

Original Text

Modern Text

Act 1, Scene 1

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.

Exeunt

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.

Act 1, Scene 2

*Alarum within. Enter KING
DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, with
attendants, meeting a bleeding CAPTAIN*

DUNCAN

What bloody man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.

MALCOLM

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

CAPTAIN

Doubtful it stood,
As two spent swimmers that do cling together

*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

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And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald—
 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!

Act 1, Scene 2, Page 2**CAPTAIN**

25 As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
 Shipwrecking 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 Norway 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.

DUNCANSo 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**Modern Text**

clinging to each other and struggling in the water, unable to move. The villainous rebel Macdonwald was supported by foot soldiers and horsemen 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

Original Text

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

Modern Text

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

Act 1, Scene 2, Page 3**ROSS**

God save the king.

DUNCAN

Whence cam'st thou, worthy thane?

ROSS

From Fife, great king,
Where the Norweyan 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***ROSS**

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.***Act 1, Scene 3***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,

*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

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

quoit I.

"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed ronnion cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' *Tiger*,
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,

10 And like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

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.

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 2

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,

35 Thus do go about, about,

Thrice to thine and thrice to mine

And thrice again, to make up nine.

Peace! The charm's wound up.

Enter MACBETH and BANQUO

MACBETH

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

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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 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.

Original Text

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,
45 By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 3

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,

- 55 Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal. To me you speak not.
60 If you can look into the seeds of time
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak, then, to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your 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!

Modern Text

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
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!

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 4

Original Text

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
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

Modern Text

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 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.

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 5

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 Norway ranks,
Nothing afraid 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,

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

Original Text

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

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
115 With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labored in his country's wrack, I know not;
But treasons capital, confessed and proved,
Have overthrown him.

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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

(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.

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 6

MACBETH

(aside) Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!

The greatest is
120 behind. *(to ROSS and ANGUS)* Thanks for your pains.
(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,

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

Original Text

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

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 7

My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man
That function is smothered in surmise,
145 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,
160 and, at more time,
The interim having weighed it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

BANQUO

Very gladly.

MACBETH

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

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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 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

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friends.

*Exeunt**They all exit.*

Act 1, Scene 4

*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 studied in his death
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.

*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.

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.

Act 1, Scene 4, Page 2

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

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

Original Text

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

DUNCAN

My worthy Cawdor!

Act 1, Scene 4, Page 3

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.

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

Act 1, Scene 5

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

Modern Text

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 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.

Exit

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

"The witches met me on the day of my victory in
battle, and I have since learned that they have

Original Text

in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it came missives from the king, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor,' by which title, before, these 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 might'st not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell."

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

5 To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst
highly,

That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,

10 And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'ld'st have, great
Glamis,

That which cries, "Thus thou must do," if thou have it,
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,

15 That I may pour my spirits in thine ear
And chastise with the valor of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

Enter **SERVANT**

Act 1, Scene 5, Page 2

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

Modern Text

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.

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

Original Text

- 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 compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
40 You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry "Hold, hold!"

Act 1, Scene 5, Page 3*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

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***Modern Text**

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 blood 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

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.

Original Text

Modern Text

Act 1, Scene 6

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

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

DUNCAN

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

BANQUO

This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
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,
The air is delicate.

0

*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,
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,
We rest your hermits.

2

0

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.

Act 1, Scene 6, Page 2

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 hold him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
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**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

Original Text

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***Modern Text**

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.***Act 1, Scene 7**

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

*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.

Act 1, Scene 7, Page 2*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 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?

Original Text

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

55 Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.

I would, while it was smiling in my face,

Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums

And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you

Have done to this.

Act 1, Scene 7, Page 3

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

Modern Text

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

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

Original Text

A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep
Their drenchèd natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon

71 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,

72 When we have marked with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,
That they have done 't?

Act 1, Scene 7, Page 4

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

Modern Text

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.