, Page 3

**MALCOLM**

It is myself I mean, in whom I know

## Modern Text

**MALCOLM**

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

**MACDUFF**

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

**MALCOLM**

Maybe you lost your hopes about me where I found my doubts about you. Why did you leave your wife and child vulnerable—the most precious things in your life, those strong bonds of love? How could you leave them behind? But I beg you, don't interpret my suspicions as slander against you. You must understand that I want to protect myself. You may really be honest, no matter what I think.

**MACDUFF**

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

**MALCOLM**

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

**MACDUFF**

Who are you talking about?

**MALCOLM**

I'm talking about myself. I know I have so many

## Original Text

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

**MACDUFF**

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

**MALCOLM**

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

**MACDUFF**

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

## Act 4, Scene 3, Page 4

**MALCOLM**

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

**MACDUFF**

This avarice  
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root  
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been  
The sword of our slain kings. Yet do not fear;  
90 Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will,  
Of your mere own. All these are portable,  
With other graces weighed.

**MALCOLM**

## Modern Text

vices that when people see all of them exposed,  
evil Macbeth will seem as pure as snow in  
comparison, and poor Scotland will call him a  
sweet lamb when they compare him to me and  
my infinite evils.

**MACDUFF**

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

**MALCOLM**

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

**MACDUFF**

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

**MALCOLM**

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

**MACDUFF**

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

**MALCOLM**

## Original Text

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

**MACDUFF**

O Scotland, Scotland!

**MALCOLM**

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

## Modern Text

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

**MACDUFF**

Oh Scotland, Scotland!

**MALCOLM**

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

## Act 4, Scene 3, Page 5

**MACDUFF**

Fit to govern?

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

**MALCOLM**

Macduff, this noble passion,  
 Child of integrity, hath from my soul  
 Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts  
 To thy good truth and honor. Devilish Macbeth  
 120 By many of these trains hath sought to win me  
 Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me  
 From overcredulous haste. But God above  
 Deal between thee and me, for even now  
 I put myself to thy direction and  
 125 Unspeak mine 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,  
 130 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.

**MACDUFF**

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

**MALCOLM**

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

## Original Text

## Modern Text

## Act 4, Scene 3, Page 6

135 Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,  
Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,  
Already at a point, was setting forth.  
Now we'll together, and the chance of goodness  
Be like our warranted quarrel! Why are you silent?

**MACDUFF**

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

*Enter a DOCTOR*

**MALCOLM**

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

**DOCTOR**

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

**MALCOLM**

I thank you, doctor.

*Exit DOCTOR*

**MACDUFF**

What's the disease he means?

**MALCOLM**

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

Indeed, before you arrived here, old Siward, with  
ten thousand soldiers already prepared for battle,  
was making his way here. Now we will fight  
Macbeth together, and may the chances of our  
success be as great as the justice of our cause!  
Why are you silent?

**MACDUFF**

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

*A DOCTOR enters.*

**MALCOLM**

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

**DOCTOR**

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

**MALCOLM**

Thank you, doctor.

*The DOCTOR exits.*

**MACDUFF**

What disease is he talking about?

**MALCOLM**

It's called the evil. Edward's healing touch is a  
miracle that I have seen him perform many times  
during my stay in England. How he receives  
these gifts from heaven, only he can say. But he  
cures people with strange conditions—all  
swollen, plagued by ulcers, and pitiful to look at,  
patients who are beyond the help of surgery—by  
placing a gold coin around their necks and  
saying holy prayers over them.

## Act 4, Scene 3, Page 7

To the succeeding royalty he leaves  
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,  
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,  
160 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.

They say that he bequeaths this ability to heal to  
his royal descendants. Along with this strange  
power, he also has the gift of prophecy and  
various other abilities. All of these signs mark  
him as a man graced by God.

*ROSS enters.*

**MACDUFF**

Who's that coming over here?

**MALCOLM**

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

**MACDUFF**

My noble kinsman, welcome.

## Original Text

**MALCOLM**

I know him now.—Good God, betimes remove

165 The means that makes us strangers!

**ROSS**

Sir, amen.

**MACDUFF**

Stands Scotland where it did?

**ROSS**

Alas, poor country!

Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot

Be called our mother, but our grave, where nothing,

But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;

170 Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air

Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems

A modern ecstasy. The dead man's knell

Is there scarce asked for who, and good men's lives

175 Expire before the flowers in their caps,

Dying or ere they sicken.

**MACDUFF**

Oh, relation

Too nice and yet too true!

## Modern Text

**MALCOLM**

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

**ROSS**

Hello, sir.

**MACDUFF**

Is Scotland the same as when I left it?

**ROSS**

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

**MACDUFF**

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

## Act 4, Scene 3, Page 8

**MALCOLM**

What's the newest grief?

**ROSS**

That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker.

Each minute teems a new one.

**MACDUFF**

How does my wife?

**ROSS**

Why, well.

**MACDUFF**

And all my children?

**ROSS**

Well too.

**MACDUFF**

180 The tyrant has not battered at their peace?

**ROSS**

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

**MACDUFF**

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

**ROSS**

When I came hither to transport the tidings,  
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumor

185 Of many worthy fellows that were out;  
Which was to my belief witnessed the rather  
For that I saw the tyrant's power afoot.  
Now is the time of help. Your eye in Scotland

**MALCOLM**

What is the most recent news?

**ROSS**

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

**MACDUFF**

How is my wife?

**ROSS**

She's well.

**MACDUFF**

And all my children?

**ROSS**

They're well too.

**MACDUFF**

Macbeth hasn't attacked them?

**ROSS**

They were [at peace](#) when I left them.

**MACDUFF**

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

**ROSS**

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

## Original Text

Would create soldiers, make our women fight,  
190 To doff their dire distresses.

**MALCOLM**

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

## Act 4, Scene 3, Page 9

**ROSS**

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

**MACDUFF**

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

**ROSS**

No mind that's honest  
200 But in it shares some woe, though the main part  
Pertains to you alone.

**MACDUFF**

If it be mine,  
Keep it not from me. Quickly let me have it.

**ROSS**

Let not your ears despise my tongue forever,  
205 Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound  
That ever yet they heard.

**MACDUFF**

Hum! I guess at it.

**ROSS**

Your castle is surprised, your wife and babes  
Savagely slaughtered. To relate the manner,  
Were, on the quarry of these murdered deer  
210 To add the death of you.

**MALCOLM**

Merciful heaven!  
What, man! Ne'er pull your hat upon your brows.  
Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak  
Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break.

**MACDUFF**

My children too?

**ROSS**

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

## Modern Text

would inspire people to fight. Even the women  
would fight to rid themselves of Macbeth's  
oppression.

**MALCOLM**

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

**ROSS**

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

**MACDUFF**

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

**ROSS**

No decent man can keep from sharing in the  
sorrow, but my news affects you alone.

**MACDUFF**

If it's for me, don't keep it from me. Let me have  
it now.

**ROSS**

I hope you won't hate me forever after I say  
these things, because I will soon fill your ears  
with the most dreadful news you have ever  
heard.

**MACDUFF**

I think I can guess what you're about to say.

**ROSS**

Your castle was attacked. Your wife and children  
were savagely slaughtered. If I told you how they  
were killed, it would cause you so much pain that  
it would kill you too, and add your body to the pile  
of murdered corpses.

**MALCOLM**

Merciful heaven! (to MACDUFF) Come on, man,  
don't keep your grief hidden. Put your sorrow into  
words. The grief you keep inside you will whisper  
in your heart until it breaks.

**MACDUFF**

They killed my children too?

**ROSS**

They killed your wife, your children, your  
servants, anyone they could find.



## Original Text

## Modern Text

## Act 4, Scene 3, Page 10

**MACDUFF**

And I must be from thence!  
My wife killed too?

**ROSS**

I have said.

**MALCOLM**

Be comforted.

220 Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge,  
To cure this deadly grief.

**MACDUFF**

He has no children. All my pretty ones?  
Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?  
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam  
225 At one fell swoop?

**MALCOLM**

Dispute it like a man.

**MACDUFF**

I shall do so,  
But I must also feel it as a man.  
I cannot but remember such things were  
230 That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,  
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,  
They were all struck for thee! Naught that I am,  
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,  
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now.

**MALCOLM**

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

**MACDUFF**

Oh, I could play the woman with mine eyes  
And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens,  
Cut short all intermission. Front to front  
240 Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself.  
Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,  
Heaven forgive him too.

**MACDUFF**

And I had to be away! My wife was killed too?

**ROSS**

I said she was.

**MALCOLM**

Take comfort. Let's cure this awful grief by taking  
revenge on Macbeth.

**MACDUFF**

He doesn't have children. All my pretty little  
children? Did you say all? Oh, that bird from hell!  
All of them? What, all my children and their  
mother dead in one fell swoop?

**MALCOLM**

Fight it like a man.

**MACDUFF**

I will. But I also have to feel it like a man. I can't  
help remembering the things that were most  
precious to me. Did heaven watch the slaughter  
and not send down any help? Sinful Macduff,  
they were killed because of you! As wicked as I  
am, they were slaughtered because of me, not  
because of anything they did. May God give their  
souls rest.

**MALCOLM**

Let this anger sharpen your sword. Transform  
your grief into anger. Don't block the feelings in  
your heart; let them loose as rage.

**MACDUFF**

I could go on weeping like a woman and  
bragging about how I will avenge them! But  
gentle heavens, don't keep me waiting. Bring me  
face to face with Macbeth, that devil of Scotland.  
Put him within the reach of my sword, and if he  
escapes, may heaven forgive him as well!

## Act 4, Scene 3, Page 11

**MALCOLM**

This tune goes manly.  
Come, go we to the king. Our power is ready;  
Our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth  
245 Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above  
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you  
may.  
The night is long that never finds the day.

*Exeunt*

**MALCOLM**

Now you sound like a man. Come on, let's go  
see King Edward. The army is ready. All we have  
to do now is say goodbye to the king. Macbeth is  
ripe for the picking. We'll be acting as God's  
agents. Cheer up as much as you can. A new  
day will come at last.

*They exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 1



## Original Text

*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 nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon 't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

**DOCTOR**

A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the line>effects of watching. In this slumbry agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say?

**GENTLEWOMAN**

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

**DOCTOR**

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

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Neither to you nor any one, having no witness to confirm my speech.

*Enter **LADY MACBETH** with a taper*

Lo you, here she comes. This is her very guise; and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her, stand close.

**DOCTOR**

15 How came she by that light?

## Modern Text

*A **DOCTOR** and a waiting-  
**GENTLEWOMAN** enter.*

**DOCTOR**

I've stayed up with you for two nights now, and I haven't seen any evidence of what you were talking about. When was the last time you saw her sleepwalking?

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Since Macbeth went to war, I have seen her rise from her bed, put on her nightgown, unlock her closet, take out some paper, fold it, write on it, read it, seal it up, and then return to bed, remaining asleep the entire time.

**DOCTOR**

It's unnatural to be asleep and act as if you're awake. When she is like this, besides walking and performing various activities, have you heard her say anything?

**GENTLEWOMAN**

She says something, sir, but I will not repeat it to you.

**DOCTOR**

You can tell me. You really should.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

I will not confess it to you nor to anyone else, because there was no one else to witness her speech.

***LADY MACBETH** enters, holding a candle.*

Look, here she comes! This is exactly how she always looks, and—I swear it—she is fast asleep. Watch her. Keep hidden.

**DOCTOR**

How did she get that candle?

## Act 5, Scene 1, Page 2

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Why, it stood by her. She has light by her continually. 'Tis her command.

**DOCTOR**

You see her eyes are open.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Ay, but their sense is shut.

**DOCTOR**

What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

20 It is an accustomed action with her to seem thus washing her hands. I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

**LADY MACBETH****GENTLEWOMAN**

It stands by her bedside. She always has to have a light next to her. Those are her orders.

**DOCTOR**

You see, her eyes are open.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

Yes, but they don't see anything.

**DOCTOR**

What's she doing now? Look how she rubs her hands.

**GENTLEWOMAN**

She often does that. She looks like she's washing her hands. I've seen her do that before for as long as fifteen minutes.

**LADY MACBETH**