

Act 3, Scene 1

Enter BANQUO

BANQUO enters.

BANQUO

Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and I fear
Thou played'st most foully for 't. Yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
5 But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them—
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine—
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well,
10 And set me up in hope? But hush, no more.

BANQUO

Now you have it all: you're the king, the thane of
Cawdor, and the thane of Glamis, just like the
weird women promised you. And I suspect you
cheated to win these titles. But it was also
prophesied that the crown would not go to your
descendants, and that my sons and grandsons
would be kings instead. If the witches tell the
truth—which they did about you—maybe what
they said about me will come true too. But shhh!
I'll shut up now.

Original Text

*Sennet sounded. Enter **MACBETH**, as king, **LADY MACBETH**, as queen, **LENNOX**, **ROSS**, **LORDS**, **LADIES**, and attendants*

MACBETH

Here's our chief guest.

LADY MACBETH

If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all thing unbecoming.

MACBETH

15 Tonight we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.

BANQUO

Let your highness
Command upon me, to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
Forever knit.

Modern Text

*A trumpet plays. **MACBETH** enters dressed as king, and **LADY MACBETH** enters dressed as queen, together with **LENNOX**, **ROSS**, **LORDS**, **LADIES**, and their attendants*

MACBETH

(indicating **BANQUO**) Here's our most important guest.

LADY MACBETH

If we forgot him, our big celebration wouldn't be complete, and that wouldn't be any good.

MACBETH

(to **BANQUO**) Tonight we're having a ceremonial banquet, and I want you to be there.

BANQUO

Whatever your highness commands me to do, it is always my duty to do it.

Act 3, Scene 1, Page 2

MACBETH

20 Ride you this afternoon?

BANQUO

Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH

We should have else desired your good advice—
Which still hath been both grave and prosperous—
In this day's council, but we'll take tomorrow.

25 Is 't far you ride?

BANQUO

As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twixt this and supper. Go not my horse the better,
I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain.

MACBETH

Fail not our feast.

BANQUO

30 My lord, I will not.

MACBETH

We hear our bloody cousins are bestowed
In England and in Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention. But of that tomorrow,
35 When therewithal we shall have cause of state
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse. Adieu,
Till your return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

BANQUO

Ay, my good lord. Our time does call upon 's.

MACBETH

Are you going riding this afternoon?

BANQUO

Yes, my good lord.

MACBETH

We would have liked to have heard your good advice, which has always been serious and helpful, at the council today, but we'll wait until tomorrow. Are you riding far?

BANQUO

I'm going far enough that I'll be riding from now until dinner. Unless my horse goes faster than expected, I will be back an hour or two after sunset.

MACBETH

Don't miss our feast.

BANQUO

My lord, I won't miss it.

MACBETH

We hear that the princes, those murderers, have hidden in England and Ireland. They haven't confessed to cruelly murdering their own father, and they've been making up strange lies to tell their hosts. But we can talk more about that tomorrow, when we'll discuss matters of state that concern us both. Hurry up and get to your horse. Good-bye, until you return tonight. Is Fleance going with you?

BANQUO

Yes, my good lord. It's time we hit the road.

Original Text

MACBETH

I wish your horses swift and sure of foot,
 40 And so I do commend you to their backs.
 Farewell.

Exit BANQUO

Let every man be master of his time
 Till seven at night. To make society
 The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
 45 Till supertime alone. While then, God be with you!

Act 3, Scene 1, Page 3

Exeunt all except MACBETH and a SERVANT

Sirrah, a word with you. Attend those men
 Our pleasure?

SERVANT

They are, my lord, without the palace gate.

MACBETH

Bring them before us.

Exit SERVANT

50 To be thus is nothing,
 But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo
 Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
 Reigns that which would be feared. 'Tis much he
 dares,
 55 And to that dauntless temper of his mind
 He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor
 To act in safety. There is none but he
 Whose being I do fear, and under him
 My genius is rebuked, as it is said
 60 Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters
 When first they put the name of king upon me
 And bade them speak to him. Then, prophetlike,
 They hailed him father to a line of kings.
 Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown
 65 And put a barren scepter in my grip,
 Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,
 No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,
 For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;
 For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered;
 70 Put rancors in the vessel of my peace
 Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
 Given to the common enemy of man,
 To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
 Rather than so, come fate into the list,
 And champion me to th' utterance. Who's there?

Enter SERVANT and two MURDERERS

Act 3, Scene 1, Page 4

75 Now go to the door and stay there till we call.

Modern Text

MACBETH

I hope your horses are fast and surefooted. And
 with that, I send you to them. Farewell.

BANQUO exits.

Everybody may do as they please until seven
 o'clock tonight. In order to make your company
 even more enjoyable, I'm going to keep to myself
 until supertime. Until then, God be with you!

*Everyone exits except MACBETH and
 a SERVANT*

(to the SERVANT) You there, let me have a word
 with you. Are those men waiting for me?

SERVANT

They're waiting outside the palace gate, my lord.

MACBETH

Bring them to me.

The SERVANT exits.

To be the king is nothing if I'm not safe as the
 king. I'm very afraid of Banquo. There's
 something noble about him that makes me fear
 him. He's willing to take risks, and his mind never
 stops working. He has the wisdom to act bravely
 but also safely. I'm not afraid of anyone but him.
 Around him, my guardian angel is frightened, just
 as Mark Antony's angel supposedly feared
 Octavius Caesar. Banquo chided the witches
 when they first called me king, asking them to tell
 him his own future. Then, like prophets, they
 named him the father to a line of kings. They
 gave me a crown and a scepter that I can't pass
 on. Someone outside my family will take these
 things away from me, since no son of mine will
 take my place as king. If this is true, then I've
 tortured my conscience and murdered the
 gracious Duncan for Banquo's sons. I've ruined
 my own peace for their benefit. I've handed over
 my everlasting soul to the devil so that they could
 be kings. Banquo's sons, kings! Instead of
 watching that happen, I will challenge fate to
 battle and fight to the death. Who's there!

*The SERVANT comes back in with
 two MURDERERS*

Now go to the door and stay there until I call for

Original Text

Modern Text

*Exit SERVANT**The SERVANT exits.*

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

you.

Wasn't it just yesterday that we spoke to each other?

FIRST MURDERER

FIRST MURDERER

It was, so please your highness.

It was yesterday, your highness.

MACBETH

MACBETH

Well then, now

Well, did you think about what I said? You should know that it was Banquo who made your lives hell for so long, which you always thought was my fault. But I was innocent. I showed you the proof at our last meeting. I explained how you were deceived, how you were thwarted, the things that were used against you, who was working against you, and a lot of other things that would convince even a half-wit or a crazy person to say, "Banquo did it!"

Have you considered of my speeches? Know
That it was he, in the times past, which held you

80 So under fortune, which you thought had been
Our innocent self. This I made good to you
In our last conference, passed in probation with you,
How you were borne in hand, how crossed, the
instruments,

85 Who wrought with them, and all things else that
might

To half a soul and to a notion crazed

Say, "Thus did Banquo."

FIRST MURDERER

FIRST MURDERER

You made it known to us.

You explained it all.

MACBETH

MACBETH

I did so, and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting. Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature
90 That you can let this go? Are you so gospelled
To pray for this good man and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bowed you to the grave
And beggared yours forever?

I did that and more, which brings me to the point of this second meeting. Are you so patient and forgiving that you're going to let him off the hook? Are you so pious that you would pray for this man and his children, a man who has pushed you toward an early grave and put your family in poverty forever?

FIRST MURDERER

FIRST MURDERER

We are men, my liege.

We are men, my lord.

MACBETH

MACBETH

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,
95 As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels,
curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are clept
All by the name of dogs. The valued file
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
100 The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed, whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike. And so of men.

Yes, you're part of the species called men. Just as hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, mutts, shaggy lapdogs, swimming dogs, and wolf-dog crossbreeds are all dogs. But if you list the different kinds of dogs according to their qualities, you can distinguish which breeds are fast or slow, which ones are clever, which ones are watchdogs, and which ones hunters. You can classify each dog according to the natural gifts that separate it from all other dogs. It's the same with men. Now, if you occupy some place in the list of men that isn't down at the very bottom, tell me. Because if that's the case, I will tell you a plan that will get rid of your enemy and bring you closer to me. As long as Banquo lives, I am sick. I'll be healthy when he is dead.

105 Now, if you have a station in the file,
Not i' th' worst rank of manhood, say 't,
And I will put that business in your bosoms,
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
110 Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

Original Text**SECOND MURDERER**

I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Have so incensed that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.

FIRST MURDERER

And I another
115 So weary with disasters, tugged with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it or be rid on 't.

MACBETH

Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.

BOTH MURDERERS

True, my lord.

MACBETH

So is he mine; and in such bloody distance
120 That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life. And though I could
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
125 Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
Who I myself struck down. And thence it is,
That I to your assistance do make love,
Masking the business from the common eye
For sundry weighty reasons.

Act 3, Scene 1, Page 6**SECOND MURDERER**

130 We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.

FIRST MURDERER

Though our lives—

MACBETH

Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at
most
I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
135 Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' th' time,
The moment on 't; for 't must be done tonight,
And something from the palace; always thought
That I require a clearness. And with him—
To leave no rubs nor botches in the work—
140 Fleance, his son, that keeps him company,
Whose absence is no less material to me
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart.
I'll come to you anon.

BOTH MURDERERS

We are resolved, my lord.

MACBETH

145 I'll call upon you straight. Abide within.

Modern Text**SECOND MURDERER**

My lord, I've been so kicked around by the world,
and I'm so angry, that I don't even care what I
do.

FIRST MURDERER

I'm the same. I'm so sick of bad luck and trouble
that I'd risk my life on any bet, as long as it would
either fix my life or end it once and for all.

MACBETH

You both know Banquo was your enemy.

BOTH MURDERERS

It's true, my lord.

MACBETH

He's my enemy too, and I hate him so much that
every minute he's alive it eats away at my heart.
Since I'm king, I could simply use my power to
get rid of him. But I can't do that, because he and
I have friends in common whom I need, so I have
to be able to moan and cry over his death in
public even though I'll be the one who had him
killed. That's why I need your help right now. I
have to hide my real plans from the public eye
for many important reasons.

SECOND MURDERER

We'll do what you want us to, my lord.

FIRST MURDERER

Though our lives—

MACBETH

(interrupts him) I can see the determination in
your eyes. Within the next hour I'll tell you where
to go and exactly when to strike. It must be done
tonight, away from the palace. Always remember
that I must be free from suspicion. For the plan to
work perfectly, you must kill both Banquo and his
son, Fleance, who keeps him company. Getting
rid of Fleance is as important to me as knocking
off Banquo. Each of you should make up your
own mind about whether you're going to do this.
I'll come to you soon.

BOTH MURDERERS

We have decided, my lord. We're in.

MACBETH

I'll call for you soon. Stay inside.

Original Text

Modern Text

*Exeunt MURDERERS**The MURDERERS exit.*

It is concluded. Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out tonight.

The deal is closed. Banquo, if your soul is going
to make it to heaven, tonight's the night.

*Exit**He exits.*

Act 3, Scene 2

*Enter LADY MACBETH and a SERVANT**LADY MACBETH and a SERVANT enter.***LADY MACBETH**

Is Banquo gone from court?

LADY MACBETH

Has Banquo left the court?

SERVANT

Ay, madam, but returns again tonight.

SERVANT

Yes, madam, but he'll be back tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Say to the king I would attend his leisure
For a few words.

LADY MACBETH

Go tell the king I want to talk to him for a few
minutes.

SERVANT

5 Madam, I will.

SERVANT

No problem, madam.

*Exit SERVANT**The SERVANT exits.***LADY MACBETH**

Naught's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content.
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

LADY MACBETH

If you get what you want and you're still not
happy, you've spent everything and gained
nothing. It's better to be the person who gets
murdered than to be the killer and be tormented
with anxiety.

*Enter MACBETH**MACBETH enters.*

10 How now, my lord! Why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making,
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without all remedy
Should be without regard. What's done is done.

What's going on, my lord? Why are you keeping
to yourself, with only your sad thoughts to keep
you company? Those thoughts should have died
when you killed the men you're thinking about. If
you can't fix it, you shouldn't give it a second
thought. What's done is done.

MACBETH**MACBETH**

15 We have scorched the snake, not killed it.
She'll close and be herself whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds
suffer,
20 Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly. Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
25 In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave.
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.
Treason has done his worst; nor steel nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
Can touch him further.

We have slashed the snake but not killed it. It will
heal and be as good as new, and we'll be
threatened by its fangs once again. But the
universe can fall apart, and heaven and earth
crumble, before I'll eat my meals in fear and
spend my nights tossing and turning with these
nightmares I've been having. I'd rather be dead
than endure this endless mental torture and
harrowing sleep deprivation. We killed those men
and sent them to rest in peace so that we could
gain our own peace. Duncan lies in his grave,
through with life's troubles, and he's sleeping
well. We have already done the worst we can do
to him with our treason. After that, nothing can
hurt him further—not weapons, poison, rebellion,
invasion, or anything else.

Act 3, Scene 2, Page 2

LADY MACBETH**LADY MACBETH**

Original Text

Come on, gentle my lord,

- 30 Sleek o'er your rugged looks. Be bright and jovial
Among your guests tonight.

MACBETH

So shall I, love,
And so, I pray, be you. Let your remembrance
Apply to Banquo; present him eminence,
Both with eye and tongue: unsafe the while that we
35 Must lave our honors in these flattering streams,
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

LADY MACBETH

You must leave this.

MACBETH

Oh, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

LADY MACBETH

- 40 But in them nature's copy's not eterne.

MACBETH

There's comfort yet; they are assailable.
Then be thou jocund. Ere the bat hath flown
His cloistered flight, ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums
45 Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

LADY MACBETH

What's to be done?

Act 3, Scene 2, Page 3

MACBETH

- Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day
50 And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale. Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to th' rooky wood.
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse;
55 Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
Thou marvel'st at my words: but hold thee still.
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.
So, prithee, go with me.

Exeunt

Act 3, Scene 3

Enter three MURDERERS

FIRST MURDERER

But who did bid thee join with us?

Modern Text

Come on, relax, dear. Put on a happy face and look cheerful and agreeable for your guests tonight.

MACBETH

That's exactly what I'll do, my love, and I hope you'll do the same. Give Banquo your special attention. Talk to him and look at him in a way that will make him feel important. We're in a dangerous situation, where we have to flatter him and hide our true feelings.

LADY MACBETH

You have to stop talking like this.

MACBETH

Argh! I feel like my mind is full of scorpions, my dear wife. You know that Banquo and his son Fleance are still alive.

LADY MACBETH

But they can't live forever.

MACBETH

That's comforting. They can be killed, it's true. So be cheerful. Before the bat flies through the castle, and before the dung beetle makes his little humming noise to tell us it's nighttime, a dreadful deed will be done.

LADY MACBETH

What are you going to do?

MACBETH

It's better you don't know about it until after it's done, when you can applaud it. *(to the night)* Come, night, and blindfold the kindhearted day. Use your bloody and invisible hand to tear up Banquo's lease on life, which keeps me in fear. *(to himself)* The sky's getting dark, and the crow is returning home to the woods. The gentle creatures of the day are falling asleep, while night's predators are waking up to look for their prey. *(to LADY MACBETH)* You seem surprised at my words, but don't question me yet. Bad deeds force you to commit more bad deeds. So please, come with me.

They exit.

The two MURDERERS enter with a third MURDERER.

FIRST MURDERER

But who told you to come here and join us?

Original Text

THIRD MURDERER

Macbeth.

SECOND MURDERER

He needs not our mistrust, since he delivers
Our offices and what we have to do

5 To the direction just.

FIRST MURDERER

Then stand with us.

The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day.
Now spurs the lated traveler apace
To gain the timely inn, and near approaches

10 The subject of our watch.

THIRD MURDERER

Hark, I hear horses.

BANQUO

(*within*) Give us a light there, ho!

SECOND MURDERER

Then 'tis he: the rest
That are within the note of expectation
Already are i' th' court.

FIRST MURDERER

His horses go about.

THIRD MURDERER

Almost a mile; but he does usually—

15 So all men do—from hence to the palace gate
Make it their walk.

Enter BANQUO and FLEANCE with a torch

Modern Text

THIRD MURDERER

Macbeth.

SECOND MURDERER

We can trust this guy. He was given exactly the
same orders we were.

FIRST MURDERER

Then stay with us. There's still a bit of daylight in
the sky. Now all the late travellers are hurrying to
reach their inns. Banquo is almost here.

THIRD MURDERER

Listen! I hear horses.

BANQUO

(*from offstage*) Hey, give us some light here!

SECOND MURDERER

That must be him. The rest of the king's guests
are already inside.

FIRST MURDERER

You can hear his horses moving around as the
servants take them to the stables.

THIRD MURDERER

It's almost a mile to the palace gate, but Banquo,
like everybody else, usually walks from here to
the palace.

BANQUO and FLEANCE enter with a torch.

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 2

SECOND MURDERER

A light, a light!

THIRD MURDERER

'Tis he.

FIRST MURDERER

Stand to 't.

BANQUO

It will be rain tonight.

FIRST MURDERER

Let it come down.

The MURDERERS attack BANQUO

BANQUO

O treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!

20 Thou may 'st revenge —O slave!

BANQUO dies. Exit FLEANCE

THIRD MURDERER

Who did strike out the light?

FIRST MURDERER

Was 't not the way?

SECOND MURDERER

Here comes a light! Here comes a light!

THIRD MURDERER

That's him.

FIRST MURDERER

Prepare yourselves.

BANQUO

It will rain tonight.

FIRST MURDERER

Then let the rain come down.

The MURDERERS attack BANQUO.

BANQUO

Oh, this is treachery! Get out of here, good
Fleance, run, run, run! Someday you can get
revenge.—Oh, you bastard!

BANQUO dies. FLEANCE escapes.

THIRD MURDERER

Who put out the light?

FIRST MURDERER

Wasn't that the best thing to do?

Original Text**THIRD MURDERER**

There's but one down. The son is fled.

SECOND MURDERER

We have lost best half of our affair.

FIRST MURDERER

Well, let's away and say how much is done.

Exeunt

Modern Text**THIRD MURDERER**

There's only one body here. The son ran away.

SECOND MURDERER

We failed in half of our mission.

FIRST MURDERER

Well, let's get out of here and tell Macbeth what we did accomplish.

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 4

Banquet prepared. Enter MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, LORDS, and attendants.

The stage is set for a banquet. MACBETH enters with LADY MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, LORDS, and their attendants.

MACBETH

You know your own degrees; sit down. At first
And last, the hearty welcome.

The LORDS sit

MACBETH

You know your own ranks, so you know where to sit. Sit down. From the highest to the lowest of you, I bid you a hearty welcome.

The LORDS sit down.

LORDS

Thanks to your majesty.

LORDS

Thanks to your majesty.

MACBETH

Ourself will mingle with society
And play the humble host.

- 5 Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time
We will require her welcome.

LADY MACBETH

Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends,
For my heart speaks they are welcome.

Enter FIRST MURDERER at the door

MACBETH

I will walk around and mingle with all of you, playing the humble host. My wife will stay in her royal chair, but at the appropriate time I will have her welcome you all.

LADY MACBETH

Say welcome to all of our friends for me, sir, for in my heart they are all welcome.

The FIRST MURDERER appears at the door.

MACBETH

- See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.
10 Both sides are even. Here I'll sit i' th' midst.
Be large in mirth. Anon we'll drink a measure
The table round.

(aside to FIRST MURDERER) There's blood upon thy face.

FIRST MURDERER

'Tis Banquo's then.

MACBETH

- 15 'Tis better thee without than he within.
Is he dispatched?

MACBETH

And they respond to you with their hearts as well. The table is full on both sides. I will sit here in the middle. Be free and happy. Soon we will toast around the table.

(approaching the door and speaking to the MURDERER) There's blood on your face.

FIRST MURDERER

Then it must be Banquo's.

MACBETH

I'd rather see his blood splattered on your face than flowing through his veins. Did you finish him off?

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 2**FIRST MURDERER**

My lord, his throat is cut. That I did for him.

MACBETH

Thou art the best o' th' cutthroats:
Yet he's good that did the like for Fleance.

FIRST MURDERER

My lord, his throat is cut. I did that to him.

MACBETH

You are the best of the cutthroats. But whoever did the same to Fleance must also be good. If

Original Text

20 If thou didst it, thou art the nonpareil.

FIRST MURDERER

Most royal sir, Fleance is 'scaped.

MACBETH

Then comes my fit again. I had else been perfect,
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad and general as the casing air.

25 But now I am cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears.—But Banquo's safe?

FIRST MURDERER

Ay, my good lord. Safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenchèd gashes on his head,
The least a death to nature.

MACBETH

Thanks for that.

30 There the grown serpent lies. The worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed;
No teeth for th' present. Get thee gone. Tomorrow
We'll hear ourselves again.

Exit FIRST MURDERER

LADY MACBETH

My royal lord,

You do not give the cheer. The feast is sold

35 That is not often vouched, while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome. To feed were best at home;
From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.

Modern Text

you cut both their throats, then you are the
absolute best.

FIRST MURDERER

Most royal sir, Fleance has escaped.

MACBETH

Now I'm scared again. Otherwise I would have
been perfect, as solid as a piece of marble, as
firm as a rock, as free as the air itself. But now
I'm all tangled up with doubts and fears. But
Banquo's been taken care of?

FIRST MURDERER

Yes, my good lord. He's lying dead in a ditch, with
twenty deep gashes in his head, any one of which
would have been enough to kill him.

MACBETH

Thanks for that. The adult snake lies in the ditch.
The young snake that escaped will in time
become poisonous and threatening, but for now
he has no fangs. Get out of here. I'll talk to you
again tomorrow.

The FIRST MURDERER exits.

LADY MACBETH

My royal lord, you're not entertaining the guests.

If you don't make your guests know they're
welcome, they'll feel like they're paying for their
meal. When you just want to eat, it's better to do
that at home. When you're eating out with people,
you need to have a little more ceremony.
Otherwise dinner parties would be boring.

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 3

MACBETH

Sweet remembrancer!

Now, good digestion wait on appetite,

40 And health on both!

LENNOX

May 't please your highness sit.

*Enter the GHOST OF BANQUO, and sits
in MACBETH's place*

MACBETH

Here had we now our country's honor roofed,
Were the graced person of our Banquo present,
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness

45 Than pity for mischance.

ROSS

His absence, sir,

Lays blame upon his promise. Please 't your
highness

To grace us with your royal company?

MACBETH

It's nice of you to remind me. *(raising a glass to
toast his guests)* Since good digestion requires a
good appetite, and good health requires both of
those, here's to good appetites, good digestion,
and good health!

LENNOX

Why don't you have a seat, your highness?

*The GHOST OF BANQUO enters and sits
in MACBETH's place.*

MACBETH

We would have all the nobility of Scotland
gathered under one roof, if only Banquo were
here. I hope it turns out that he's late out of
rudeness, and not because something bad has
happened to him.

ROSS

His absence means he's broken his promise, sir.
If it pleases you, your highness, why don't you sit
with us and grace us with your royal company?

Original Text

MACBETH
The table's full.

LENNOX
Here is a place reserved, sir.

MACBETH
50 Where?

LENNOX
Here, my good lord. What is 't that moves your highness?

MACBETH
Which of you have done this?

LORDS
What, my good lord?

MACBETH
(to GHOST) Thou canst not say I did it. Never shake Thy gory locks at me.

Modern Text

MACBETH
The table's full.

LENNOX
Here's an empty seat, sir.

MACBETH
Where?

LENNOX
(pointing to where the GHOST sits) Here, my good lord. What's wrong, your highness?

MACBETH
(seeing the GHOST) Which one of you did this?

LORDS
What, my good lord?

MACBETH
(to the GHOST) You can't say I did it. Don't shake your bloody head at me.

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 4

ROSS
55 Gentlemen, rise. His highness is not well.

LADY MACBETH
Sit, worthy friends. My lord is often thus And hath been from his youth. Pray you, keep seat. The fit is momentary; upon a thought He will again be well. If much you note him,
60 You shall offend him and extend his passion. Feed and regard him not. (aside to MACBETH) Are you a man?

MACBETH
Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that Which might appall the devil.

LADY MACBETH
O proper stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear.
65 This is the air-drawn dagger which you said Led you to Duncan. Oh, these flaws and starts, Impostors to true fear, would well become A woman's story at a winter's fire, Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!
70 Why do you make such faces? When all's done, You look but on a stool.

MACBETH
Prithee, see there! Behold! Look! Lo! How say you? Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too. If charnel houses and our graves must send
75 Those that we bury back, our monuments Shall be the maws of kites.

ROSS
Gentlemen, stand up. His highness is not well.

LADY MACBETH
Sit down, worthy friends. My husband is often like this, and he has been since he was a child. Please stay seated. This is just a brief fit. In a moment he'll be well again. If you pay too much attention to him you'll make him angry, and that will make his convulsions go on longer. Eat your dinner and pay no attention to him. (speaking so that only MACBETH can hear) Are you a man?

MACBETH
Yes, and a brave one, who dares to look at something that would frighten the devil.

LADY MACBETH
Oh, that's nonsense! This is just another one of the hallucinations you always get when you're afraid. This is like that floating dagger you said was leading you toward Duncan. These outbursts of yours don't even look like real fear. They're more like how you would act if you were a woman telling a scary story by the fireside in front of her grandmother. Shame on you! Why are you making these faces? When the vision passes, you'll see that you're just looking at a stool.

MACBETH
Please, just look over there. Look! Look! See! (to the GHOST) What do you have to say? What do I care? If you can nod, then speak too. If the dead are going to return from their graves, then there's nothing to stop the birds from eating the bodies. So there's no point in our burying people.

Exit GHOST

The GHOST vanishes.

Original Text

LADY MACBETH

What, quite unmanned in folly?

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 5

MACBETH

If I stand here, I saw him.

LADY MACBETH

Fie, for shame!

MACBETH

Blood hath been shed ere now, i' th' olden time,
Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal;

- 80 Ay, and since too, murders have been performed
Too terrible for the ear. The time has been
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end. But now they rise again
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns
85 And push us from our stools. This is more strange
Than such a murder is.

LADY MACBETH

My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.

MACBETH

I do forget.

Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends.

- 90 I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all.
Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine. Fill full.

Enter the GHOST OF BANQUO

I drink to the general joy o' th' whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
95 Would he were here! To all and him we thirst,
And all to all.

LORDS

Our duties, and the pledge.

They drink

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 6

MACBETH

(*seeing the GHOST*) Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let
the earth hide thee.

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold.

- 100 Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with!

LADY MACBETH

Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom. 'Tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

Modern Text

LADY MACBETH

What, has your foolishness paralyzed you
completely?

MACBETH

As sure as I'm standing here, I saw him.

LADY MACBETH

Nonsense!

MACBETH

In ancient times, before there were laws to make
the land safe and peaceful, a lot of blood was
spilled. Yes, and since then murders have been
committed that are too awful to talk about. It used
to be that when you knocked a man's brains out
he would just die, and that would be it. But now
they rise from the dead with twenty fatal head
wounds and push us off our stools. This haunting
business is even stranger than murder.

LADY MACBETH

My worthy lord, your noble friends miss your
company.

MACBETH

I forgot about them. (*to the guests*) Don't be
alarmed on my account, my most worthy friends. I
have a strange disorder, which no longer shocks
those who know me well. (*raising his glass to
toast the company*) Come, let's drink a toast: love
and health to you all. Now I'll sit down. Give me
some wine. Fill up my cup.

*The GHOST OF BANQUO reappears
in MACBETH's seat.*

I drink to the happiness of everyone at the table,
and to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss. I
wish he were here! Let's drink to everyone here,
and to Banquo. Now, everybody, drink

LORDS

Hear, hear.

They drink.

MACBETH

(*to the GHOST*) Go! And get out of my sight!
Stay in your grave. There's no marrow in your
bones, and your blood is cold. You're staring at
me with eyes that have no power to see.

LADY MACBETH

Good friends, think of this as nothing more than
a strange habit. It's nothing else. Too bad it's
spoilng our pleasure tonight.

Original Text**MACBETH**

What man dare, I dare.

Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,

105 The armed rhinoceros, or th' Hyrcan tiger;

Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves

Shall never tremble. Or be alive again,

And dare me to the desert with thy sword.

If trembling I inhabit then, protest me

110 The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!

Unreal mockery, hence!

Exit GHOST

Why so, being gone,

Why so, being gone,

I am a man again. Pray you sit still.

LADY MACBETH

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting,

With most admired disorder.

MACBETH

Can such things be,

115 And overcome us like a summer's cloud,

Without our special wonder? You make me strange

Even to the disposition that I owe,

When now I think you can behold such sights,

And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,

120 When mine is blanch'd with fear.

ROSS

What sights, my lord?

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 7**LADY MACBETH**

I pray you, speak not. He grows worse and worse.

Question enrages him. At once, good night.

Stand not upon the order of your going,

But go at once.

LENNOX

125 Good night, and better health

Attend his majesty!

LADY MACBETH

A kind good night to all!

Exeunt all but MACBETH and LADY MACBETH

MACBETH

It will have blood, they say. Blood will have blood.

Stones have been known to move, and trees to

130 speak.

Augurs and understood relations have

By magot pies and choughs and rooks brought forth

The secret'st man of blood.—What is the night?

LADY MACBETH

Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

Modern Text**MACBETH**

I am as brave as any other man. Come at me in the form of a rugged Russian bear, an armor-plated rhinoceros, or a tiger from Iran. Take any shape other than the one you have now and I will never tremble in fear. Or come back to life again and challenge me to a duel in some deserted place. If I tremble then, you can call me a little girl. Get out of here, you horrible ghost, you hallucination. Get out!

The GHOST vanishes.

I am a man again. Pray you sit still.

Look, now that it's gone, I'm a man again.

Please, remain seated.

LADY MACBETH

You have ruined our good cheer and disrupted the gathering by making a spectacle of yourself.

MACBETH

(to the guests) Can things like this happen so suddenly without making us all astonished? You make me feel like I don't know myself, when I see you looking at these terrible things and keeping a straight face, while my face has gone white with fear.

ROSS

What things, my lord?

LADY MACBETH

Please, don't speak to him. He's getting worse and worse. Talk makes him crazy. Everybody, please leave right now. Don't bother exiting in the order of your rank, but just leave right away.

LENNOX

Good night. I hope the king recovers soon!

LADY MACBETH

A kind good night to all!

Everyone leaves except MACBETH and LADY MACBETH.

MACBETH

There's an old saying: the dead will have their revenge. Gravestones have been known to move, and trees to speak, to bring guilty men to justice. The craftiest murderers have been exposed by the mystical signs made by crows and magpies. How late at night is it?

LADY MACBETH

It's almost morning. You can't tell whether it's day or night.

Original Text

MACBETH

How say'st thou that Macduff denies his person

135 At our great bidding?

LADY MACBETH

Did you send to him, sir?

MACBETH

I hear it by the way; but I will send.

There's not a one of them but in his house

I keep a servant fee'd. I will tomorrow—

And betimes I will—to the weird sisters.

140 More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good,
All causes shall give way. I am in blood
Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.

145 Strange things I have in head, that will to hand,
Which must be acted ere they may be scanned.

Modern Text

MACBETH

What do you think about the fact that Macduff
refuses to come to me when I command him?

LADY MACBETH

Did you send for him, sir?

MACBETH

I've heard about this indirectly, but I will send for him. In every one of the lords' households I have a servant paid to spy for me. Tomorrow, while it's still early, I will go see the witches. They will tell me more, because I'm determined to know the worst about what's going to happen. My own safety is the only important thing now. I have walked so far into this river of blood that even if I stopped now, it would be as hard to go back to being good as it is to keep killing people. I have some schemes in my head that I'm planning to put into action. I have to do these things before I have a chance to think about them.

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 8

LADY MACBETH

You lack the season of all natures, sleep.

MACBETH

Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use.

150 We are yet but young in deed.

LADY MACBETH

You haven't slept.

MACBETH

Yes, let's go to sleep. My strange self-delusions
just come from inexperience. We're still just
beginners when it comes to crime.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 5

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES meeting **HECATE**

FIRST WITCH

Why, how now, Hecate! You look angrily.

HECATE

Have I not reason, beldams as you are?

Saucy and overbold, how did you dare

To trade and traffic with Macbeth

5 In riddles and affairs of death,
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,
Was never called to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art?

10 And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a wayward son,
Spiteful and wrathful, who, as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.

But make amends now. Get you gone,
15 And at the pit of Acheron
Meet me i' th' morning. Thither he
Will come to know his destiny.
Your vessels and your spells provide,

*Thunder. The three WITCHES enter,
meeting* **HECATE**.

FIRST WITCH

What's wrong, Hecate? You look angry.

HECATE

Don't I have a reason to be angry, you
disobedient hags? How dare you give Macbeth
riddles and prophecies about his future without
telling me? I am your boss and the source of your
powers. I am the one who secretly decides what
evil things happen, but you never called me to
join in and show off my own powers. And what's
worse, you've done all this for a man who
behaves like a spoiled brat, angry and hateful.
Like all spoiled sons, he chases after what he
wants and doesn't care about you. But you can
make it up to me. Go away now and in the
morning meet me in the pit by the river in hell.
Macbeth will go there to learn his destiny. You
bring your cauldrons, your spells, your charms,
and everything else. I'm about to fly away. I'll
spend tonight working to make something horrible

Original Text

- Your charms and everything beside.
 20 I am for the air. This night I'll spend
 Unto a dismal and a fatal end.
 Great business must be wrought ere noon.
 Upon the corner of the moon
 There hangs a vap'rous drop profound.
 25 I'll catch it ere it come to ground.
 And that distilled by magic sleights
 Shall raise such artificial sprites
 As by the strength of their illusion
 Shall draw him on to his confusion.

Act 3, Scene 5, Page 2

- 30 He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
 His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear.
 And you all know, security
 Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

Music and a song within: 'Come away, come away,'
 &c

- Hark! I am called. My little spirit, see,
 35 Sits in a foggy cloud and stays for me.

Exit

FIRST WITCH

Come, let's make haste; she'll soon be back again.

Exeunt

Modern Text

happen. I have a lot to do before noon. An important droplet is hanging from the corner of the moon. I'll catch it before it falls to the ground. When I work it over with magic spells, the drop will produce magical spirits that will trick Macbeth with illusions.

He will be fooled into thinking he is greater than fate, he will mock death, and he will think he is above wisdom, grace, and fear. As you all know, overconfidence is man's greatest enemy.

Music plays offstage, and voices sing a song with the words "Come away, come away."

Listen! I'm being called. Look, my little spirit is sitting in a foggy cloud waiting for me.

HECATE exits.

FIRST WITCH

Come on, let's hurry. She'll be back again soon.

They all exit.

Act 3, Scene 6

Enter LENNOX and another LORD

LENNOX

- My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
 Which can interpret farther. Only I say
 Things have been strangely borne. The gracious
 Duncan
 5 Was pitied of Macbeth. Marry, he was dead.
 And the right-valiant Banquo walked too late,
 Whom, you may say, if 't please you, Fleance killed,
 For Fleance fled. Men must not walk too late.
 Who cannot want the thought how monstrous
 10 It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
 To kill their gracious father? Damnèd fact!
 How it did grieve Macbeth! Did he not straight
 In pious rage the two delinquents tear
 That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep?
 15 Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too,
 For 'twould have angered any heart alive
 To hear the men deny 't. So that, I say,
 He has borne all things well. And I do think
 That had he Duncan's sons under his key—
 20 As, an't please heaven, he shall not—they should find
 What 'twere to kill a father. So should Fleance.
 But, peace! For from broad words, and 'cause he

LENNOX and another LORD enter.

LENNOX

What I've already said shows you we think alike, so you can draw your own conclusions. All I'm saying is that strange things have been going on. Macbeth pitied Duncan—after Duncan was dead. And Banquo went out walking too late at night. If you like, we can say that Fleance must have killed him, because Fleance fled the scene of the crime. Clearly, men should not go out walking too late! And who can help thinking how monstrous it was for Malcolm and Donalbain to kill their gracious father? Such a heinous crime—how it saddened Macbeth! Wasn't it loyal of him to kill those two servants right away, while they were still drunk and asleep? That was the right thing to do, wasn't it? Yes, and it was the wise thing, too, because we all would have been outraged to hear those two deny their crime. Considering all this, I think Macbeth has handled things well. If he had Duncan's sons in prison—which I hope won't happen—they would find out how awful the punishment is for those who kill their fathers, and so would Fleance. But enough of that. I hear that Macduff is out of favor with the king because he

Original Text

failed
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear
Macduff lives in disgrace. Sir, can you tell
Where he bestows himself?

LORD

The son of Duncan—
25 From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth—
Lives in the English court and is received
Of the most pious Edward with such grace
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff
30 Is gone to pray the holy king upon his aid
To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward,
That by the help of these—with Him above
To ratify the work—we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
35 Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,
Do faithful homage and receive free honors.
All which we pine for now. And this report
Hath so exasperated the king that he
Prepares for some attempt of war.

Act 3, Scene 6, Page 2

LENNOX

40 Sent he to Macduff?

LORD

He did, and with an absolute "Sir, not I,"
The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who should say "You'll rue the time
That clogs me with this answer."

LENNOX

And that well might
45 Advise him to a caution, t' hold what distance
His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
Fly to the court of England and unfold
His message ere he come, that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our suffering country
50 Under a hand accursed!

LORD

I'll send my prayers with him.

Exeunt

Modern Text

speaks his mind too plainly, and because he
failed to show up at Macbeth's feast. Can you tell
me where he's hiding himself?

LORD

Duncan's son Malcolm, whose birthright and
throne Macbeth has stolen, lives in the English
court. There, the saintly King Edward treats
Malcolm so well that despite Malcolm's
misfortunes, he's not deprived of respect.
Macduff went there to ask King Edward for help.
He wants Edward to help him form an alliance
with the people of Northumberland and their lord,
Siward. Macduff hopes that with their help—and
with the help of God above—he may once again
put food on our tables, bring peace back to our
nights, free our feasts and banquets from violent
murders, allow us to pay proper homage to our
king, and receive honors freely. Those are the
things we pine for now. Macbeth has heard this
news and he is so angry that he's preparing for
war.

LENNOX

Did he tell Macduff to return to Scotland?

LORD

He did, but Macduff told the messenger, "No
way." The messenger scowled and rudely turned
his back on Macduff, as if to say, "You'll regret
the day you gave me this answer."

LENNOX

That might well keep Macduff away from
Scotland. Some holy angel should go to the court
of England and give Macduff a message. He
should return quickly to free our country, which is
suffering under a tyrant!

LORD

I'll send my prayers with him.

They exit.

