

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’ charmèd pot.	
	ALL	
10	Double, double toil and trouble,	
	Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.	
	SECOND WITCH	
	Fillet of a fenny snake,	
	In the cauldron boil and bake.	
	Eye of newt and toe of frog,	
15	Wool of bat and tongue of dog,	
	Adder’s fork and blind-worm’s sting,	
	Lizard’s leg and owlet’s wing,	
	For a charm of powerful trouble,	
	Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.	
	ALL	
20	Double, double toil and trouble,	
	Fire burn and cauldron bubble.	

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.	
	<i>Enter HECATE and the other three WITCHES</i>	
	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,	
	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**Modern 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.

*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!

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 3

Enter MACBETH

MACBETH enters.

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.

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.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 4**ALL**

Come, high or low;

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

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.

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.

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
100 Unfix his earthbound root? Sweet bodes! 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?

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?

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

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

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

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

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.

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?

FIRST WITCH

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

Music. The WITCHES dance and then vanish

What? Is this true?

FIRST WITCH

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

MACBETH

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

Music plays. The WITCHES dance and then vanish.

MACBETH

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

LENNOX enters.

LENNOX

What's your grace's will?

MACBETH

Saw you the weird sisters?

LENNOX

No, my lord.

MACBETH

Came they not by you?

LENNOX

No, indeed, my lord.

MACBETH

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

LENNOX

What does your grace want?

MACBETH

Did you see the weird sisters?

LENNOX

No, my lord.

MACBETH

Didn't they pass by you?

LENNOX

No, indeed, my lord.

MACBETH

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

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 8**LENNOX**

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

MACBETH

Fled to England?

LENNOX

Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH

150 Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits.

LENNOX

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

MACBETH

Fled to England?

LENNOX

Yes, my good lord.

MACBETH

Time, you thwart my dreadful plans. Unless a

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.
I take my leave at once.

Exit

LADY MACDUFF

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

SON

As birds do, Mother.

LADY MACDUFF

What, with worms and flies?

SON

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

LADY MACDUFF

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

SON

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

LADY MACDUFF

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

SON

40 Nay, how will you do for a husband?

LADY MACDUFF

Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

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.

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.

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**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.

Exit

LADY MACDUFF

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

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!

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!

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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?

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?

Act 4, Scene 3, Page 3

MALCOLM

It is myself I mean, in whom I know

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.

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.

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

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

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 swell'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,

Modern Text

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

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.

Modern Text

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.

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.

Exeunt

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 slumbery 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