

Act 2, Scene 1

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;
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

A friend.

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 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.

Original Text

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.

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 2

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

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
 The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch
 35 thee.
 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,
 40 Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain?
 I see thee yet, in form as palpable

Modern Text

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 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

Original Text

As this which now I draw.
 Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,
 And such an instrument I was to use.
 45 Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses,
 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
 50 Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
 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,
 55 Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
 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 whereabouts,
 60 And take the present horror from the time,
 Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives.
 Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

Modern Text

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 splashes 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.

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 3

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

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.

Act 2, Scene 2

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
 5 bellman,
 Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it.
 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

Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
 10 And 'tis not done. Th' attempt and not the deed
 Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;

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

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*

Original Text

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

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

LADY MACBETH

15 I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.

Did not you speak?

MACBETH

When?

Act 2, Scene 2, Page 2

LADY MACBETH

Now.

MACBETH

As I descended?

LADY MACBETH

Ay.

MACBETH

Hark! Who lies i' th' second chamber?

LADY MACBETH

Donalbain.

MACBETH

20 *(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
25 them.

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,"
When they did say "God bless us!"

LADY MACBETH

30 Consider it not so deeply.

MACBETH

But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?

Modern Text

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 bloody 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

Original Text

I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat.

LADY MACBETH

These deeds must not be thought
After these ways. So, it will make us mad.

Act 2, Scene 2, Page 3**MACBETH**

35 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,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
40 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

Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthythane,
45 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?
They must lie there. Go carry them and smear
50 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
Are but as pictures. 'Tis the eye of childhood
55 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

Modern Text

needed God's blessing, but the word "Amen"
stuck in my throat.

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.

Act 2, Scene 2, Page 4**MACBETH**

Whence is that knocking?
How is 't with me when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? Ha! They pluck out mine eyes.
60 Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather

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

Original Text

The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH

My hands are of your color, but I shame
65 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
Hath left you unattended.

Knock within

70 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

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

Knock within

75 Wake Duncan with thy knocking. I would thou
couldst.

Exeunt

Act 2, Scene 3

Enter a PORTER. Knocking within

PORTER

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.

Modern Text

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 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

Original Text

Modern Text

fashion he can't get away with it. Come on in, tailor. You can heat your iron up in here.

Knock within

A sound of knocking from offstage.

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 2

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.

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.

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.

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.

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 3

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.

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.

Original Text**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.

MACDUFFI know this is a joyful trouble to you,
But yet 'tis one.**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?

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 4**MACBETH**

He does. He did appoint so.

LENNOXThe 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.

LENNOXMy 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?

Modern Text**LENNOX**

Good morning, noble sir.

MACBETH

Good morning to both of you.

MACDUFF

Is the king awake, worthy thane?

MACBETH

Not yet.

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

I'll bring you to him.

MACDUFFI 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 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.

LENNOXThe 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?

Original Text**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?

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 5**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,
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?

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 6**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,

Modern Text**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 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

Original Text

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.
 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.

Modern Text

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 have been entrusted to them.

MACBETH

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

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 7

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
 100 tongues,
 That most may claim this argument for ours?

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.

Original Text

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

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 8

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 fight
Of treasonous malice.

MACDUFF

And so do I.

ALL

So all.

MACBETH

Let's briefly put on manly readiness,
115 And meet it '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.

Modern Text

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.

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.

Original Text**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.

Act 2, Scene 4, Page 3**MACDUFF**

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

