

ORIGINAL TEXT

Thunder and lightning. Enter three WITCHES

FIRST WITCH

When shall we three meet again?
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH

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

THIRD WITCH

5 That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH

Where the place?

SECOND WITCH

Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH

There to meet with Macbeth.

FIRST WITCH

I come, Graymalkin!

SECOND WITCH

10 Paddock calls.

THIRD WITCH

Anon.

ALL

Fair is foul, and foul is fair

Hover through the fog and filthy air.

MODERN TEXT

Thunder and lightning. Three WITCHES enter

FIRST WITCH

When should the three of us meet again? Will it be in thunder, lightning, or rain?

SECOND WITCH

We'll meet when the noise of the battle is over, when one side has won and the other side has lost.

THIRD WITCH

That will happen before sunset.

FIRST WITCH

Where should we meet?

SECOND WITCH

Let's do it in the open field.

THIRD WITCH

We'll meet Macbeth there.

The WITCHES hear the calls of their spirit friends or "familiars," which look like animals—one is a cat and one is a toad.

FIRST WITCH

(calling to her cat) I'm coming, Graymalkin!

SECOND WITCH

My toad, Paddock, calls me.

THIRD WITCH

(to her spirit) I'll be right here!

ALL

Fair is foul, and foul is fair. Let's fly away through the fog and filthy air.

They exit.

Sounds of a trumpet and soldiers fighting offstage. KING DUNCAN enters with his sons MALCOLM and DONALBAIN, LENNOX, and a number of attendants. They meet a wounded and bloody CAPTAIN.

DUNCAN

Who is this bloody man? Judging from his appearance, I bet he can tell us the latest news about the revolt.

MALCOLM

This is the brave sergeant who fought to keep me from being captured. Hail, brave friend! Tell the king what was happening in the battle when you left it.

CAPTAIN

For a while you couldn't tell who would win. The armies were like two exhausted swimmers clinging to each other and struggling in the water, unable to move. The villainous rebel Macdonwald was supported by foot soldiers and horsemen

10 Worthy to be a rebel, for to that

The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him—from the Western Isles
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied,
And fortune, on his damnèd quarrel smiling,
15 Showed like a rebel's whore. But all's too weak,
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining fortune, with his brandished steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valor's minion carved out his passage

20 Till he faced the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseamed him from the nave to th' chops,
And fixed his head upon our battlements.

DUNCAN

O valiant cousin! Worthy gentleman!

CAPTAIN

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

DUNCAN

Dismayed not this our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

CAPTAIN

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

DUNCAN

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

Exit CAPTAIN with attendants

Enter ROSS and ANGUS

45 Who comes here?

MALCOLM

The worthy thane of Ross.

LENNOX

What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look
That seems to speak things strange.

ROSS

from Ireland and the Hebrides, and Lady Luck was with him, smiling cruelly at his enemies as if she were his whore. But Luck and Macdonwald together weren't strong enough. Brave Macbeth, laughing at Luck, chopped his way through to Macdonwald, who didn't even have time to say good-bye or shake hands before Macbeth split him open from his navel to his jawbone and stuck his head on our castle walls.

DUNCAN

My brave relative! What a worthy man!

CAPTAIN

But in the same way that violent storms always come just as spring appears, our success against Macdonwald created new problems for us. Listen to this, King: as soon as we sent those Irish soldiers running for cover, the Norwegian king saw his chance to attack us with fresh troops and shiny weapons.

DUNCAN

Didn't this frighten our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

CAPTAIN

The new challenge scared them about as much as sparrows frighten eagles, or rabbits frighten a lion. To tell you the truth, they fought the new enemy with twice as much force as before; they were like cannons loaded with double ammunition. Maybe they wanted to take a bath in their enemies' blood, or make that battlefield as infamous as Golgotha, where Christ was crucified, I don't know. But I feel weak. My wounds must be tended to.

DUNCAN

Your words, like your wounds, bring you honor. Take him to the surgeons.

The CAPTAIN exits, helped by attendants.

ROSS and ANGUS enter.

Who is this?

MALCOLM

The worthy THANE of Ross.

LENNOX

His eyes seem frantic! He looks like someone with a strange tale to tell.

ROSS

God save the king.

DUNCAN

Whence cam'st thou, worthy thane?

ROSS

From Fife, great king,

Where the Norwegian banners flout the sky

50 And fan our people cold.

Norway himself, with terrible numbers,

Assisted by that most disloyal traitor,

The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict,
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapped in proof,

55 Confronted him with self-comparisons,

Point against point, rebellious arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish spirit; and to conclude,

The victory fell on us.

DUNCAN

Great happiness!

ROSS

That now

Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition.

60 Nor would we deign him burial of his men

Till he disbursed at Saint Colme's Inch

Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

DUNCAN

No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive

Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death,

65 And with his former title greet Macbeth.

ROSS

I'll see it done.

DUNCAN

What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.

Exeunt

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES

FIRST WITCH

Where hast thou been, sister?

SECOND WITCH

Killing swine.

THIRD WITCH

Sister, where thou?

FIRST WITCH

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,

5 And munched, and munched, and munched. "Give me,"
quoth I.

"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed runnion cries.

Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' *Tiger*;
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And like a rat without a tail,

10 I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

God save the king!

DUNCAN

Where have you come from, worthy thane?

ROSS

Great king, I've come from Fife, where the Norwegian flag flies,
mocking our country and frightening our people. Leading an
enormous army and assisted by that disloyal traitor, the thane
of Cawdor, the king of Norway began a bloody battle. But
outfitted in his battle-weathered armor, Macbeth met the
Norwegian attacks shot for shot, as if he were the goddess of
war's husband. Finally he broke the enemy's spirit, and we
were victorious.

DUNCAN

Great happiness!

ROSS

So now Sweno, the Norwegian king, wants a treaty. We told
him we wouldn't even let him bury his men until he retreated
to Saint Colme's Inch and paid us ten thousand dollars.

DUNCAN

The thane of Cawdor will never again betray me. Go announce
that he will be executed, and tell Macbeth that Cawdor's titles
will be given to him.

ROSS

I'll get it done right away.

DUNCAN

The thane of Cawdor has lost what the noble Macbeth has won.

They all exit.

Thunder. The three WITCHES enter.

FIRST WITCH

Where have you been, sister?

SECOND WITCH

Killing pigs.

THIRD WITCH

And you, sister?

FIRST WITCH

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap and munched away at
them. "Give me one," I said. "Get away from me, witch!" the fat
woman cried. Her husband has sailed off to Aleppo as master
of a ship called the *Tiger*. I'll sail there in a kitchen strainer,
turn myself into a tailless rat, and do things to him—

SECOND WITCH

I'll give thee a wind.

FIRST WITCH

Thou 'rt kind.

THIRD WITCH

And I another.

FIRST WITCH

I myself have all the other,

15 And the very ports they blow,

All the quarters that they know

I' th' shipman's card.

I'll drain him dry as hay.

Sleep shall neither night nor day

20 Hang upon his penthouse lid.

He shall live a man forbid.

Weary sev'nights nine times nine

Shall he dwindle, peak and pine.

Though his bark cannot be lost,

25

Yet it shall be tempest-tossed.

Look what I have.

SECOND WITCH

Show me, show me.

FIRST WITCH

Here I have a pilot's thumb,

Wrecked as homeward he did come.

Drum within

THIRD WITCH

30 A drum, a drum!

Macbeth doth come.

ALL

(dancing together in a circle) The weird sisters, hand in hand,

Posters of the sea and land,

Thus do go about, about,

35 Thrice to thine and thrice to mine

And thrice again, to make up nine.

Peace! The charm's wound up.

Enter MACBETH and BANQUO

MACBETH

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO

How far is 't called to Forres?—What are these

40 So withered and so wild in their attire,

That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' Earth,

And yet are on 't?—Live you? Or are you aught

That man may question? You seem to understand me,

By each at once her choppy finger laying

SECOND WITCH

I'll give you some wind to sail there.

FIRST WITCH

How nice of you!

THIRD WITCH

And I will give you some more.

FIRST WITCH

I already have control of all the other winds, along with the ports from which they blow and every direction on the sailor's compass in which they can go. I'll drain the life out of him. He won't catch a wink of sleep, either at night or during the day. He will live as a cursed man. For eighty-one weeks he will waste away in agony.

Although I can't make his ship disappear, I can still make his journey miserable. Look what I have here.

SECOND WITCH

Show me, show me.

FIRST WITCH

Here I have the thumb of a pilot who was drowned while trying to return home.

A drum sounds offstage.

THIRD WITCH

A drum, a drum! Macbeth has come.

ALL

(dancing together in a circle) We weird sisters, hand in hand, swift travelers over the sea and land, dance around and around like so. Three times to yours, and three times to mine, and three times again, to add up to nine. Enough! The charm is ready.

MACBETH and BANQUO enter.

MACBETH

(to BANQUO) I have never seen a day that was so good and bad at the same time.

BANQUO

How far is it supposed to be to Forres? (he sees the WITCHES) What are these creatures? They're so withered-looking and crazily dressed. They don't look like they belong on this planet, but I see them standing here on Earth. (to the WITCHES) Are you alive? Can you answer questions? You seem to understand me, because each of you has put a gruesome finger to her

45 Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

MACBETH

Speak, if you can: what are you?

FIRST WITCH

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

SECOND WITCH

50 All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH

All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

BANquo

Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? (*to the WITCHES*) I' th' name of
truth,

Are ye fantastical, or that indeed

55 Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal. To me you speak not.
If you can look into the seeds of time

60 And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak, then, to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favors nor your hate.

FIRST WITCH

Hail!

SECOND WITCH

Hail!

THIRD WITCH

65 Hail!

FIRST WITCH

Lesser than Macbeth and greater.

SECOND WITCH

Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH

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

FIRST

WITCH

70 Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

MACBETH

Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more.
By Sinel's death I know I am thane of Glamis.
But how of Cawdor? The thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman, and to be king
75 Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence, or why

skinny lips. You look like women, but your beards keep me from believing that you really are.

MACBETH

Speak, if you can. What kind of creatures are you?

FIRST WITCH

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

SECOND WITCH

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

THIRD WITCH

All hail, Macbeth, the future king!

BANquo

My dear Macbeth, why do you look so startled and afraid of these nice things they're saying? (*to the WITCHES*) Tell me honestly, are you illusions, or are you really what you seem to be? You've greeted my noble friend with honors and talk of a future so glorious that you've made him speechless. But you don't say anything to me. If you can see the future and say how things will turn out, tell me. I don't want your favors and I'm not afraid of your hatred.

FIRST WITCH

Hail!

SECOND WITCH

Hail!

THIRD WITCH

Hail!

FIRST WITCH

You are lesser than Macbeth but also greater.

SECOND WITCH

You are not as happy as Macbeth, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH

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

FIRST WITCH

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

MACBETH

Wait! You only told me part of what I want to know. Stay and tell me more. I already know I am the thane of Glamis because I inherited the position when my father, Sinel, died. But how can you call me the thane of Cawdor? The thane of Cawdor is alive, and he's a rich and powerful man. And for me to be the king is completely impossible, just as it's impossible for me to be thane of Cawdor. Tell me where you learned these strange

Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting. Speak, I charge you.

WITCHES vanish

BANQUO

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

MACBETH

Into the air, and what seemed corporal
Melted, as breath into the wind. Would they had stayed.

BANQUO

Were such things here as we do speak about?
85 Or have we eaten on the insane root

That takes the reason prisoner?

MACBETH

Your children shall be kings.

BANQUO

You shall be king.

MACBETH

And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

BANQUO

To the selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

Enter ROSS and ANGUS

ORIGINAL TEXT

ROSS

90 The king hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success, and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his. Silenced with that,
95 In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norwegian ranks,
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death. As thick as tale
Can post with post, and every one did bear
100 Thy praises in his kingdom's great defense,
And poured them down before him.

ANGUS

We are sent
To give thee from our royal master thanks,
Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.

ROSS

105 And, for an earnest of a greater honor,
He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor:
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane,
For it is thine.

BANQUO

things, and why you stop us at this desolate place with this prophetic greeting? Speak, I command you.

The WITCHES vanish.

BANQUO

The earth has bubbles, just like the water, and these creatures must have come from a bubble in the earth. Where did they disappear to?

MACBETH

Into thin air. Their bodies melted like breath in the wind. I wish they had stayed!

BANQUO

Were these things we're talking about really here? Or are we both on drugs?

MACBETH

Your children will be kings.

BANQUO

You will be the king.

MACBETH

And thane of Cawdor too. Isn't that what they said?

BANQUO

That's exactly what they said. Who's this?

ROSS and ANGUS enter.

MODERN TEXT

ROSS

The king was happy to hear of your success, Macbeth. Whenever he hears the story of your exploits in the fight against the rebels, he becomes so amazed it makes him speechless. He was also shocked to learn that on the same day you fought the rebels you also fought against the army of Norway, and that you weren't the least bit afraid of death, even as you killed everyone around you. Messenger after messenger delivered news of your bravery to the king with praise for how you defended his country.

ANGUS

The king sent us to give you his thanks and to bring you to him. Your real reward won't come from us.

ROSS

And to give you a taste of what's in store for you, he told me to call you the thane of Cawdor. So hail, thane of Cawdor! That title belongs to you now.

BANQUO

What, can the devil speak true?

MACBETH

The thane of Cawdor lives. Why do you dress me
110 In borrowed robes?

ANGUS

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

MACBETH

(aside) Glamis, and thane of
Cawdor!
The greatest is behind. (to ROSS and ANGUS) Thanks
for your pains.
120 (aside to BANQUO) Do you not hope your children
shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?

BANQUO

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

BANQUO, ROSS, and ANGUS move to one side

MACBETH

130 (aside) Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme. (to ROSS and ANGUS) I thank you,
gentlemen.
(aside) This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,
135 Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor.
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
140 Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.

My thought, whose murder yet is
but fantastical,

(shocked) Can the devil tell the truth?

MACBETH

The thane of Cawdor is still alive. Why are you putting his
clothes on me?

ANGUS

The man who was the thane of Cawdor is still alive, but he's
been sentenced to death, and he deserves to die. I don't know
whether he fought on Norway's side, or if he secretly aided the
rebels, or if he fought with both of our enemies. But his
treason, which has been proven, and to which he's confessed,
means he's finished.

MACBETH

(to himself) It's just like they said—now I'm the thane of
Glamis and the thane of Cawdor. And the best part of what
they predicted is still to come. (to ROSS and ANGUS) Thank
you for the news. (speaking so that only BANQUO can hear)
Aren't you beginning to hope your children will be kings? After
all, the witches who said I was thane of Cawdor promised them
nothing less.

BANQUO

If you trust what they say, you might be on your way to
becoming king, as well as thane of Cawdor. But this whole
thing is strange. The agents of evil often tell us part of the truth
in order to lead us to our destruction. They earn our trust by
telling us the truth about little things, but then they betray us
when it will damage us the most. (to ROSS and ANGUS)
Gentlemen, I'd like to have a word with you, please.

ROSS, ANGUS, and BANQUO move to one side.

MACBETH

(to himself) So far the witches have told me two things that
came true, so it seems like this will culminate in my becoming
king. (to ROSS and ANGUS) Thank you, gentlemen. (to
himself) This supernatural temptation doesn't seem like it can
be a bad thing, but it can't be good either. If it's a bad thing,
why was I promised a promotion that turned out to be true?
Now I'm the thane of Cawdor, just like they said I would be.
But if this is a good thing, why do I find myself thinking about
murdering King Duncan, a thought so horrifying that it makes
my hair stand on end and my heart pound inside my chest?
The dangers that actually threaten me here and now frighten
me less than the horrible things I'm imagining.

Even though it's just a fantasy so far, the mere thought of
committing murder shakes me up so much that I hardly know

Shakes so my single state of man
That function is smothered in
surmise,
And nothing is but what is not.

BANQUO

Look how our partner's rapt.

MACBETH

(aside) If chance will have me king, why, chance may
crown me
Without my stir.

BANQUO

New honors come upon him,
150 Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mold
But with the aid of use.

MACBETH

(aside) Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

BANQUO

Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

MACBETH

155 Give me your favor. My dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are registered where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.
(aside to BANQUO) Think upon what hath chanced, and, at more
time,

160 The interim having weighed it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

BANQUO

Very gladly.

MACBETH

Till then, enough. (to ROSS and ANGUS) Come, friends.

Exeunt

*Flourish. Enter KING DUNCAN, LENNOX, MALCOLM,
DONALBAIN, and attendants*

DUNCAN

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

MALCOLM

My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
5 That very frankly he confessed his treasons,
Implored your highness' pardon, and set forth
A deep repentance. Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it. He died
As one that had been studious in his death

who I am anymore. My ability to act is stifled by my thoughts and speculations, and the only things that matter to me are things that don't really exist.

BANQUO

Look at Macbeth—he's in a daze.

MACBETH

(to himself) If fate wants me to be king, perhaps fate will just make it happen and I won't have to do anything.

BANQUO

(to ROSS and ANGUS) Macbeth is not used to his new titles. They're like new clothes: they don't fit until you break them in over time.

MACBETH

(to himself) One way or another, what's going to happen is going to happen.

BANQUO

Good Macbeth, we're ready when you are.

MACBETH

I beg your pardon; I was distracted. Kind gentlemen, I won't forget the trouble you've taken for me whenever I think of this day. Let's go to the king. (speaking so that only BANQUO can hear) Think about what happened today, and when we've both had time to consider things, let's talk.

BANQUO

Absolutely.

MACBETH

Until then, we've said enough. (to ROSS and ANGUS) Let's go, my friends.

They all exit.

*A trumpet fanfare sounds. KING DUNCAN, LENNOX,
MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, and their attendants enter.*

DUNCAN

Has the former thane of Cawdor been executed yet? Haven't the people in charge of that come back?

MALCOLM

My king, they haven't come back yet. But I spoke with someone who saw Cawdor die, and he said that Cawdor openly confessed his treasons, begged your highness's forgiveness, and repented deeply. He never did anything in his whole life that looked as good as the way he died. He died like someone who had practiced how to toss away his most cherished possession as if it were a worthless piece of garbage.

10 To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle.

DUNCAN

There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face.
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, and ANGUS

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

MACBETH

The service and the loyalty I owe
In doing it pays itself. Your highness' part
25 Is to receive our duties, and our duties
Are to your throne and state children and servants,
Which do but what they should, by doing everything
Safe toward your love and honor.

DUNCAN

Welcome hither.

I have begun to plant thee, and will labor
30 To make thee full of growing. (to BANQUO) Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserved, nor must be known
No less to have done so, let me infold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

BANQUO

There, if I grow,

The harvest is your own.

DUNCAN

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

MACBETH

45 The rest is labor which is not used for you:
I'll be myself the harbinger and make joyful

DUNCAN

There's no way to read a man's mind by looking at his face. I trusted Cawdor completely.

MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, and ANGUS enter.

(to MACBETH) My worthiest kinsman! Just this moment I was feeling guilty for not having thanked you enough. You have done so much for me so fast that it has been impossible to reward you properly. If you deserved less, then perhaps my payment would have matched your deeds! All I can say is that I owe you more than I can ever repay.

MACBETH

The opportunity to serve you is its own reward. Your only duty, your highness, is to accept what we owe you. Our duty to you and your state is like the duty of children to their father or servants to their master. By doing everything we can to protect you, we're only doing what we should.

DUNCAN

You are welcome here. By making you thane of Cawdor, I have planted the seeds of a great career for you, and I will make sure they grow. (to BANQUO) Noble Banquo, you deserve no less than Macbeth, and everyone should know it. Let me bring you close to me and give you the benefit of my love and good will.

BANQUO

Then if I accomplish anything great, it will be a credit to you.

DUNCAN

My joy is so overwhelming it brings tears to my eyes. My sons, relatives, lords, and all those closest to me, I want you to witness that I will bestow my kingdom on my eldest son, Malcolm. Today I name him the prince of Cumberland. But Malcolm isn't going to be alone in receiving honors—titles of nobility will shine like stars on all of you who deserve them. (to MACBETH) And now, let's go to your castle at Inverness, where I will become even more obliged to you because of your hospitality.

MACBETH

I'm not happy unless I can be working for you. I will go ahead and bring my wife the good news that you are coming. With

The hearing of my wife with your approach.
So humbly take my leave.

DUNCAN

My worthy Cawdor!

MACBETH

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

Exit

DUNCAN

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

60 It is a peerless kinsman.

Flourish. Exeunt

Enter LADY MACBETH, alone, with a letter

LADY MACBETH

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

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness

5 To catch the nearest way: thou wouldest be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldest highly,
That wouldest thou holily; wouldest not play false,
And yet wouldest wrongly win. Thou'l'dst have, great Glamis,

10 That which cries, "Thus thou must do," if thou have it,
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear
And chastise with the valor of my tongue

15 All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

that, I'll be off.

DUNCAN

My worthy Cawdor!

MACBETH

(to himself) Malcolm is now the prince of Cumberland! To become king myself, I'm either going to have to step over him or give up, because he's in my way. Stars, hide your light so no one can see the terrible desires within me. I won't let my eye look at what my hand is doing, but in the end I'm still going to do that thing I'd be horrified to see.

MACBETH exits.

DUNCAN

(to BANQUO, in the middle of a conversation we haven't heard) You're right, Banquo. Macbeth is every bit as valiant as you say, and I am satisfied with these praises of him. Let's follow after him, now that he has gone ahead to prepare our welcome. He is a man without equal.

Trumpet fanfare. They exit.

LADY MACBETH enters, reading a letter.

LADY MACBETH

"The witches met me on the day of my victory in battle, and I have since learned that they have supernatural knowledge. When I tried desperately to question them further, they vanished into thin air. While I stood spellbound, messengers from the king arrived and greeted me as the thane of Cawdor, which is precisely how the weird sisters had saluted me before calling me 'the future king!' I thought I should tell you this news, my dearest partner in greatness, so that you could rejoice along with me about the greatness that is promised to us. Keep it secret, and farewell."

(she looks up from the letter) You are thane of Glamis and Cawdor, and you're going to be king, just like you were promised. But I worry about whether or not you have what it takes to seize the crown. You are too full of the milk of human kindness to strike aggressively at your first opportunity. You want to be powerful, and you don't lack ambition, but you don't have the mean streak that these things call for. The things you want to do, you want to do like a good man. You don't want to cheat, yet you want what doesn't belong to you. There's something you want, but you're afraid to do what you need to do to get it. You want it to be done for you. Hurry home so I can persuade you and talk you out of whatever's keeping you from going after the crown. After all, fate and witchcraft both seem to want you to be king.

Enter SERVANT

What is your tidings?

SERVANT

The king comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Thou 'rt mad to say it.

20 Is not thy master with him, who, were 't so,
Would have informed for preparation?

SERVANT

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

LADY MACBETH

Give him tending.
He brings great news.

Exit SERVANT

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
30 Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood.
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
35 That no compunctionous visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
40 You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunkest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry "Hold, hold!"

Enter MACBETH

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

MACBETH

My dearest love,

50 Duncan comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

And when goes hence?

MACBETH

Tomorrow, as he purposes.

LADY MACBETH

A SERVANT enters.

What news do you bring?

SERVANT

The king is coming here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

You must be crazy to say that! Isn't Macbeth with the king, and wouldn't Macbeth have told me in advance so I could prepare, if the king were really coming?

SERVANT

I'm sorry, but it's the truth. Macbeth is coming. He sent a messenger ahead of him who arrived here so out of breath that he could barely speak his message.

LADY MACBETH

Take good care of him. He brings great news.

The SERVANT exits.

So the messenger is short of breath, like a hoarse raven, as he announces Duncan's entrance into my fortress, where he will die. Come, you spirits that assist murderous thoughts, make me less like a woman and more like a man, and fill me from head to toe with deadly cruelty! Thicken my blod and clog up my veins so I won't feel remorse, so that no human compassion can stop my evil plan or prevent me from accomplishing it! Come to my female breast and turn my mother's milk into poisonous acid, you murdering demons, wherever you hide, invisible and waiting to do evil! Come, thick night, and cover the world in the darkest smoke of hell, so that my sharp knife can't see the wound it cuts open, and so heaven can't peep through the darkness and cry, "No! Stop!"

MACBETH enters.

Great thane of Glamis! Worthy thane of Cawdor! You'll soon be greater than both those titles, once you become king! Your letter has transported me from the present moment, when who knows what will happen, and has made me feel like the future is already here.

MACBETH

My dearest love, Duncan is coming here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

And when is he leaving?

MACBETH

He plans to leave tomorrow.

LADY MACBETH

O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
55 Look like the time. Bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue. Look like th' innocent flower,
But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming
Must be provided for; and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch,
60 Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

MACBETH

We will speak further.

LADY MACBETH

Only look up clear.
To alter favor ever is to fear.

65 Leave all the rest to me.

Exeunt

*hautboys and torches. Enter KING DUNCAN, MALCOLM,
DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS,
ANGUS, and attendants*

DUNCAN

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

BANQUO

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

Enter LADY MACBETH

DUNCAN

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

LADY MACBETH

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

That day will never come. Your face betrays strange feelings, my lord, and people will be able to read it like a book. In order to deceive them, you must appear the way they expect you to look. Greet the king with a welcoming expression in your eyes, your hands, and your words. You should look like an innocent flower, but be like the snake that hides underneath the flower. The king is coming, and he's got to be taken care of. Let me handle tonight's preparations, because tonight will change every night and day for the rest of our lives.

MACBETH

We will speak about this further.

LADY MACBETH

You should project a peaceful mood, because if you look troubled, you will arouse suspicion. Leave all the rest to me.

They exit.

*The stage is lit by torches. Hautboys play. DUNCAN enters,
together with MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO,
LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, and their attendants.*

DUNCAN

This castle is in a pleasant place. The air is sweet and appeals to my refined senses.

BANQUO

The fact that this summer bird, the house martin, builds his nests here proves how inviting the breezes are. There isn't a single protrusion in the castle walls where these birds haven't built their hanging nests to sleep and breed. I've noticed that they always like to settle and mate where the air is the nicest.

LADY MACBETH enters.

DUNCAN

Look, here comes our honored hostess! Sometimes the love my subjects bring me is inconvenient, but I still accept it as love. In doing so, I'm teaching you to thank me for the inconvenience I'm causing you by being here, because it comes from my love to you.

LADY MACBETH

Everything we're doing for you, even if it were doubled and then doubled again, is nothing compared to the honors you have brought to our family. We gladly welcome you as our guests, with gratitude for both the honors you've given us before and the new honors you've just given us.

20 We rest your hermits.

DUNCAN

Where's the thane of Cawdor?

We coursed him at the heels and had a purpose
To be his purveyor; but he rides well,
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,

25 We are your guest tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Your servants ever

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

DUNCAN

Give me your hand.

Conduct me to mine host. We love him highly

30 And shall continue our graces towards him.

By your leave, hostess.

Exeunt

*Hautboys. Torches. Enter a sewer and divers servants with dishes
and service over the stage. Then enter MACBETH*

MACBETH

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly. If the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
5 Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here, that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
10 To plague th' inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
15 Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
20 The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked newborn babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
25 That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur

DUNCAN

Where is Macbeth, the thane of Cawdor? We followed closely after him. I hoped to arrive here before him, but he rides swiftly. And his great love, which is as sharp as his spur, helped him beat us here. Fair and noble hostess, we are your guests tonight.

LADY MACBETH

We are your servants, your highness, and as always our house and everything in it is at your disposal, for after all, we keep it in your trust and we're glad to give you back what's yours.

DUNCAN

Give me your hand. Bring me to my host, Macbeth. I love him dearly, and I shall continue to favor him. Whenever you're ready, hostess.

They all exit.

Hautboys play. The stage is lit by torches. A butler enters, and various servants carry utensils and dishes of food across the stage. Then MACBETH enters.

MACBETH

If this business would really be finished when I did the deed, then it would be best to get it over with quickly. If the assassination of the king could work like a net, sweeping up everything and preventing any consequences, then the murder would be the be-all and end-all of the whole affair, and I would gladly put my soul and the afterlife at risk to do it. But for crimes like these there are still punishments in this world. By committing violent crimes we only teach other people to commit violence, and the violence of our students will come back to plague us teachers. Justice, being equal to everyone, forces us to drink from the poisoned cup that we serve to others. The king trusts me in two ways. First of all, I am his kinsman and his subject, so I should always try to protect him. Second, I am his host, so I should be closing the door in his murderer's face, not trying to murder him myself. Besides, Duncan has been such a humble leader, so free of corruption, that his virtuous legacy will speak for him when he dies, as if angels were playing trumpets against the injustice of his murder. Pity, like an innocent newborn baby, will ride the wind with winged angels on invisible horses through the air to spread news of the horrible deed to everyone everywhere. People will shed a flood of tears that will drown the wind like a horrible downpour of rain. I can't spur myself to action. The only thing motivating me is ambition, which makes people rush ahead of themselves toward disaster.

To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on th' other.

Enter LADY MACBETH

How now! What news?

LADY MACBETH

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

MACBETH

30 Hath he asked for me?

LADY MACBETH

Know you not he has?

MACBETH

We will proceed no further in this business.
He hath honored me of late, and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,

35 Not cast aside so soon.

LADY MACBETH

Was the hope drunk

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

45 Like the poor cat i' th' adage?

MACBETH

Prithee, peace:

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

LADY MACBETH

What beast was 't, then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
50 And to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
55 How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

LADY MACBETH enters.

What news do you have?

LADY MACBETH

He has almost finished dinner. Why did you leave the dining room?

MACBETH

Has he asked for me?

LADY MACBETH

Don't you know he has?

MACBETH

We can't go on with this plan. The king has just honored me, and I have earned the good opinion of all sorts of people. I want to enjoy these honors while the feeling is fresh and not throw them away so soon.

LADY MACBETH

Were you drunk when you seemed so hopeful before? Have you gone to sleep and woken up green and pale in fear of this idea? From now on this is what I'll think of your love. Are you afraid to act the way you desire? Will you take the crown you want so badly, or will you live as a coward, always saying "I can't" after you say "I want to"? You're like the poor cat in the old story.

MACBETH

Please, stop! I dare to do only what is proper for a man to do.
He who dares to do more is not a man at all.

LADY MACBETH

If you weren't a man, then what kind of animal were you when you first told me you wanted to do this? When you dared to do it, that's when you were a man. And if you go one step further by doing what you dared to do before, you'll be that much more the man. The time and place weren't right before, but you would have gone ahead with the murder anyhow. Now the time and place are just right, but they're almost too good for you. I have suckled a baby, and I know how sweet it is to love the baby at my breast. But even as the baby was smiling up at me, I would have plucked my nipple out of its mouth and smashed its brains out against a wall if I had sworn to do that the same way you have sworn to do this.

MACBETH

If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH

We fail?

60 But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince
65 That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep
Their drenchèd natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
70 The unguarded Duncan? What not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?

MACBETH

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

LADY

MACBETH

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

MACBETH

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

Exeunt

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE, with a torch before him

BANQUO

How goes the night, boy?

FLEANCE

The moon is down. I have not heard the clock.

BANQUO

And she goes down at twelve.

FLEANCE

I take 't 'tis later, sir.

BANQUO

Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heaven;

MACBETH

But if we fail—

LADY MACBETH

We, fail? If you get your courage up, we can't fail. When Duncan is asleep—the day's hard journey has definitely made him tired—I'll get his two servants so drunk that their memory will go up in smoke through the chimneys of their brains. When they lie asleep like pigs, so drunk they'll be dead to the world, what won't you and I be able to do to the unguarded Duncan? And whatever we do, we can lay all the blame on the drunken servants.

MACBETH

May you only give birth to male children, because your fearless spirit should create nothing that isn't masculine. Once we have covered the two servants with blood, and used their daggers to kill, won't people believe that they were the culprits?

LADY MACBETH

Who could think it happened any other way? We'll be grieving loudly when we hear that Duncan has died.

MACBETH

Now I'm decided, and I will exert every muscle in my body to commit this crime. Go now, and pretend to be a friendly hostess. Hide with a false pleasant face what you know in your false, evil heart.

They exit.

BANQUO enters with **FLEANCE**, who lights the way with a torch.

BANQUO

How's the night going, boy?

FLEANCE

The moon has set. The clock hasn't struck yet.

BANQUO

The moon sets at twelve, right?

FLEANCE

I think it's later than that, sir.

BANQUO

Here, take my sword. The heavens are being stingy with their

5 Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose.

Enter MACBETH and a SERVANT with a torch
Give me my sword. Who's there?

MACBETH

10 A friend.

BANQUO

What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed.
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great largess to your offices.
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
15 By the name of most kind hostess, and shut up
In measureless content.

MACBETH

Being unprepared,
Our will became the servant to defect,
Which else should free have wrought.

BANQUO

All's well.

I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:

20 To you they have showed some truth.

MACBETH

I think not of them.
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.

BANQUO

At your kind'st leisure.

MACBETH

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

BANQUO

So I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,
I shall be counselled.

MACBETH

Good repose the while!

BANQUO

30 Thanks, sir: the like to you!

Exeunt BANQUO and FLEANCE

MACBETH

(to the SERVANT) Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

Exit SERVANT

light. Take this, too. I'm tired and feeling heavy, but I can't sleep. Merciful powers, keep away the nightmares that plague me when I rest!

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

Give me my sword. Who's there?

MACBETH

A friend.

BANQUO

You're not asleep yet, sir? The king's in bed. He's been in an unusually good mood and has granted many gifts to your household and servants. This diamond is a present from him to your wife for her boundless hospitality. (*he hands MACBETH a diamond*)

MACBETH

Because we were unprepared for the king's visit, we weren't able to entertain him as well as we would have wanted to.

BANQUO

Everything's OK. I had a dream last night about the three witches. At least part of what they said about you was true.

MACBETH

I don't think about them now. But when we have an hour to spare we can talk more about it, if you're willing.

BANQUO

Whenever you like.

MACBETH

If you stick with me, when the time comes, there will be something in it for you.

BANQUO

I'll do whatever you say, as long as I can do it with a clear conscience.

MACBETH

Rest easy in the meantime.

BANQUO

Thank you, sir. You do the same.

BANQUO and FLEANCE exit.

MACBETH

(to the SERVANT) Go and tell your mistress to strike the bell when my drink is ready. Get yourself to bed.

The SERVANT exits.

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
35 I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
40 I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses,
45 Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still,
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing.
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
50 Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and withered murder,
Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
55 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
60 Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives.
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

A bell rings

I go, and it is done. The bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

Exit

Enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold.
What hath quenched them hath given me fire.
Hark! Peace! It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it.
5 The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores. I have drugged their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

MACBETH

(within)

Who's there? What, ho!

LADY MACBETH

Is this a dagger I see in front of me, with its handle pointing toward my hand? (*to the dagger*) Come, let me hold you. (*he grabs at the air in front of him without touching anything*) I don't have you but I can still see you. Fateful apparition, isn't it possible to touch you as well as see you? Or are you nothing more than a dagger created by the mind, a hallucination from my fevered brain? I can still see you, and you look as real as this other dagger that I'm pulling out now. (*he draws a dagger*) You're leading me toward the place I was going already, and I was planning to use a weapon just like you. My eyesight must either be the one sense that's not working, or else it's the only one that's working right. I can still see you, and I see blood splotches on your blade and handle that weren't there before. (*to himself*) There's no dagger here. It's the murder I'm about to do that's making me think I see one. Now half the world is asleep and being deceived by evil nightmares. Witches are offering sacrifices to their goddess Hecate. Old man murder, having been roused by the howls of his wolf, walks silently to his destination, moving like **Tarquin**, as quiet as a ghost. (*speaking to the ground*) Hard ground, don't listen to the direction of my steps. I don't want you to echo back where I am and break the terrible stillness of this moment, a silence that is so appropriate for what I'm about to do. While I stay here talking, Duncan lives. The more I talk, the more my courage cools.

A bell rings.

I'm going now. The murder is as good as done. The bell is telling me to do it. Don't listen to the bell, Duncan, because it summons you either to heaven or to hell.

MACBETH exits.

LADY MACBETH enters.

LADY MACBETH

The alcohol that got the servants drunk has made me bold. The same liquor that quenched their thirst has fired me up. Listen! Quiet! That was the owl that shrieked, with a scary "good night" like the bells they ring before they execute people. Macbeth must be killing the king right now. The doors to Duncan's chamber are open, and the drunk servants make a mockery of their jobs by snoring instead of protecting the king. I put so many drugs in their drinks that you can't tell if they're alive or dead.

MACBETH

(from offstage) Who's there? What is it?

LADY MACBETH

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

Enter MACBETH, with bloody daggers
My husband!

MACBETH

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

LADY MACBETH

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

MACBETH

When?

LADY

MACBETH

Now.

MACBETH

As I descended?

LADY MACBETH

Ay.

MACBETH

Hark! Who lies i' th' second chamber?

LADY MACBETH

20 Donalbain.

MACBETH

(looking at his hands) This is a sorry sight.

LADY MACBETH

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

MACBETH

There's one did laugh in 's sleep, and one cried. "Murder!"
That they did wake each other. I stood and heard them.

25 But they did say their prayers, and addressed them

Again to sleep.

LADY MACBETH

There are two lodged together.

MACBETH

One cried, "God bless us!" and "Amen" the other,
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.
List'ning their fear I could not say "Amen,"
30 When they did say "God bless us!"

LADY MACBETH

Consider it not so deeply.

MACBETH

But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?
I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat.

Oh no, I'm afraid the servants woke up, and the murder didn't happen. For us to attempt murder and not succeed would ruin us. (*She hears a noise.*) Listen to that! I put the servants' daggers where Macbeth would find them. He couldn't have missed them. If Duncan hadn't reminded me of my father when I saw him sleeping, I would have killed him myself.

MACBETH enters carrying *Obloody daggers*.

My husband!

MACBETH

I have done the deed. Did you hear a noise?

LADY MACBETH

I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry. Didn't you say something?

MACBETH

When?

LADY MACBETH

Just now.

MACBETH

As I came down?

LADY MACBETH

Yes.

MACBETH

Listen! Who's sleeping in the second chamber?

LADY MACBETH

Donalbain.

MACBETH

(looking at his bloody hands) This is a sorry sight.

LADY MACBETH

That's a stupid thing to say.

MACBETH

One of the servants laughed in his sleep, and one cried, "Murder!" and they woke each other up. I stood and listened to them, but then they said their prayers and went back to sleep.

LADY MACBETH

Malcolm and Donalbain are asleep in the same room.

MACBETH

One servant cried, "God bless us!" and the other replied, "Amen," as if they had seen my bloody hands. Listening to their frightened voices, I couldn't reply "Amen" when they said "God bless us!"

LADY MACBETH

Don't think about it so much.

MACBETH

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

LADY MACBETH

These deeds must not be thought

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

MACBETH

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

LADY MACBETH

What do you mean?

MACBETH

Still it cried, "Sleep no more!" to all the house.
"Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more."

LADY MACBETH

45 Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?

50 They must lie there. Go carry them and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH

I'll go no more:

I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on 't again I dare not.

LADY MACBETH

Infirm of purpose!

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

Exit

Knock within

MACBETH

Whence is that knocking?

How is 't with me when every noise appals me?
60 What hands are here? Ha! They pluck out mine eyes.
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH

65 My hands are of your color, but I shame

LADY MACBETH

We can't think that way about what we did. If we do, it'll drive us crazy.

MACBETH

I thought I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more! Macbeth is murdering sleep." Innocent sleep. Sleep that soothes away all our worries. Sleep that puts each day to rest. Sleep that relieves the weary laborer and heals hurt minds. Sleep, the main course in life's feast, and the most nourishing.

LADY MACBETH

What are you talking about?

MACBETH

The voice kept crying, "Sleep no more!" to everyone in the house. "Macbeth has murdered sleep, and therefore Macbeth will sleep no more."

LADY MACBETH

Who said that? Why, my worthy lord, you let yourself become weak when you think about things in this cowardly way. Go get some water and wash this bloody evidence from your hands. Why did you carry these daggers out of the room? They have to stay there. Go take them back and smear the sleeping guards with the blood.

MACBETH

I can't go back. I'm afraid even to think about what I've done. I can't stand to look at it again.

LADY MACBETH

Coward! Give me the daggers. Dead and sleeping people can't hurt you any more than pictures can. Only children are afraid of scary pictures. If Duncan bleeds I'll paint the servants' faces with his blood. We must make it seem like they're guilty.

LADY MACBETH exits.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

MACBETH

Where is that knocking coming from? What's happening to me, that I'm frightened of every noise? (*looking at his hands*) Whose hands are these? Ha! They're plucking out my eyes. Will all the water in the ocean wash this blood from my hands? No, instead my hands will stain the seas scarlet, turning the green waters red.

LADY MACBETH enters.

LADY MACBETH

My hands are as red as yours, but I would be ashamed if my

To wear a heart so white.

Knock within

I hear a knocking

At the south entry. Retire we to our chamber.

A little water clears us of this deed.

How easy is it, then! Your constancy

70 Hath left you unattended.

Knock within

Hark! More knocking.

Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us

And show us to be watchers. Be not lost

So poorly in your thoughts.

MACBETH

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

Knock within

Wake Duncan with thy knocking. I would thou couldst.

Exeunt

Enter a PORTER. Knocking within

PORTR

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

Knock within

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' th' name of Beelzebub?

Here's a farmer that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty.
Come in time, have napkins enough about you, here you'll sweat
for 't.

Knock within

Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's name? Faith,
here's an equivocator that could swear in both the scales against
either scale, who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet
could not equivocate to heaven. O, come in, equivocator.

Knock within

5 Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor
come hither for stealing out of a French hose. Come in, tailor.
Here you may roast your goose.

Knock within

Knock, knock! Never at quiet. What are you? But this place is too
cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further. I had thought to have let in
some of all professions that go the primrose way to the everlasting
bonfire.

Knock within

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

heart were as pale and weak.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

I hear someone knocking at the south entry. Let's go back to
our bedroom. A little water will wash away the evidence of our
guilt. It's so simple! You've lost your resolve.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Listen! There's more knocking. Put on your nightgown, in case
someone comes and sees that we're awake. Snap out of your
daze.

MACBETH

Rather than have to think about my crime, I'd prefer to be
completely unconscious.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Wake Duncan with your knocking. I wish you could!

They exit.

*A sound of knocking from offstage. A **PORTER**, who is obviously drunk, enters.*

PORTER

This is a lot of knocking! Come to think of it, if a man were in
charge of opening the gates of hell to let people in, he would
have to turn the key a lot.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Knock, knock, knock! (*pretending he's the gatekeeper in hell*)
Who's there, in the devil's name? Maybe it's a farmer who
killed himself because grain was cheap. (*talking to the
imaginary farmer*) You're here just in time! I hope you
brought some handkerchiefs; you're going to sweat a lot here.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name? Maybe
it's some slick, two-faced con man who lied under oath. But he
found out that you can't lie to God, and now he's going to hell
for perjury. Come on in, con man.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Maybe it's an English tailor
who liked to skimp on the fabric for people's clothes. But now
that tight pants are in fashion he can't get away with it. Come
on in, tailor. You can heat your iron up in here.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Knock, knock! Never a moment of peace! Who are you? Ah,
this place is too cold to be hell. I won't pretend to be the devil's
porter anymore. I was going to let someone from every
profession into hell.

A sound of knocking from offstage.

I'm coming, I'm coming! Please, don't forget to leave me a tip.

Opens the gate
Enter MACDUFF and LENNOX

MACDUFF

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

PORTER

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

MACDUFF

What three things does drink especially provoke?

PORTER

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

MACDUFF

I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

PORTER

That it did, sir, i' th' very throat on me; but I requited him for his lie, and, I think, being too strong for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift to cast him.

MACDUFF

15 Is thy master stirring?

Enter MACBETH

Our knocking has awaked him. Here he comes.

LENNOX

Good morrow, noble sir.

MACBETH

Good morrow, both.

MACDUFF

Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

MACBETH

Not yet.

MACDUFF

He did command me to call timely on him.

20 I have almost slipped the hour.

MACBETH

I'll bring you to him.

MACDUFF

I know this is a joyful trouble to you,
But yet 'tis one.

MACBETH

The PORTER opens the gate.
MACDUFF and LENNOX enter.

MACDUFF

Did you go to bed so late, my friend, that you're having a hard time getting up now?

PORTER

That's right sir, we were drinking until 3 A.M., and drink, sir, makes a man do three things.

MACDUFF

What three things does drink make a man do?

PORTER

Drinking turns your nose red, it puts you to sleep, and it makes you urinate. Lust it turns on but also turns off. What I mean is, drinking stimulates desire but hinders performance. Therefore, too much drink is like a con artist when it comes to your sex drive. It sets you up for a fall. It gets you up but it keeps you from getting off. It persuades you and discourages you. It gives you an erection but doesn't let you keep it, if you see what I'm saying. It makes you dream about erotic experiences, but then it leaves you asleep and needing to pee.

MACDUFF

I believe drink did all of this to you last night.

PORTER

It did, sir. It got me right in the throat. But I got even with drink. I was too strong for it. Although it weakened my legs and made me unsteady, I managed to vomit it out and laid it flat on the ground.

MACDUFF

Is your master awake?

MACBETH enters.

Our knocking woke him up. Here he comes.

LENNOX

Good morning, noble sir.

MACBETH

Good morning to both of you.

MACDUFF

Is the king awake, worthy thane?

MACBETH

Not yet.

MACDUFF

He commanded me to wake him up early. I've almost missed the time he requested.

MACBETH

I'll bring you to him.

MACDUFF

I know the burden of hosting him is both an honor and a trouble, but that doesn't mean it's not a trouble just the same.

MACBETH

The labor we delight in physics pain.

This is the door.

MACDUFF

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

Exit MACDUFF

LENNOX

Goes the king hence today?

MACBETH

He does. He did appoint so.

LENNOX

The night has been unruly. Where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down and, as they say,
30 Lamentings heard i' th' air, strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confused events
New hatched to the woeful time. The obscure bird
Clamored the livelong night. Some say the Earth
35 Was feverous and did shake.

MACBETH

"Twas a rough night.

LENNOX

My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

Enter MACDUFF

MACDUFF

O horror, horror, horror!

Tongue nor heart cannot conceive nor name thee!

MACBETH & LENNOX

What's the matter?

MACDUFF

40 Confusion now hath made his masterpiece.
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' th' building!

MACBETH

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

LENNOX

Mean you his majesty?

MACDUFF

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

Exeunt MACBETH and LENNOX

Awake, awake!

Ring the alarm bell. Murder and treason!

50 Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! Awake!

Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,

The work we enjoy is not really work. This is the door.

MACDUFF

I'll wake him, because that's my job.

MACDUFF exits.

LENNOX

Is the king leaving here today?

MACBETH

He is. He told us to arrange it.

LENNOX

The night has been chaotic. The wind blew down through the chimneys where we were sleeping. People are saying they heard cries of grief in the air, strange screams of death, and terrible voices predicting catastrophes that will usher in a woeful new age. The owl made noise all night. Some people say that the earth shook as if it had a fever.

MACBETH

It was a rough night.

LENNOX

I'm too young to remember anything like it.

MACDUFF enters, upset.

MACDUFF

Oh, horror, horror, horror! This is beyond words and beyond belief!

MACBETH & LENNOX

What's the matter?

MACDUFF

The worst thing imaginable has happened. A murderer has broken into God's temple and stolen the life out of it.

MACBETH

What are you talking about? "The life"?

LENNOX

Do you mean the king?

MACDUFF

Go into the bedroom and see for yourself. What's in there will make you freeze with horror. Don't ask me to talk about it. Go look and then do the talking yourselves.

MACBETH and LENNOX exit.

Wake up, wake up! Ring the alarm bell. Murder and treason! Banquo and Donalbain, Malcolm! Wake up! Shake off sleep, which looks like death, and look at death itself! Get up, get up, and look at this image of doomsday! Malcolm! Banquo! Get up

And look on death itself! Up, up, and see
The great doom's image! Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
55 To countenance this horror! Ring the bell

Bell rings. Enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH

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

MACDUFF

O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
60 The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.

Enter BANQUO

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

LADY MACBETH

Woe, alas!
What, in our house?

BANQUO

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

Enter MACBETH, LENNOX, and ROSS

MACBETH

Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had lived a blessed time, for from this instant
70 There's nothing serious in mortality.
All is but toys. Renown and grace is dead.
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

Enter MALCOLM and DONALBAIN

DONALBAIN

What is amiss?

MACBETH

75 You are, and do not know 't.
The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopped; the very source of it is stopped.

MACDUFF

Your royal father's murdered.

MALCOLM

Oh, by whom?

LENNOX

Those of his chamber, as it seemed, had done 't.
80 Their hands and faces were all badged with blood.
So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
Upon their pillows. They stared, and were distracted.

from your beds as if you were rising out of your own graves,
and walk like ghosts to come witness this horror. Ring the bell.

A bell rings. LADY MACBETH enters.

LADY MACBETH

What's going on? Why is that terrifying trumpet calling
together everyone who's sleeping in the house? Speak up and
tell me!

MACDUFF

Oh gentle lady, my news isn't fit for your ears. If I repeated it to
you, it would kill you as soon as you heard it.

BANQUO enters.

Oh Banquo, Banquo, the king has been murdered!

LADY MACBETH

How horrible! What, in our own house?

BANQUO

It would be a terrible event no matter where it happened. Dear
Macduff, I beg you, tell us you were lying and say it isn't so.

MACBETH and LENNOX reenter, with ROSS.

MACBETH

If I had only died an hour before this event I could say I had
lived a blessed life. Because from this moment on, there is
nothing worth living for. Everything is a sick joke. The graceful
and renowned king is dead. The wine of life has been poured
out, and only the dregs remain.

MALCOLM and DONALBAIN enter.

DONALBAIN

What's wrong?

MACBETH

You are, but you don't know it yet. The source from which your
royal blood comes has been stopped.

MACDUFF

Your royal father is murdered.

MALCOLM

Who did it?

LENNOX

It seems that the guards who were supposed to be protecting
his chamber did it. Their hands and faces were all covered with
blood. So were their daggers, which we found on their pillows,
unwiped. They stared at us in confusion. No one's life should

No man's life was to be trusted with them.

MACBETH

Oh, yet I do repent me of my fury,

85 That I did kill them.

MACDUFF

Wherefore did you so?

MACBETH

Who can be wise, amazed, temp'rate, and furious,

Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man.

Th' expedition of my violent love

90 Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,

His silver skin laced with his golden blood,

And his gashed stabs looked like a breach in nature

For ruin's wasteful entrance; there, the murderers,

Steeped in the colors of their trade, their daggers

95 Unmannerly breeched with gore. Who could refrain,

That had a heart to love, and in that heart

Courage to make 's love known?

LADY MACBETH

Help me hence, ho!

MACDUFF

Look to the lady.

MALCOLM

(aside to DONALBAIN) Why do we hold our tongues,

100 That most may claim this argument for ours?

DONALBAIN

(aside to MALCOLM) What should be spoken here, where our fate,

Hid in an auger-hole, may rush and seize us?

Let's away. Our tears are not yet brewed.

MALCOLM

(aside to DONALBAIN) Nor our strong sorrow

105 Upon the foot of motion.

BANquo

Look to the lady.

Exit LADY MACBETH, attended

And when we have our naked
frailties hid,

That suffer in exposure, let us
meet
And question this most bloody
piece of work,
To know it further. Fears and
scruples shake us.

110 In the great hand of God I stand,
and thence
Against the undivulged pretense I

have been entrusted to them.

MACBETH

And yet I still regret the anger that drove me to kill them.

MACDUFF

What did you do that for?

MACBETH

Is it possible to be wise, bewildered, calm, furious, loyal, and neutral all at once? Nobody can do that. The violent rage inspired by my love for Duncan caused me to act before I could think rationally and tell myself to pause. There was Duncan, his white skin all splattered with his precious blood. The gashes where the knives had cut him looked like wounds to nature itself. Then right next to him I saw the murderers, dripping with blood, their daggers rudely covered in gore. Who could have restrained himself, who loved Duncan and had the courage to act on it?

LADY MACBETH

Help me out of here, quickly!

MACDUFF

Take care of the lady.

MALCOLM

(speaking so that only DONALBAIN can hear) Why are we keeping quiet? The two of us have the most to say in this matter.

DONALBAIN

(speaking so that only MALCOLM can hear) What are we going to say here, where danger may be waiting to strike at us from anywhere? Let's get out of here. We haven't even begun to weep yet—but there will be time for that later.

MALCOLM

(speaking so that only DONALBAIN can hear) And the time hasn't come yet for us to turn our deep grief into action.

BANquo

Take care of the lady.

LADY MACBETH is carried out.

When we're properly dressed for the cold, let's meet and discuss this bloody crime to see if we can figure anything out. Right now we're shaken up by fears and doubts. I'm putting myself in God's hands, and with his help I plan to fight against the secret plot that caused this treasonous murder.

fight
Of treasonous malice.

MACDUFF

And so do I.

ALL

So all.

MACBETH

Let's briefly put on manly readiness,

115 And meet i' th' hall together.

ALL

Well contented.

Exeunt all but MALCOLM and DONALBAIN

MALCOLM

What will you do? Let's not consort with them.

To show an unfelt sorrow is an office

Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.

DONALBAIN

To Ireland, I. Our separated fortune

120 Shall keep us both the safer. Where we are,

There's daggers in men's smiles. The near in blood,

The nearer bloody.

MALCOLM

This murderous shaft that's shot

Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way

125 Is to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse,

And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,

But shift away. There's warrant in that theft

Which steals itself when there's no mercy left.

Enter ROSS with an OLD MAN

OLD MAN

Threescore and ten I can remember well,

Within the volume of which time I have seen

Hours dreadful and things strange, but this sore night

Hath trifled former knowings.

ROSS

Ha, good father,

5 Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act,

Threatens his bloody stage. By th' clock 'tis day,

And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.

Is 't night's predominance or the day's shame

That darkness does the face of Earth entomb

10 When living light should kiss it?

OLD MAN

"Tis unnatural,

Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,

A falcon, tow'ring in her pride of place,

Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.

ROSS

MACDUFF

So will I.

ALL

So will we all.

MACBETH

Let's get dressed quickly and then meet in the hall.

ALL

Agreed.

Everyone exits except MALCOLM and DONALBAIN.

MALCOLM

What are you going to do? Let's not stay here with them. It's easy for a liar to pretend to feel sorrow when he actually feels none. I'm going to England.

DONALBAIN

I'll go to Ireland. We'll both be safer if we go separate ways. Wherever we go, men will smile at us while hiding daggers. Our closest relatives are the ones most likely to murder us.

MALCOLM

We haven't yet encountered that danger, and the best thing to do is avoid it entirely. With that in mind, let's get on our horses. We'd better not worry about saying polite good-byes; we should just get away quickly. There's good reason to escape when there's no mercy to be found anymore.

ROSS and an OLD MAN enter.

OLD MAN

I can remember the past seventy years pretty well, and in all that time I have seen dreadful hours and strange things. But last night's horrors make everything that came before seem like a joke.

ROSS

Ah yes, old man. You can see the skies. They look like they're upset about what mankind has been doing, and they're threatening the Earth with storms. The clock says it's daytime, but dark night is strangling the sun. Is it because night is so strong, or because day is so weak, that darkness covers the earth when it's supposed to be light?

OLD MAN

It's unnatural, just like the murder that has been committed. Last Tuesday a falcon was circling high in the sky, and it was caught and killed by an ordinary owl that usually goes after mice.

ROSS

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

OLD MAN

'Tis said they eat each other.

ROSS

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

Enter MACDUFF

How goes the world, sir, now?

MACDUFF

Why, see you not?

ROSS

Is 't known who did this more than bloody deed?

MACDUFF

Those that Macbeth hath slain.

ROSS

Alas, the day!

What good could they pretend?

MACDUFF

They were suborned.

25 Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

ROSS

'Gainst nature still!

Thriftless ambition, that will raven up

30 Thine own lives' means! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

MACDUFF

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

ROSS

Where is Duncan's body?

MACDUFF

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

ROSS

Will you to Scone?

MACDUFF

No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

ROSS

Well, I will thither.

MACDUFF

40 Well, may you see things well done there. Adieu,

And something else strange happened. Duncan's horses, which are beautiful and swift and the best of their breed, suddenly turned wild and broke out of their stalls. Refusing to be obedient as usual, they acted like they were at war with mankind.

OLD MAN

They say the horses ate each other.

ROSS

I saw it with my own eyes. It was an amazing sight. Here comes the good Macduff.

MACDUFF enters.

How are things going now?

MACDUFF

Can't you see for yourself?

ROSS

Does anyone know who committed this horrible crime?

MACDUFF

The servants Macbeth killed.

ROSS

It's too bad he killed them. What good would it have done those men to kill Duncan?

MACDUFF

They were paid to betray their master. Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons, have run away and fled, which makes them the prime suspects.

ROSS

Everything about this is unnatural! What a stupid ambition, causing a son to kill the father who supports him. Then it looks like Macbeth will become king.

MACDUFF

He has already been named king and has left for Scone to be crowned.

ROSS

Where is Duncan's body?

MACDUFF

It was carried to Colmekill to be placed in the tomb of his ancestors, where their bones are kept safe.

ROSS

Are you going to Scone?

MACDUFF

No, cousin, I'm going to Fife.

ROSS

Well, I'll go to Scone.

MACDUFF

I hope things go well there. Good-bye! And let's hope things

Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

ROSS

Farewell, father.

OLD MAN

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

Exeunt

don't get worse.

ROSS

Farewell, old man.

OLD MAN

May God's blessing go with you and with all who turn bad into
good, and enemies into friends!

They all exit.