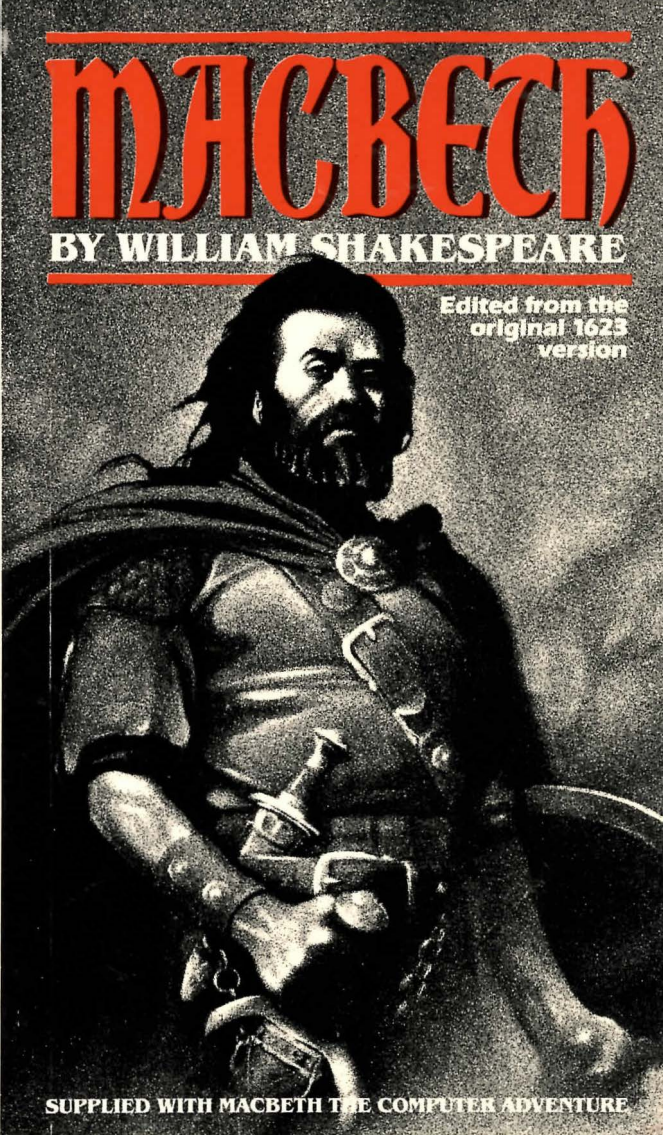
MACBETH

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Edited from the original 1623 version



SUPPLIED WITH MACBETH THE COMPUTER ADVENTURE

Macbeth

by

William Shakespeare

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps more than any of his other works, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is a living play, full of unexpected twists and turns, rich in different meanings, alive with fresh possibilities. You can read it many times and still see something new. You can peel back different layers of emotions, trying to understand what drives a man like Macbeth. You can put him in the dock and condemn him as a bloody tyrant and murderer. Or you can defend him as a strong-armed hero tricked into destroying himself. Almost every character and every word can be read in a different way. Fair is foul and foul is fair.

Just imagine Shakespeare, with bald head and inky fingers, scrawling page after page of this marvellously intricate play, in less time than it takes to write a computer adventure! The candle guttering, and the playwright cursing that the ale has run out. You can almost feel his creative passion pouring out of him: the action rushes pell-mell to the climax, while the poetry deepens, echoes, reverberates. You're caught up in the torrent, and part of the play's mystery is that you don't want Macbeth to lose. Actors have become so enmeshed in the play that they have forgotten it's only acting. Friendships have been broken between actors playing Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. So many have been wounded — and one even killed — in the battle scenes that the play is believed to be cursed. Its real name is taboo inside some dressing rooms: it's simply called 'the Scottish play'.

Too often, *Macbeth* is seen as a fossil on the school syllabus. Or as part of that glossy unread volume of 'Complete Works' that sits in every home next to the encyclopaedia. Too often, reading Shakespeare, and *Macbeth* in particular, is a chore that has to be faced. The conscientious reader will copy all the footnotes into the margins, feeling that Shakespeare used a foreign language. The less conscientious — or those with exams looming — will turn to a handy potted version with the same old analysis of plot, character and themes. Neither approach really works. (Everyone on the ODE team admits to this! We've all tried it at one time or another.) You have to get inside the play, somehow. You have to feel the language working on you, identify with the characters, think their thoughts, see them as living people. It's not easy. Three and a half centuries have passed since Shakespeare lived, and ten since the real Macbeth. There have been many changes. Language, superstitions and attitudes towards society have altered. But once you've broken through those barriers, and are more familiar with the differences, it's a whole new world. The universality of Shakespeare strikes a chord of recognition in you, the twentieth century reader. Here was a man who knew men, in all their follies and pettiness and grandeur.

A main aim of our package is to help you to break through to that world. For the student, it means that you'll be much more at home with the play and with the ideas in it. At the same time, it won't be a chore but a challenge: a game in every sense of the word. Afterwards, your approach to the text should be fresher, more confident, more individual. Remember that Shakespeare would have thought he'd failed as an artist if his audience didn't argue over his plays, each person having a different view!

The four Adventure Games are a fun way of learning to find your way around *Macbeth*, becoming familiar with Shakespeare's language as you play them. The four 'psychiatrist' programs are designed to make you work out the feelings and motives of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth for yourself. In light-hearted but probing 'sessions' with the psychiatrist, you'll be able to explore the many different ways of interpreting the role which you've assumed. This approach is new, and lively, and there's a lot of thought-provoking material as well.

Our edition of *Macbeth* comes from the first published version, that of 1623. It hasn't the same number of footnotes as, say, an edition used in schools would have, because it isn't designed to rival a study text. But it is a faithful, scholarly edition.

The 'Notes' following this introduction will be helpful if you are studying Macbeth, if you have just seen the play performed, or if you are simply avid for extra knowledge. Again, these notes are not designed to rival the usual study guides. Instead, they are meant to fill the gaps left by many study guides, and to prompt you to ways of thinking of *Macbeth* that have probably not occurred to you.

Above all, this package, including the educational content, is designed to give a fresh, enjoyable approach to one of the great works of literature.

Oxford Digital Enterprises 1984

SCOTLAND *Ca.* 1040

Malcolm I
ruled 943–54

- **Dubh** 962–67
  - **Kenneth III** 997–1005
    - Boedh
      - Malcolm c.1033
      - Gruoch=1) Gillacomgain=2)
        - **Lulach** 1057–8
- **Kenneth II** 971–95
  - **MALCOLM II** 1005–34
    - Findlaech=Doada [2] of Moray
      - **MACBETH** 1040–57
      - **MALCOLM III** 1058–93
        - 9 sons, 4 of them kings
      - **Donald Ban** 1093–94, 1094–97
      - Maelmuire
    - Crinan=Bethoc [1]
      - **DUNCAN** 1034–40
    - daughter [3]=Sigurd of Orkney
      - Thorfinn

ROYAL FAMILY TREE

THE REAL MACBETH

'The liberal king . . . was fair, yellow-haired and tall;
Pleasant was the handsome youth to me.
Brimful of food was Alban east and west,
During the reign of the ruddy and brave king.'

— Saint Berchan, mid-eleventh century

' . . . black Macbeth . . . bloody,
luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
that has a name.'

— Malcolm, in Shakespeare's *'Macbeth'*,
early seventeenth century

If the Macbeth of history were to meet the Macbeth of Shakespeare at a banquet (or on the battlefield), they wouldn't recognise each other. The real Macbeth had a legal claim to the Scottish throne, and was lawfully elected king after his cousin Duncan had died in battle. There is much uncertainty as to whether or not King Duncan was actually killed by Macbeth. Even if he was, such fatal rivalry was not unusual in eleventh century Scotland. Macbeth ruled for seventeen years and two days, and appears to have kept the loyalty of his people throughout. He lost the throne because England wanted a King of Scots who would toe the line. So England gave Duncan's son Malcolm, who had grown up in England, an English army with which to topple Macbeth.

Much of Scotland's early history has disappeared into the mists of time. Modern historians are often at odds in their views about the facts, but it is possible to piece together from contemporary writers (chroniclers) a likely picture of Macbeth's life and times.

It was a Celtic country, where nearly everyone spoke some form of Gaelic or Celtic. The Orkney Islands, however, just several days' sailing from Norway, had become almost entirely Viking.

The mainland of Scotland was divided into small kingdoms, like provinces. Their leaders were called mormaers, and sometimes kings. The two most important kingdoms were Moray, north of the mountain line called the Mounth, and Atholl, to the south (see map). The lowlands below the Forth and Clyde rivers were debatable lands, often fought over by the southern kings and the English. There was strong rivalry between the two main kingdoms, and it's possible that Moray, the northern kingship, was for a while as important as the southern one. There was a high kingship over the whole of Scotland, and this was mostly held by the southern royal family. Certainly the southern family won out in the end.

Where does Macbeth fit into this? Macbeth was born in about 1005, the son of Findlaech, who was the mormaer or king of Moray in the north. Most historians agree that through his mother, Macbeth was a grandson of Malcolm II, head of the southern royal family and high king over Scotland as a whole. Besides Macbeth, Malcolm II had two other grandsons: Duncan and Thorfinn (see family tree). The three cousins were all roughly the same age, and they were all kings: Macbeth was king of Moray, Duncan of Cumbria, and Thorfinn (whose father was Norse) of Viking Orkney. They were all pos-

sible successors to the high kingship. However, th most likely successor was from another family branch

Why wasn't it clear who should be king? The Celti Scots didn't have an hereditary monarchy. Instead when the king died, the mormaers and the churchmer would meet at Scone, and choose their king from th adult males of the royal family. It was an 'electiv monarchy'. Usually the crown switched regularl between at least two lines of the royal family (see tree). When there were several adult males, the stronges and best leader would be chosen. It was rare for the so of a king to inherit the throne immediately.

This system often led to rivalry between would-b kings. It was survival of the fittest. For instance, Macbeth's grandfather killed the previous king and four of his sons to become king. Then he decided tha he wanted his favourite grandson, Duncan, to follow him. So he killed Duncan's main rival. However, his claim was inherited by his sister Gruoch, who married Macbeth. Gruoch had a baby son by an earlier marriage. Macbeth, besides being of the present king's line, was now also guardian of the rival line's claim. It's not clear why Malcolm didn't eliminate Macbeth along with Gruoch's brother. Perhaps Macbeth was next on the hit list when Malcolm finally died.

Although Malcolm had no right to try to interfere with the succession, Duncan (then 33 years old) did become king in 1034. He seems to have been elected in the usual way. But even if Duncan was called high king, he probably only had real control over the south. In the north, Macbeth and Thorfinn would have been kings in their own right.

Far from being the old, virtuous king of Shakespeare's play, Duncan was young, and brash. He sent an army to challenge Thorfinn in the north, and at the same time tried to invade England in the south. His northern army fled from Thorfinn, and his southern army was almost wiped out. Duncan didn't learn from his mistake, but set off again to attack Thorfinn in the north. He had been king for six years, and had weakened the country through disastrous wars.

Duncan's second war with Thorfinn was his last. In August 1040 Duncan fought his cousin at the Moray Firth. This was the battle in which some historians say Macbeth fought as Duncan's general, leading the king's forces and then turning on Duncan afterwards. Others believe that Macbeth's sympathies were with Thorfinn, and that he was allied with him all along. Duncan was defeated, and started to retreat south. He met his end soon afterwards, at Pitgaveny. The details are confusing. However, one thing is clear: Duncan was not murdered in Macbeth's fort, and it is very likely that he died in open battle. (There was no talk of murder for another three and a half centuries.) Perhaps Macbeth's men were in at the kill, perhaps not: it's just as likely Duncan was killed by Thorfinn's Orkneymen, who must have passed Pitgaveny as they chased Duncan's shattered army south to Fife.

If Thorfinn reached Fife (which is beyond Scone), why didn't he, instead of Macbeth, take the crown? Thorfinn, after all, was a grandson of Malcolm II, just like Macbeth and Duncan. But he was also an Orkneyman, without a strong power base in the heart of Scotland. Also, if he was an ally of Macbeth, which is likely, they would have struck a bargain earlier: Mac-

beth to be high king, but Thorfinn to be unchallenged in the lands that were his. So Thorfinn went back to the Orkneys, and Macbeth went to Scone.

At Scone, Macbeth would have been elected high king by the mormaers and churchmen. There was no real competition. His grandfather had wiped out all other serious rivals to Duncan, except of course Macbeth and Thorfinn. Duncan's children, Malcolm, aged nine, Donald Ban (Donalbain), aged seven, and Maelmuire, even younger, were still children and so not eligible. Malcolm and Donald Ban were sent away by their grandfather Crinan, who must have feared that Macbeth would turn out to be as ruthless as Malcolm II had been. Malcolm went to England, Donald Ban to Ireland. Crinan was the only nobleman to rebel against Macbeth in the seventeen years of his rule, and he was defeated and killed in battle in 1045, five years after Macbeth was acclaimed king.

So what kind of king was this Macbeth of history? After Duncan, he was seen as a 'liberal' king. No contemporary writer called him a usurper or a tyrant. For centuries, chroniclers called his reign wise and just. His kingdom was stable enough for him to go on pilgrimage to Rome in 1050, where he met the Pope, and scattered money 'like seed' among the poor. Macbeth and his wife were generous to the Church. Trade thrived, as it could only do in times of peace and good government. Scotland seemed set to become a rich, perhaps powerful country. And that worried England.

Except for the beginning of Macbeth's reign, England at this time was ruled by the last Anglo-Saxon king, Edward the Confessor. Duncan's son, Malcolm, grew up either at the English court, or with his Danish relative, Siward, who was Earl of Northumbria from 1041. When Malcolm had grown up, Edward the Confessor ordered Earl Siward to invade Scotland and set Malcolm up as king. It would be to England's advantage to have a Scottish king who had been brought up in England, who was grateful to England, and who acknowledged England's overlordship. That would be preferable to a strong, independent Scotland under the Celtic Macbeth. And quite apart from Edward's interest, Siward was probably quite happy to go to war: Malcolm was his relative, and Siward could only gain more power for himself from the venture.

In 1054, Siward set off, with his Northumbrians. His son Oshern, his nephew Siward, and probably Malcolm went with him. It was a large army, and Shakespeare's figure of 10,000 is quite possible. The battle was joined near Scone, probably on the plain near Dunsinane. About 3,000 Scots are believed to have been killed, and half that number of Northumbrians, among them Siward's son and his nephew.

But even though the Scots lost so many men, the battle may have been inconclusive. Siward turned home, laden with booty. Whether he had succeeded in making Malcolm king is not clear. Some chroniclers say that Macbeth fled and Malcolm took the high kingship. Others say that Siward only succeeded in making Malcolm king of Cumbria, and that Macbeth held the high kingship for another three years. At the very most, Malcolm became king of southern Scotland only, with Macbeth still effective ruler in the north. But in any case, the fight was over for Siward.

He died the following year. However, the new Earl of Northumbria, Tostig, also backed Malcolm, and in 1057 the young challenger made another bid for the throne. From his foothold in Cumbria, Malcolm may also have won some of the southern Scots to his side. They had always tended to support the southern royal family against Moray. When Malcolm's English army advanced, it seems Macbeth retreated north towards his old power base in Moray. He probably made his stand before he was ready, at Lumphanan on the Moray border. Macbeth died fighting, and his body was taken to the sacred Isle of Iona, where the Celtic kings were buried.

But Malcolm's struggle was not over yet. Macbeth's stepson, Lulach, now mormaer of Moray by Macbeth's death, was elected king and crowned at Scone. His reign was short, only seven months long. Malcolm killed him as well, and finally became high king.

If England had thought to install a mere puppet in Scotland, Malcolm proved to be a disappointment. The honeymoon between Malcolm and England was over within four years, and the next three decades were stormy ones, marked by wars and reconciliations. Finally, Malcolm was killed in battle by the English in 1093. And this is where his brother Donald Ban returns to the story. Like Macbeth and unlike Malcolm, Donald Ban had been raised in the old Celtic ways. After Malcolm's death, Donald Ban was elected king at Scone. But again, England didn't want an independent Celtic Scotland. Malcolm's eldest son Duncan (who'd been held as an hostage for Malcolm's good behaviour) set out from England with an English

army. Donald Ban was ousted, and Duncan became king for a short time, until he was assassinated. Donald Ban was restored, and ruled until another of Malcolm's sons, backed by yet another English army, took the throne. Donald Ban was blinded and, so the legend goes, set to work in the royal laundry. But like Lulach and Macbeth before him, he was still buried like a king, on Iona. Donald Ban was the last of Scotland's Celtic kings and the last to be taken to the sacred isle.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE HISTORIANS

If the real Macbeth seems so far from Shakespeare's how did the playwright arrive at his portrait of th king-slayer and tyrant?

Shakespeare was a dramatist, not an historian. H didn't pretend to draw an accurate picture of eleven century Scotland and her kings. He was more co cerned with showing aspects of human life an passions than with being faithful to history. The timeless things, and not time itself, were important him. Shakespeare found that the story of a Scottis king called Macbeth could be used to show th workings of ambition and love, good and evil, crim and punishment. He used what is called 'poeti licence', which means that an artist may be forgive for straying from the truth (i.e. facts), provided that h does so in order to show a general truth. For a sta then, Shakespeare used poetic licence in his portrait Macbeth. But could he have created the portrait th he did out of thin air, or out of the picture of Macbe as a 'liberal' king, under whom Scotland flourished? is doubtful. No, Shakespeare used as his starting poi at least one historian, who in turn had based his wo on that of another, who had used another, and so on

Before Macbeth (and after him too), 'history' w more like story-telling. Knowledge about the past w handed down through the generations by word-o mouth ('Well, my great-grandfather's father foug e Saxons at Badon Hill, next to King Arthur Skalds and minstrels would repeat old songs and mak

ıp new ones about the great events happening around hem. They would be handed on down the years, until someone finally thought to write down these legends and songs. By then they may have become larger than life, and today we would hesitate to accept them as history.

Often, where there were gaps, a medieval historian would simply let his imagination run riot, instead of admitting that he knew very little about a particular period.

Not all the old sagas and ballads are fairy-stories. Sometimes modern historians or archaeologists discover a manuscript or site that lends weight to old legends. But the more contemporary a source, the better. (For instance, if a chronicler writing in Macbeth's time says that Duncan died in battle, and an historian' writing three centuries later says that he was murdered in his bed, without producing any evidence, whom do you believe? The chronicler, until proved otherwise.)

It's a fact of life that each generation re-writes its history. In medieval times, an historian wanting to curry favour with a king whose claim to the throne was doubtful, would often write a history ('story' is a better word!) that re-shaped the facts. The earlier king would be maligned, and the new king shown to be good. Sometimes a whole royal pedigree would even be invented. (Thus the Tudors were supposed to be descended from King Arthur, and the Stewarts, including James I, were supposedly descended from an important Scottish thane, Banquo, whom you'll meet in *Macbeth*.) Once errors like this were accepted as history, it became very difficult to weed them out.

By the time Shakespeare came to write his play, M
beth had suffered enough 'bad press' to be roun
condemned out of hand by any right-thinking pers

Shakespeare's main source for *Macbeth* was an hi
rian called Holinshed, whose *Chronicles of Engla*
Scotlande and Ireland was first published in 1577. It m
have been a well-thumbed book on Shakespear
shelf, for he used it while writing many of his pla
Some incidents in *Macbeth* (such as the prophecies)
lifted straight from Holinshed's account of the S
tish king. But where it suited him. Shakespe
changed Holinshed's picture. In Holinshed, Banq
helps Macbeth to murder King Duncan. But Sha
speare was hardly going to depict an ancestor of
king as a villain, so Banquo became innocent
Duncan's murder. Holinshed barely mentioned L
Macbeth, but Shakespeare borrowed a descriptio
the pestering wife of another king-killer and made t
the basis for his Lady Macbeth. Holinshed says t
Macbeth was a good king for ten years, but a tyrant
the last seven. In Shakespeare's version, Macbet
never a good ruler, and he loses the throne after on
short time. Shakespeare used Holinshed, but
wasn't bound by the facts as presented by
historian.

Holinshed was closer to historical truth than Sha
speare, but he was still way off the mark. He ma
relied on the Scottish historian Hector Boece, who
writing for the Scottish Stewart kings in the early 1
century. Boece dreamed up Banquo, and the S
warts' mythical descent from him. He also inven
the story of Lady Macduff's horrible murder,
accused Macbeth of poisoning Duncan. Boece

nly continuing a long pattern of borrowing from and
dding to still earlier chroniclers, each with their own
easons for blackening the king's character.

Shakespeare fixed our image of Macbeth, just as he
xed our image of Richard III as a deformed,
surping tyrant. He used the historians of his day, but
is neither their portrayals nor those presented by
ter historians that leap to mind when the names of
ese monarchs are mentioned. It is Shakespeare's
ortrait that holds our imagination, simply because of
e power of his artistry. And so we turn to the play
self.

MACBETH AND THE ELIZABETHANS

It's thought that *Macbeth* was performed at Court
James I and his brother-in-law, King Christian
Denmark, in August 1606. The play may have b
written specially for the Royal Command Perfo
ance, and then performed at the Globe Theatre af
wards. Or it may have had its premiere at the Gl
first, and then perhaps been shortened for the ben
of James. (He hated long plays, which made him
asleep.) Either way, Shakespeare probably wrote
play in early 1606. It does not seem to have b
printed until 1623, when the First Folio was publis
(this was like the first Complete Works
Shakespeare).

Why did Shakespeare choose a long-ago Scott
king for his play? A main reason was that, for the f
time in history, one of Scotland's kings was now a
king of England. James had been made King of Sc
land when he was just one year old, after rebelli
Protestant nobles had forced his mother, the Ron
Catholic Mary Queen of Scots, off the throne. M
fled to England, where she was imprisoned and la
beheaded by her cousin, Elizabeth I. James grew u
Protestant and, when Elizabeth died without an h
came to the English throne. And so, in 1603, centu
of warfare between the two countries at last seeme
have come to an end.

Although it's a play about Scotland, there's m
in *Macbeth* to appeal to patriotic Elizabethans. T
murdered king's son, Malcolm, is taken under

ing of England's good and wise king, Edward the
onfessor. It is an English army that enables him to
rest the Scottish throne from the usurper, Macbeth.
nd Macbeth, shown the future by the witches, sees a
rocession of kings stretching down through the ages.
he later kings hold the coronation regalia of both
ngland and Scotland: some day (i.e. under James),
e countries shall be united.

Naturally, the English of Shakespeare's time were
so interested in the homeland of their new king. To
any, Scotland seemed a wild, half-savage place. Its
istory was perhaps even more bloody than
ngland's. And in the legend of Macbeth, Shake-
peare had found a perfect subject to capture
diences.

We must be wary of thinking that Shakespeare
ose the story of Macbeth just to please James. In
me ways, it was rather a dicey subject. For one
ing, James hated the English view that the Scots
ere a race of barbarians, and Macbeth's times were
tremely bloody. For another, James' own mother
d been deposed and beheaded. Yet here, under
akespeare's pen, was a story of two kings slain.
ow did Shakespeare get around these two
oblems?

Firstly, King Duncan is shown as being a gentle,
ndly monarch, and his court (mostly) calm and
olite. When he is killed by Macbeth and the times
come more brutal, Duncan's former courtiers long
r peace and good government. Order returns to
otland when Duncan's son Malcolm defeats the
rant Macbeth. Except for Macbeth and his hench-
en, the Scots in this play don't relish killing for its

own sake: quite the opposite. But at the same ti…ve had great appeal for the groundlings who flocked there is enough blood-letting to show that the S… the Globe. What James thought about it hasn't weren't exactly a meek race. …en recorded!

Secondly there was the tricky subject of k…So, politically, it was a topical play. It was topical in killing. Shakespeare stresses that this was …her ways too. Take the weather, for instance. *Mac-* normal in Scotland. Macbeth's murder of Dun…*h* is full of thunderstorms and hurricanes. The is shown as a crime against heaven and earth. …ring of 1606 was rent by gales, and Englishmen said of course he pays for it in the end. But should …was the worst weather for a generation. (Perhaps crowned king be killed? A lot was written about …ey were as preoccupied with the weather then as in Shakespeare's time, some of it by Jame…eir descendants are now!) The tempests in *Macbeth* himself, who believed that kings ruled by the Di…ust have struck a chord in the audience. So too, the Will of God, and that they should not even…ee witches, who tell Macbeth's fortune and then criticised, let alone deposed and killed. How…etch him head for disaster.

there was one escape clause in this theory, w…Many Elizabethans believed in witchcraft. England said that a tyrant or a usurper could be deprived …d Europe were from time to time swept by witch the throne. James agreed that this might be just…res, when scores of hapless women (and men) ble, although he said that it was still unlawful …uld be arrested, forced to confess, and then burnt or what of Macbeth? In Shakespeare's story, he is …ged. As late as 1642 there were full-time 'witch- a usurper and a tyrant, and the country is well r…ders' in England, scouring the land for suspects. him. The Scottish lords and Prince Malcolm …There were some scoffers, even in Shakespeare's seen as being justified in taking up arms against…'. James I, who had once written a book about terrible king. …chcraft, had become a bit more sceptical about the

Even so, it was a difficult subject to write ab…ject by the time *Macbeth* was written. But witchcraft and Shakespeare may have had an uneasy mon… still a crime punishable by death (it was until or two. Already one play of his — *Richard II*, al…6), and it's likely that most people in 1606 believed the killing of an English king — had been se…t.

upon during Elizabeth's reign by plotters aga…What kind of people were accused of being witches? the crown. And there had just been a frighter…stly poor, old women. Often they lived by begging attempt on James' life and on the government of…s from their neighbours. Once they would have realm. In November 1605, an undercover group…n supported by the manor community and the by Guy Fawkes had tried to blow up the House…s and priests who helped the poor. But when Parliament (with the king inside). With London…ior life died with changing times, and the old buzzing about the gunpowder plot, *Macbeth* r…eys and monasteries were broken up when

England became Protestant under Henry VIII, poor were on their own. When those without fa turned to their neighbours for help, they were shunned. They would go away, perhaps mutt curses against a mean neighbour. When the n bour's pig died, or when the neighbour began t ill, the hapless widow would be blamed. Other p to whom the same thing had happened would forward with their own tales. The 'witch' wou seized and examined for the devil's mark. If she pet (as many lonely people would have), it wou called a 'familiar' — an animal thought to be a spirit and perhaps even the devil himself. Wi money or friends, the accused would be luck escape with her life.

Sometimes a person would actually believe th or she had these powers to curse, or to cast spells so be revenged on others. For a while, the neigh might be afraid, and give a suspected witch wha she asked for. But it was a dangerous way to m living! Sooner or later someone would raise th and cry.

Not all witches were considered evil. There 'cunning' women (or again, men), who supposed to be able to counter bad magic, to se the future, to find objects lost or mislaid by clients, and to spot other, 'bad' witches, who causing harm to someone. Again though, it was carious business, for one might be considered a witch one day, and a bad one the next.

The witches in *Macbeth* fit into this picture perf Just as real-life witches were believed to, they ca spells, foretell the future, and influence the we

ey have their own familiars — a cat, a toad and an (Gray-Malkin, Padock and Harpier). They are think they are) commanded by their 'masters' — nons or evil spirits. They seem to move invisibly. a more day-to-day level, they kill swine (probably eighbour's) and wreak vengeance when refused rity. The three witches of *Macbeth* may seem fan- ic to us now, but for many in Shakespeare's audi- e they wouldn't have seemed far-fetched at all. Ve must remember that while Shakespeare's play *beth* is ageless and universal in many ways, it was ten in an age in which men saw themselves and r world very differently. The widespread belief in hes is only one example. Just as important was the on that all things in nature (including men) were ed according to proper degree. Upsetting any of that order could unleash chaos in the world. , like other creatures, must keep to their allotted tions. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* showed the Eliza- ans a frightening picture of what could happen n a man defied the laws of society and of nature.

SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

ACT 1 (Scenes 1 – 7)

A desolate heath in Scotland is split by thunder lightning. In the midst of the storm, three witches to waylay Macbeth after the battle, now raging i distance, is over.

Elsewhere, the royal court anxiously awaits the come of the battle against dangerous rebel wounded captain brings King Duncan the latest n The king's general, Macbeth, has turned the ti battle by slaying the rebel leader, Macdonwal ferocious single combat. The thane Ross enters news of another action, against foreign invaders only has Macbeth slain the rebel Macdonwald; h also hurried to meet the invading Danes, led b Norwegian king, Sweno, and has vanquished h hand-to-hand combat. Duncan's kingdom has saved twice over by the fearless warrior. But a tr still lives: the Thane of Cawdor, who had secretly helping the Norwegian king. Duncan orders his cution. Cawdor's lands and titles will fall to Ma in reward for his loyal defence of the kingdom.

The heath again, with thunder rolling roun the three witches chanting their spells. Ma comes upon them as he returns from the wars. with his companion-in-arms, Banquo. The wa are startled, and a little afraid. The witches hail beth with a triple title: Thane of Glamis, Tha Cawdor, and King hereafter. Macbeth is taken a not only do the witches call him by the title G

herited from his father, Sinel, but they also call him awdor' and 'King'. Not to be left out, Banquo asks weird sisters what's in store for him. He shall nd a royal dynasty, although he will not be a king nself. The witches vanish, leaving Macbeth and nquo bemused.

The thanes Ross and Angus seek out Macbeth, er to tell him of his new title. Macbeth and nquo, startled, recall the witches' uncanny words. Macbeth is now Thane of Cawdor, perhaps the rest lso true?

The thanes reach Forres, where Duncan lavishes ise on Macbeth. The king says that no reward ld be enough for such a worthy kinsman. There me: a promise of the throne. But Duncan, his d turning to the future, names as heir his son lcolm. Macbeth sees that this move by the king him at least one step further from the crown mised by the witches. The king decides to honour beth by visiting his castle at Inverness, and the Thane of Cawdor goes on ahead to prepare for royal party.

Lady Macbeth reads of the ge encounter with the witches in a letter from husband. Her thoughts turn immediately to pulous to kill for the crown. A messenger arrives Macbeth to warn her of the king's visit that evening. Lady Macbeth prays to the dark spir- give her enough strength and cruelty to see the sination of the king through. She is not content ait for time and chance to fulfil the witches' hecy — and she plans to persuade Macbeth to

'the nearest way'. Macbeth arrives, looking troub
and his wife warns him to conceal his thoughts.

Macbeth is still troubled during the eveni
victory feast. He withdraws from the banq
wrapped in his own thoughts as he weighs the pros
cons of assassination. He decides against it, but l
Macbeth joins him, and steels his flagging res
Macbeth accepts his wife's plan. Duncan will be
as he sleeps and his two guards will be framed fo
murder.

ACT 2 (Scenes 8 – 11)

It is after midnight. The night is silent, dark,
nous. Banquo is reluctant to sleep — last nigh
dreamed of the weird sisters. His mind is heavy
speaks with his son Fleance in the castle court
Macbeth enters, and Banquo brings up the subj
the witches' prophecies. They agree to discuss it
and Banquo goes to bed. Macbeth, alone, and
templating the act before him, is stricken with ha
nation. A dagger hangs in the air, seeming to lead
towards Duncan's room. Macbeth shakes him
and resumes his fatal path. Lady Macbeth waits
vously for Macbeth's return. Macbeth joins
aghast at the deed just committed. He carrie
grooms' bloody daggers, which should have bee
on their pillows. Lady Macbeth, impatient at
beth's bungling, returns the daggers to the side
drugged guards. Macbeth is wracked with horro
his wife remains practical, telling him to change
his nightclothes and act normally.

A loud knocking at the castle gate wake
grumbling porter. He admits the nobles Macduf

nox, who were quartered for the night outside the
stle. Macbeth joins them, pretending to be wakened
the knocking. Macduff goes to rouse the king. His
rrified cries ring through the castle. Macbeth and
nox rush to the king's chamber. Lady Macbeth
pears, all shocked innocence. Macbeth, returning
om the chamber, reveals that in his fury at the
ooms' crime he slew them both. Lady Macbeth
nts, and attention is deflected from Macbeth's
sty disposal of the chief suspects. The king's sons,
alcolm and Donalbain, quickly decide to flee Scot-
d. The danger, they feel, did not die with the
ooms.

Later, as the old king's retinue disperses from
erness, Ross chats with an old man. They
hange tales of strange happenings, and shake their
ds at these troubled times. Macduff enters. For
s moment, he seems to have swallowed the unlikely
ry that the king's sons paid the guards to kill their
er. Even so, he won't be following Macbeth, just
ted king by the thanes, to his coronation in Scone.

ACT 3 (Scenes 12 – 17)

the palace in Forres, Banquo reflects on the newly-
wned king's rise to power. Although he suspects
cbeth of foul play, he has not challenged him.
quo cannot forget that the witches have promised
he shall father a line of kings: in some ways, their
s are meshed. Macbeth interrupts Banquo's
ghts, commanding him to be at the evening
quet. Banquo is to be chief guest. Macbeth draws
rmation from Banquo about his movements for
rest of the day, discovering that he plans to ride a

fair distance with his son Fleance, returning at n
fall. Banquo sets off, and the king dismisses
Macbeth and the rest of the court. Alone, the
falls. Macbeth feels unsafe on the throne. He be
that the chief threat lies in Banquo. Macbeth d
his loyalty, and fears that he may simply be bidi
time before making a move. Moreover, Macb
anguished by the prophecy that it will be Banqu
founds a royal dynasty, and not himself. He is re
challenge fate itself, by rooting out Banquo a
son. Two desperadoes, down on their luck, ar
suaded by Macbeth that they owe their ill-fortu
Banquo. They agree to murder Banquo and Fl
that evening.

Lady Macbeth sends a servant to her hus
requesting a private audience. While she wait
lapses into sorrow. She has found no joy as queen
when Macbeth joins her, she hides her de
Instead, she chides him for brooding alone,
coaxes him to forget the past. Macbeth remin
wife that they are still in danger, and tells her to
Banquo, their chief enemy. Lady Macbeth i
turbed by the king's obsession with Banquo. Alth
he hints at the dark deed planned, Macbeth do
confide in her. This time, he is able to act witho
support.

The two assassins, together with a third se
Macbeth, ambush Banquo and Fleance as
approach the palace at dusk. In the confusion Fl
escapes, but Banquo is brutally stabbed to death

Inside the palace, the nobility of Scotland asse
in the banqueting hall for the great feast. Th
bids them be seated according to their rank, a

yal hosts are lavish in their welcome. As Macbeth
ingles with the guests, he catches sight of one of the
sassins lingering on the fringe. Slipping away to join
m, Macbeth is relieved to hear that Banquo is dead,
t enraged at Fleance's escape. However, that threat
s in the future, and Macbeth puts it aside. Macbeth
joys a fleeting moment of security as he toasts the
mpany, and remarks on the absence of the chief
est, Banquo. Ross urges him to join the table, but
king sees no spare seat. Lenox motions him to an
pty chair. Macbeth is aghast. Banquo has kept his
mise to attend the feast: his ghost sits in the king's
ir. Macbeth speaks wildly to the ghost. The thanes
alarmed at the sight of their king addressing an
pty chair. No one, except perhaps Lady Macbeth,
any inkling of Banquo's fate. Lady Macbeth des-
ately tries to deflect attention from the king: it is
a passing fit, best ignored. Whispering urgently to
cbeth, she tries to shame him into self-control. But
cbeth is hysterical with fear, and the queen's
rts are futile. When the ghost disappears, Macbeth
vers and sits. He again toasts the company, and
absent Banquo. On cue, the ghost re-appears.
cbeth is convulsed with terror and rage. He has lost
nstinct for concealment. Lady Macbeth is on a
e-edge of terror lest he expose them both as mur-
rs. The queen tries to cling to some shreds of royal
ity, but Macbeth's ravings cannot be ignored.
dismisses the bewildered guests, and the company
ks up in disorder.

eft alone, Lady Macbeth is too exhausted even to
oach her husband for putting them both in such
. But Macbeth, with the ghost gone, immediately

turns to new problems — Macduff, who has flo
the royal summons, and his own uncertainty abo
future. He decides to visit the witches again, and
more information from them. Macbeth is deter
to be utterly ruthless in cementing his power. Al
he has thrown an intelligence network over the
dom: in every noble household there is a spy i
king's pay. Macbeth resolves to stop at nothi
make his power absolute. He will wade even furt
blood. Macbeth puts his earlier terror at Ban
haunting down to inexperience in dark deeds
will be tougher in future.

Although Macbeth does not yet know it, his
dealings with the witches will involve a str
power. For the witches are subservient to the
goddess Hecat, who now scolds them for dar
speak to Macbeth without her guidance. Mac
she tells them, acts for his own ends, and not for
the witches or what they represent. From now o
will take charge of the oracle-making. The witch
commanded to meet Hecat at the pit of Acheron
gates of hell — the next morning. They will ca
spells. But it is Hecat who will determine what
beth sees: she will make him feel secure throu
power of illusion.

Meanwhile, discontent is growing in Sco
There is gossip about the deaths of Dunca
Banquo. But some are wary about declaring the
murderer. Lenox uses double-speak in conver
with another lord: on the face of it, he sounds
but there is deep sarcasm underneath. The oth
is less cautious — he calls Macbeth a tyrant ou
and reveals that Macduff has fled to the English

ere to help gather an army to restore Duncan's line.
enox, now surer of the other lord's sympathies,
clares himself for the Scottish exiles in England.

CT 4 (Scenes 18 – 20)

n the heath, the witches mix their horrible brew,
anting and dancing around the cauldron. Hecat
pears briefly to check their sinister work before
acbeth arrives. The king demands that the witches
swer whatever he may ask, despite the conse-
ences. The first witch asks if he would rather hear
higher powers of darkness, and, throwing caution
he winds, Macbeth agrees. The first apparition, an
ned head, warns Macbeth to beware Macduff. The
ond, a bloody child, tells the king to be ruthless,
l fearless, for no man born of woman shall ever
m him. The third apparition, a crowned child
rying a tree, tells Macbeth that he shall never be
quished until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane
. Macbeth accepts the visions without question:
witches' earlier prophecies were truthful enough,
hy doubt these oracles? Macbeth feels secure with
hese supernatural assurances about his own invin-
ity, but he still burns to know whether Banquo's
shall inherit the throne. The witches are reluctant,
Macbeth insists, and they call forth a line of kings,
last with a mirror to reflect Banquo's dynasty
n the ages. Macbeth is beside himself with rage.
witches vanish, and Lenox, who hasn't yet
vn in his lot with the exiles, brings Macbeth news
acduff's flight to England. Macbeth has just been
ed to beware Macduff, but he is now beyond his
. Furious, Macbeth resolves to slaughter all

Macduff's kin. And in future he will act more sw
lest other traitors escape. The iron fist of tyra
closing on the land.

In Macduff's castle, his wife, left alone wi
children, is bewildered at her husband's unexp
flight. She feels he has abandoned his family
fear — a treacherous act. Her relative, Ross, t
soothe her. After he has left, Lady Macduff la
her son's fatherless state. A messenger bursts i
begs her to flee the castle with her children. Con
she hesitates, and the murderers enter.
Macduff's small son stands up to the villains, an
is stabbed to death he cries to his mother to flee.
is no escape. Her family and entire household
butchered.

Macduff, unaware of the tragedy, meets Du
son Malcolm at the English court. Macduff urg
to challenge Macbeth, for the sake of Sc
groaning under his rule. But Malcolm has lear
his father's too ready trust in men, and he s
Macduff of being Macbeth's spy. To test M
Malcolm pretends that he has Macbeth's vic
more. At first Macduff argues that any king i
than Macbeth, but as the list of unkingly vices
Macduff is horrified. The man is not fit to
alone rule! All hope for Scotland dead, he pre
leave. A spy of Macbeth's would have pretend
stick by Malcolm whatever his vices, but M
genuine concern for Scotland is now beyond
Malcolm throws off his evil disguise, and s
battle plans with Macduff: his uncle Siward
Northumberland, is to join him with ten th
men. Macduff is digesting this sudden change,

m's character when Ross — rather unexpectedly —
ers. He brings the latest news of Scotland's woes,
hedges when Macduff asks after his family. At last
blurts out the terrible news. Macduff is beside
lself with grief, remorse, and finally, the burning
re for vengeance.

T 5 (Scenes 21 – 31)

k in troubled Scotland, at Dunsinane Castle, Lady
beth is on the brink of disintegration. She has
left alone: Macbeth is out in the field, preparing
rmy. Her lady-in-waiting is anxious. The queen
been walking — and, worse, talking — in her
). The loyal gentlewoman calls in the doctor to
nose her illness, but she refuses to tell him what
Macbeth has revealed. The doctor learns soon
gh. Lady Macbeth passes them in a blind trance,
ng her hands frantically as if to wash them. In
nguished dream, there is a spot that will not come
however hard she scrubs. She speaks brokenly,
ng from one memory to another. The chain of
ly events is mixed up — she tries to wash her
of Duncan's blood, and then scolds Macbeth for
ting to kill him, she asks where Lady Macduff is,
Macbeth to control himself at the haunted
to wash his hands and put on his
gown, and begs him to forget his fears of
o's ghost. At last she hears knocking — the
ing at the porter's gate before the dead king is
ered — and she takes Macbeth's (imagined)
to lead him to bed, to sleep and oblivion. The
having learned the cause of Lady Macbeth's

secret agony, is horrified, and not a little afraid dangerous to have such knowledge. He cannot her: she needs a doctor of the soul, not of the bo

In the country outside the castle, armie mobilizing for war. The thanes Angus and L together with other Scottish nobles, have sw sides, and are about to march with their soldiers their English allies near Birnam Wood. The country is rising against Macbeth. The king has drawn to Dunsinane Castle, which he is for against seige.

Inside the castle, Macbeth forbids any more r of the armies massing against him. He still belie his charmed life. A servant, pale with fear, bra king's anger to tell him of the ten thousand English force. The news makes Macbeth unea he turns the threat over in his mind, he become of the poetic, reflective man of old, rather th brutal, emotionless tyrant of late. Sad, he mus he has lived long enough. He would have to end winter of old age without the things that should sacrificed all that, Macbeth pulls himself to and calls his loyal armour-bearer, Seyton. He relief in action, giving orders, donning his ar He is ready to be the warrior again. He sp moment to ask the doctor about his wife. Told t sickness lies only in the soul, Macbeth asks the if he cannot cure her of her sorrows. The doctor that the patient must minister to 'himself'. M turns to more pressing problems. He strides o ant, sure that he will be safe till Birnam Wood c Dunsinane.

Meanwhile, at Birnam Wood, the English and ttish armies have met. Malcolm orders the soldiers camouflage themselves with boughs cut from the s. The commanders — Malcolm, Macduff, and ard — prepare for the advance on Dunsinane tle.

ack at Dunsinane, Macbeth believes that his posi- is impregnable: the castle is strong enough to stand a siege. Suddenly, women are heard crying he heart of the castle. While Seyton investigates, cbeth reflects on how he has lost the capacity to feel . But these cries are not of fear, they are of grief. ton returns. The queen has killed herself. Her h highlights Macbeth's growing feeling that the ld is meaningless: life is just a guttering candle, a ing shadow, an empty tale. A messenger brings a tering report — gazing toward Birnam, he ught he saw the wood begin to move. It is now less three miles away. Disbelief, anger, and then ot wage war within Macbeth. He begins to ect that he has been tricked by the double- king oracle. If he has been, he may as well die like rrior in open fight as hole himself up in the castle: elieves the outcome will be the same. Recklessly e, he summons the remnants of his army, before ng out onto the plain.

low the battlements, Malcolm's moving forest vs away its disguise. He directs old Siward and his o lead the first wave of the attack: Malcolm and luff will do whatever else is needed.

e plain resounds with the cries and clashing of . Macbeth, hemmed in by the sheer weight of ers cannot fly. But his desperation lightens as he

remembers that he need only fear a man not b
woman — he forgets that one prophecy has a
played him false. Young Siward confronts Ma
the seasoned warrior, and Macbeth kills him.
was born of woman: Macbeth can still la
weapons brandished by normal men. He ma
way to another part of the battle. Macduff
seeking Macbeth. He is bent on vengeanc
continues his pursuit. Old Siward tells Malcol
doesn't seem to be fighting, that the cas
surrendered and the battle is almost over.

Macbeth, his castle lost, his men either dese
surrendering, resolves to fight to the finish. M
comes upon Macbeth and challenges him. Ma
reluctant. He tells Macduff that he has killed
of his family already. Macduff has no ti
Macbeth's belated pangs of conscience, and
Macbeth to defend himself. Macbeth urges his
to give it up, since he can be harmed by no
woman born. Now the last terrible blow — M
was not born in natural labour, but by Ca
birth. The revelation is Macduff's strongest w
It immediately cuts through the invincible w
guard. Macbeth, his last hope stripped from h
the whole world hostile, refuses to fight, to su
to the trap that seems to have been laid for h
Macduff gives him no choice, reminding h
surrender will only lead to humiliation. M
confidence has gone, but his courage has not.
Birnam has come to Dunsinane, and there
man strangely born, Macbeth will still challe
and fight on. In his last desperate struggle, h

only Macduff but the whole uncertain universe.
dies defiantly.

Malcolm and Old Siward consider the day's
sory. They're still missing Macduff and young
ard. Ross describes Siward's heroic death to his
er, who is relieved to hear that the untried youth
well: courage is the measure of the man. Macduff
s them, bearing Macbeth's head on a pole. Mac-
f pronounces tyranny dead, and the time free.
lcolm is hailed as king. In the shadow of Macbeth's
red head, Duncan's son promises a just and
ceful reign.

MACBETH AND LADY MACBETH: VILLAINS OR VICTIMS?

On stage, no two Macbeths or Lady Macbe
ever played in quite the same way. Macbeth m
strong or weak, courageous or cowardly, b
decent or basically evil. Lady Macbeth m
tender or terrible, unselfish or selfish, loving o
ing. One thing is certain: in almost no other p
Shakespeare created two characters who m
interpreted in such different ways. It is up to th
or, in our case, the reader, to judge.

Macbeth as Victim

Do we see Macbeth as being tricked by the
into murdering Duncan, as being driven to his
the evil outside of himself? Do we see him as
whose fate is ordained, who is simply fulfill
destiny? If we do, then his guilt is greatly lessen
we must remember that Macbeth always
power to choose. The witches may encourage h
there is something in this man which makes hi
to them. His path may be foretold, but he ch
follow it.

If we see Macbeth as a man driven to kill t
because of unbearable pressure from his wife, t
guilt is also lessened. But it also diminishes our
for him, for then he must appear to be someth
hen-pecked husband. If Macbeth is deeply
with his wife, and kills out of fear of losing h
then we feel pity at his dilemma.

ut we are probably reluctant to whitewash
beth to this extent, for then we risk losing the
ral drama of the play — Macbeth's struggle
himself. We can see the witches and Lady
beth as influencing Macbeth, but not forcing
In this portrait, he is basically a good, decent
. He is not driven, but rather is tempted by the
hes and by Lady Macbeth to commit a crime
he knows is wrong, and which is completely out
haracter. Being human, Macbeth finds the
otation of the crown too hard to resist, because
as always been an ambitious man. After a fierce
ggle with his nobler instincts, he gives in to
otation. He resolves to murder the king. But
cience still wars with his desire, and his soul is
in two by the conflict. He is horrified by that
of himself that can contemplate such a foul act.
n he kills the king, the horror of it almost drives
mad. He knows he has murdered his own peace
innocence by killing Duncan: 'Wake Duncan
thy knocking — I would thou couldst.' Mac-
's grief the next morning may not be all sham.
aps he really does wish he had died before
can:

> ad I but died an hour before this chance
> had lived a blessed time, for from this instant
> ere's nothing serious in mortality —
> l is but toys: renown and grace is dead,
> e wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
> left this vault to brag of. *(Sc.10, ll.87–92)*

aps he knows that the best part of himself has

indeed been poured away with Duncan's blood. M
beth's lament is echoed much later, when he com
plates how

My way of life
is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf;
and that which should accompany old age,
as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have . . . *(Sc. 23, ll. 22*

Whatever anguish he is suffering over Duncan, M
beth is desperate not to be revealed for what h
Perhaps this is why he kills the grooms. Perha
feared that they had seen him in Duncan's cha
when they stirred in their drugged sleep.

But how, then, can this basically decent but g
ously erring man go on to kill the noble Banq
Firstly, he is haunted by the prophecy that Banq
line will become kings, but his own will not. Per
he fears that Banquo suspects, and that he will re
all. But perhaps his fears are rather different. Mac
must be wondering why Banquo has remained sil
After all, he had an ideal opportunity to tell the o
thanes about the witches' prophecies when he ca
the meeting after the crime was discovered. Of cou
Banquo may feel that a mere prophecy is no hard p
of guilt, and that it would only be his word aga
Macbeth's. He might be biding his time until M
beth makes a slip. But his silence could also be du
more sinister reasons, and so perhaps Mac
suspects that Banquo is also capable of murderin
king, especially a usurping king. Perhaps he rem
bers his own fear, that

we but teach
bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
to plague the inventor. This even-handed justice
commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
to our own lips. *(Sc. 7, ll. 8 – 12)*

What is more, Macbeth may also feel that it is not only himself who is in danger from Banquo, but also his wife. He does not disclose his plans for Banquo and Fleance to Lady Macbeth. Perhaps this is because he has gone beyond her in crime, and does not need her support. Or, if he senses how deeply his wife is troubled, it may be to spare her more guilt. Macbeth himself may not be entirely happy with the task of having Banquo killed, and so he persuades the murderers that they have a personal grudge against the thane. When Banquo's ghost haunts him at the banquet, it may be his conscience working through his imagination, to produce a fearsome picture of his awful deeds. The only escape from these pictures, from the scorpions in his mind, from the sleepless nights and brooding days, is in further action. The witches' oracles warn him to beware Macduff: but Macduff has fled, and Macbeth, afraid that in Macduff's case he has hesitated once too often, decides to strike immediately at the disobedient thane through his family. Even a basically honourable Macbeth is in danger of losing all of our sympathy now.

There are only two possible reasons for such a horrible act. The witches have made him drunk with power, by telling him to be bloody, brave and bold, by making him believe he is invulnerable, above other men, almost immortal. But they have also caused him

enormous anguish, by showing that Banquo's lin
be kings. He has sacrificed his soul for Banquo's i
It has all been in vain. Frustrated, he lashe
brutally.

As the enemy forces gather, and as his own
leave him, Macbeth starts counting the cost o
crime. He has lost his friends, his reputation
honour. He feels in the autumn of his life, and ha
or destroyed all that would make old age worth li
When Macbeth learns of his wife's death, he
little. Perhaps he has lost the capacity to care; per
he has no time to mourn, with the enemy advan
or perhaps his grief is beyond words.

> She should have died hereafter —
> there would have been a time for such a word
> *(Sc. 25, ll. 17*

There is a rich ambiguity in the brief staten
People have puzzled over it for centuries. Ho
read it depends on how we see Macbeth, and par
larly his relationship with his wife. If she seem
harsh, callous lady to us, unloving and difficult
love, then even a decent Macbeth could be ra
unmoved. 'She would have died anyway.' But if
beth loved her — and his earlier endearments see
show that he did — then the words will have a diffe
message for us. Perhaps he means that she should
died at a time when he could mourn her properly.
haps he means that she should have died after they
had time to heal the gap that had been grow
between them. Perhaps that she should have wa
so that they could die together.

In the Macbeth who loves, it is his wife's death that
nally makes him see the utter meaningless of all that
as passed and of all that is left to come:

> Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
> creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> to the last syllable of recorded time;
> and all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> the way to dusty death. *(Sc. 25, ll. 19–23)*

Having lost his wife, and having seen this terrible
uth about his own life, Macbeth still finds the
ourage to go on living. When Birnam Wood comes to
Dunsinane, Macbeth dares fate itself and leaves the
ronghold to fight in the open. Face to face with Mac-
uff, the memory of the terrible wrong done him stays
Macbeth's arm. He reels with horror when he learns
hat Macduff is the one man who can kill him. The
witches have lured him to this moment. Macbeth faces
p to the terrible truth. He curses them, but he does
t blame them. Perhaps, at heart, he knows there is
ly one person to blame: himself. Knowing the out-
me, Macbeth fights like the heroic warrior that he
ce was. This time, he has nothing to win, which
akes his courage more awesome. Macbeth the
tim — of witches, of wife, of himself — dies well.

Macbeth as Villain

villainous Macbeth is less caught up and carried
ong by events. Instead, he is a man who would have
ne exactly the same even if he had never met the

witches and even if his wife had never urged him
His lust for power is enormous: the witches and L
Macbeth simply strengthen his determination.

This Macbeth started with fear when the wi
told him the future not because he was taken aba
because he was afraid at his own disturbing reacti
the witches' prophecy, but because the witches k
his secret ambitions, nursed for a long time. Dep
ing on just how villainous this Macbeth is, he e
starts plotting immediately, or deceives himself,
tending to have a conscience that he knows,
down, is lacking. When he weighs the pros and co
assassination during the banquet at his castle,
more concerned about being found out than with
evil of the murder. He knows that Duncan has be
good king, and that the people's wrath against
murderer, if caught, will be enormous. Afraid fo
own skin rather than for his soul, he decides ag
the king-killing. But when Lady Macbeth come
with a good plan, he leaps to agree.

The deed done, he returns to Lady Macbeth, fu
triumph: 'I have done the deed.' But then he star
panic, ranting (for the moment he has become a w
villain) — he realises that it is no small thing to k
king. But by morning his fears seem to have
appeared, and he cold-bloodedly murders the 'gu
grooms. He acts the grief-mad host, playing it up
and strong. It is all sham. Later, Macbeth cunni
plots to destroy Banquo and his line, feeling no
ing for himself or for the men he has hired. Perha
almost enjoys the intrigue. If he has trouble sleep
it is solely due to worry about wiping out all threa
himself. When the ghost of Banquo appears at

ening banquet, Macbeth feels fear and defiance,
ut little or no guilt. Although he is shaken, he
uickly recovers. He cannot see, or does not care,
at Lady Macbeth is deeply disturbed. Instead, his
ind leaps forward to ways to cement his power. Any
ho might stand in his way must be crushed. The
itches feed his hunger for security and power. Mac-
ff has escaped his net, but his family is made to
y. Holed up in Dunsinane while the forces of good
arch against him, Macbeth bullies and blusters.
arelessly he asks the doctor how his sick wife is. He
ems almost unconcerned at her illness, and turns to
e more important business of war. When he learns
her suicide, there is little grief. Perhaps he did once
re for his partner in crime, as together they plotted
ainst the world. If so, that is past. Her death only
ghlights the shortness of life: 'Out, out, brief
ndle!' And not only life's guttering brevity, but also
futility:

> Life's but a walking shadow — a poor player
> that struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> and then is heard no more. It is a tale
> told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> signifying nothing. *(Sc. 25, ll. 24–28)*

en if we find Macbeth a hateful villain, he still has
best poetry in the play, poetry that echoes in the
nd. In this terrifying denial of any meaning to life
to man's efforts, even the most evil Macbeth
uses awe. To reject life as Macbeth does, but to go
fighting and striving anyway, takes remarkable
rage.

Macbeth needs it, for Birnam Wood has i
come to Dunsinane. But he still has the witches'
promise, that he is beyond the power of ordinary
Only Macduff can expose that promise for wha
And he does. Macbeth throws his shield awa
doesn't need it any more, for his real shield w
witches' promise. Thus Macbeth dies withou
seeing how evil he has been, without understa
why his life has been meaningless: because it ha
devoid of honour and human kindness.

Lady Macbeth

Is Lady Macbeth really a 'fiend-like queen'? S
bullying, and cruel? Or is she simply ambitious
husband whom she loves, and so forces herself to
her true self, which is tender and vulnerable?

During the eighteenth and nineteenth cen
audiences wanted Lady Macbeth to be fiend-li
few actresses wanted to show her softer side, b
image was cast and it took a brave Lady to tr
break the mould. The famous actress, Ellen T
attempted it late last century: the reception
mixed, but from then on actresses were more will
explore a new side of Lady Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth as Fiend

In this more traditional reading of the character
Macbeth is by far the stronger and more v
member of the partnership. She wants a crow
Macbeth is going to get it for her. Calling on the
of murder, she is almost a fourth witch. She is i
mony with dark night, birds of ill omen, and
that are damned. She almost revels in cruelty.

th she despises as being too soft, too compassionate,
t she knows she can rule him. When he looks like
cking out of the murder of the king, this Lady Mac-
th bullies him into submission. But she does not
mmit the murder herself. Perhaps she is content to
ve the most dangerous part to her husband? When
bungles, she marches off in exasperation to smear
e grooms with blood. Scornful of her husband's
akness, she taunts him with cowardice. She cannot
are any regret or remorse he may feel. Next morn-
g, when Macbeth is in danger of arousing suspicion
his over-loud grief at the king's death, and his
dden murder of the grooms, she pretends to faint.
eally!' she thinks, 'The man can't do anything
ht.'

Things start to go wrong for Lady Macbeth once
acbeth comes into his own as king. He is becoming
rder to control; he no longer asks her what he should
There is only one ruler in this kingdom, and it is
Lady Macbeth. She even has to ask him for
dience! She suspects that he is going to kill Banquo,
she encourages him: 'But in them nature's copy's
eterne.' All the same, she is worried about his state
mind: he seems dangerously obsessed, and if he
s too far he may expose them. Macbeth does not
d her ruthlessness any more: he has enough of his
n, he has broken away from her. He needs her
ck wits and her nerves of steel only once more, to
e them both at the banquet when he lapses into his
terrors and imaginings. But in private, he is his
n man again.

t is this, perhaps more than anything, that drives
ly Macbeth to the brink of insanity. In her sleep-

walking, she re-enacts the times when she coul
trol Macbeth. If she feels regret at the murd
perhaps because she cannot wash away the eve
has led to this sorry state of affairs. She has lea
what is done is never undone, and there is al
price to pay. She may feel that the price is bei
now, in the form of this new, uncontrollable M
or that it will be paid soon, for one day thei
must be discovered ('Surely,' she thinks
dreams, 'everyone must be able to see this bl
my hands!'). Perhaps she fears they will have to
the afterlife, which she senses is looming: '
murky'. If there is remorse for the cruelty she s
Duncan, it is completely subconscious, an
hinted at in her tormented sleep. However, e
her waking life the old strength is broken and s
by her own hand.

Lady Macbeth as Caring Wife

This Lady Macbeth puts her husband before h
tries to kill her own better nature for his sake, an
that the cost has been too great. Love, rathe
ambition, is at the centre of her world. M
promises her greatness, but it is his greatness t
is more concerned about. She knows that deep
he wants to be king, and she sets about fulfillin
need in him by whatever means are necessary.
so, she must find resources of cruelty that are
to her nature, and so she calls on the dark spir
knows that unless she can stop up the pity and
ness that is within her, Macbeth will never b
She must act a part for herself, and for Macbe
tries taunting him, coaxing him, and flatterin

sing his love for her (and hers for him) as a weapon.
s a desperate resort, she says that she would rather
ill her own babe than break her word as Macbeth
oes when he announces he cannot commit the
urder after all. Macbeth, sensing what this must cost
woman who is naturally tender, is shamed. Lady
acbeth nerves herself for the ordeal with alcohol.
e has her doubts about Macbeth's resolve, but
ows she would be unable to commit the murder her-
lf. 'Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had
ne it,' is just bravado. Terrified, she awaits the out-
me. When Macbeth returns from the deed, she
ust control any horror that she feels, because he is so
se to collapse and needs her support, her realism,
r calmness. She coaxes and rebukes him, trying to
ld him together. Perhaps she finds smearing the
ards with Duncan's blood hateful, but it has to be
ne, for Macbeth's safety as well as her own. She
ust keep being strong, or all will be lost.
When Duncan's murder is discovered, she is a poor
ress compared with Macbeth, who gives full vent to
retended grief. When Macbeth reveals his cold-
oded murder of the guards, and goes on to describe
scene of the crime in grim detail, she faints. Mac-
h, the husband she thought 'too full of the milk of
man kindness,' has committed two more murders
hout hesitation. Already he is changed by the deed.
at, perhaps coupled with last night's horrors
ught alive by Macbeth's description, is enough to
ke her feel sick and faint. It has proved too much for
Macbeth's readiness to kill is confirmed in his plans
inst Banquo and Fleance. If Lady Macbeth

suspects, she tries to persuade him against it: 'Bu
them nature's copy's not eterne.' They won't l
forever, why not let them be? But Macbeth n
thinks he knows best, and does not confide his pl
Perhaps he sees how troubled she is, and wishe
spare her further knowledge. He is now str
enough to act alone. But still she seeks to com
him, and perhaps to save him from himself as w
For herself she seeks no comfort, even though
soul-sickness is growing and, despairing, she alr
longs for death:

> 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.
>
> *(Sc. 13, ll.4*

Being queen has not made her happy. The old l
between her and Macbeth is now complicated by n
pressures, and perhaps she feels that they
growing apart. She saves him at the banquet,
calling up every ounce of strength left to her, and
effort leaves her drained. She can now see the ruin
their golden hopes. And when Macbeth speaks of
'dark and deep desires,' his affinity with evil, and
determination to suppress all opposition, she kn
that he is lost to her, and that their love can never
the same again. They are each quite alone.
knows she cannot go with him further down t
bloody path.

Deeply anguished, Lady Macbeth acts out her g
and guilt in her sleep, going over and over the d
that killed their innocence and destroyed their m

riage. The horror of the murder appals her: everything that she suppressed when she was busy pulling Macbeth together now comes to the surface in her tormented dreams. The guilt can never be washed away, although she longs for innocence again. She cannot confess her crimes and seek forgiveness, and so die 'holily', because to do so would be to betray her husband.

But neither can she live with herself, and her guilt, any longer. She takes the only available course, and takes her own life. There were no last words with Macbeth, no final closing of the gap that has grown between them. She died without that comfort, and unshriven of her sins. 'Hell is murky'. She would not confess her guilt, and she would not burden Macbeth with her despair. The caring, tormented Lady Macbeth can be a courageous and tragic figure, even as the honourable Macbeth can be.

THEMES

Good and Evil

The theme of good versus evil is at the heart of *Mac*
The witches set the tone at the very beginning: fa
foul and foul is fair. Good and evil exist side by s
and it can be difficult to tell which is which. The
face may hide the foul heart. As Duncan says of
first Thane of Cawdor: 'There's no art to find
mind's construction in the face.' This is part of
theme of equivocation, of ambiguity, of false w
and false appearances, which runs through Macb
Are the witches' intentions towards Macbeth at
outset foul or fair? Is Duncan, the meek monarch
applauds savagery in battle, as gentle as he seems
Banquo noble or self – serving? Are thanes like Le
and Ross honourable or opportunistic? Does Malc
truly represent good, when, as he does to Macduff
can imitate evil so well? Words spoken by so man
the characters have double meanings and so can
read in several ways. And then of course there is
huge deception practised on Macbeth. The witc
show him visions and promise: 'All this is so.' It is,
not in the way that Macbeth expects. They have
'like truth': they have equivocated. The porter
course, adds a note of black comedy to the theme of
evils of double meaning, tying it to the famous equi
cation practised by one of the gunpowder plot culpr
His satirical in-jokes would have made the El
bethans laugh in recognition, and perhaps shudde

well, for the Elizabethans hated the 'fiend that lies like truth.' Such equivocation destroyed certainty in their world, and made it seem a dangerous, shifting place.

Besides equivocation that can make things bad seem good, evil in *Macbeth* can also exist side by side with good. We watch the struggle between good and evil within Macbeth. Then, the battle lost and won, we see the evil growing and corrupting him still further. The disease spreads beyond him, affecting the whole of Scotland. Linked with evil is disorder: the natural world shudders and quakes, and the order of things seems to be turned upside down. But Macbeth is not the only source of evil. There is something dark in the world outside of him. The witches are there before we meet Macbeth. Black night and ravens are the other side of the sun and of the martlets. They exist without Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. But the misguided couple seize on the darkness that is around them, and use it to strengthen the evil impulses within themselves, edging out the good as darkness squeezes out light during an eclipse. The shadows over Scotland lift only when the forces of justice and order return to defeat Macbeth, and to restore harmony to the world. We must assume that the world is still, in some ways, both fair and foul. But evil has been put in its place, and balance restored. It is now up to Scotland's kings and subjects to see fair as fair, and foul as foul.

Ambition

The theme of ambition is linked to that of good and evil. Like many other passions and impulses, ambition can be both foul and fair. Through Mac-

beth, we see that it can be fair when put to good
and when it is kept in check by one's sense of righ
wrong. But ambition is foul when it become
powerful that it destroys a person's mor
Unleashed, such ambition wreaks havoc on the
vidual, and on his society.

Power

Macbeth is driven by the ambition for personal sta
and for power. The play is deeply concerned with
tical power: with the power of a king over his subj
and with the good and bad uses of power. The ideal
king who governs wisely, justly, and stron
Duncan, although he has many virtues and is a g
king, is not the best example of a monarch. He is n
strong as he should be: the kingdom's safety depe
too much on one man — Macbeth. He is also
trusting, and because of this he makes two big
takes: he misjudged the treacherous Thane
Cawdor, and then he does the same with Macbeth
king must be able to tell who is loyal to him, and wh
not. Duncan's son Malcolm learnt from his fath
mistakes. He tests Macduff thoroughly bef
accepting him as his liege man. Malcolm represe
power which is founded on shrewd political sen
Malcolm is a new kind of ruler: neither a venera
father-figure like Duncan, nor a warrior king l
Macbeth. Malcolm is a statesman. His strength a
leader lies in his coolness, diplomacy and cunnin
rather than in the reverence he can command or in
brute force he can display. Malcolm, in describi
that ideal of kingship, Edward the Confessor, is d
cribing just that — an ideal. Malcolm is the reality

how a king rules: not like a saint, but like an intelli-
gent, shrewd, and above all, political man. Of course,
the lesson of how not to rule is given by Macbeth. He
tyrannizes his subjects in order to achieve greater con-
trol. But this tyranny drives the thanes from him.
Macbeth is a fighter, not a politician. He believes in
brute force, rather than diplomacy and shrewdness.

Besides kingly power, *Macbeth* deals with power in
personal relationships, as seen in Macbeth's mar-
riage. Lady Macbeth has power over Macbeth,
whether we see her as a fiend or as a caring wife. If a
fiend, then the power is that of a stronger partner
over a weaker one; if a caring wife, then it is the power
of one who loves and is loved. 'If you loved me, then
you would do as I ask' can be as effective a means of
persuasion as bullying. The sexual element may be a
greater or lesser aspect of the caring wife – husband
power balance: the more infatuated Macbeth is with
Lady Macbeth, the stronger the sexual power she
wields. The play shows us the balance between Mac-
beth and Lady Macbeth changing after Duncan's
murder. As Macbeth becomes stronger, Lady Mac-
beth starts to lose her hold over him. From a fiendish
wife, he will take less and less bullying; from a loving,
caring wife, he needs less and less reassurance and
support.

Relationships

These fall into distinct groups. Firstly, there is the
relationship between husband and wife, seen in the
marriage of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, and of Mac-
duff and Lady Macduff. In both cases, the couples
seem to love each other. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth

put their personal relationship and their own ne
above the well-being of the country. Macd
however, puts his loyalty to Scotland above his l
and loyalty to his wife and children. He leaves the
danger while he flees and helps raise the stand
against Macbeth. Macduff is not without blame,
he was in a difficult dilemma, caught between that
of loyalties which can happen when the nation is
danger: to whom is one's chief loyalty due? To
greater family, the nation? Or to the immediate o
the close kin?

The other close family relationship explo
(though in less detail) is that between father and s
Malcolm's relationship with his father, King Dunc
is seen entirely in the context of the kingship. If Don
bain and Malcolm have tears to shed at his murder,
they surely have, then those are for later, in priva
Their immediate aim is to escape the unknown m
derer, for by saving themselves, they also save th
father's dynasty. At the end, Malcolm's revenge
Macbeth seems less personal than Macduff's. M
colm is revenging the killing of a king rather than th
of a father, and his aim is to restore his father's right
line to the throne. Macduff, by contrast, who has h
his family wiped out by Macbeth, is bent on revengi
them. He now has no sons to follow him: brave you
Macduff, who defended his father's honour before
abandoned mother, and then in the face of fearso
murderers, is dead. Macduff has paid dearly for h
loyalty to Scotland, with the death of his family and
noble line. Banquo, under attack from Macbeth
assassins, urges his son Fleance to flee. The royal dy
asty which Banquo, no less than Macbeth, ha

dreamed of, will endure through the son. Perhaps another father-son relationship worth considering is that between Macbeth and his hoped-for offspring. He cannot bear the thought that Banquo's sons will one day inherit the crown that he has risked everything for, and so he tries to destroy Banquo's line. Then, when the witches show him Banquo's royal descendants, Macbeth is almost beside himself with anger and frustration. His first action is to lash out at the family of another — Macduff's. Denied his own dynasty, he cannot bear to see others flourishing.

Besides family bonds, there are the sacred ties between king and subject. Macbeth breaks these (as he also breaks the ties between guest and host, and kinsmen) when he kills Duncan. Once he is king himself, he has for a short time the respect and loyalty due to a monarch. But as the nature of his kingship becomes clear, the ties that bind a subject to his king are broken, and the thanes are justified in deserting him. Macbeth has only borrowed (or stolen) the robes of kingship: they do not fit him, unlike his warrior's garb of old. Macbeth committed regicide (the killing of a king); Macduff and Malcolm commit tyrannicide (the killing of a tyrant).

The Meaning and Pattern of Life

This is a very general theme, but an important one. In the beginning, Macbeth finds that life is given meaning by success, by being admired, honoured, and loved. To be king, to achieve the most glittering prize of all, will crown his earlier success as a leader of men. He will be even more admired and honoured than before. But, as Macbeth realises more and more,

the crowning of his ambition will be pointless if
rewards stop with himself: he must pass them on
dynasty, and root out the line of any who challe
him. But it is a barren crown. Macbeth has no s
and will have no opportunity in any case to pass on
kingship. So much of the meaning of life lies not in
present, but in the future: in the nurturing of
generations to come. Macbeth knows this, and i
part of his despair. For him, life ends with the autu
or winter of old age, with no hope of spring to follo
borne by his sons and then, in turn, by his sons' so
For Banquo and Duncan this is not so: their fam
trees will flourish, even though the source is cut
early. Their lives have not been barren like Ma
beth's. For Macbeth, with no vision of the future, l
is meaningless. For him, indeed, it is like being a poo
impotent player, whose role is ended when the play
over. *Macbeth* is not a play that denies that life h
meaning, for it does affirm hope in the future. But it
about life's lack of meaning for a man who has lost t
friends and honour he held dear, and who has
vision of the future. It is these things that make li
meaningful.

MACBETH AS TRAGEDY

Macbeth was the fourth and last great tragic play by Shakespeare. What does it mean when we talk of a play as being a 'tragedy'? Certainly, it doesn't mean that the play is a disaster! The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word tragedy, when it is used to describe a play, as 'that branch of dramatic art which treats of sorrowful or terrible events, in a serious and dignified style'.

The Elizabethan Age was the second era of great tragic drama. The first was that of Ancient Greece. The Greeks, like the Elizabethans, loved the theatre, and would flock to see the latest tragedy or comedy. Several ancient Greek tragedies are still performed today, the most famous being Sophocles' *Oedipus*, written in the fifth century B.C., during the Greek Golden Age. During the Renaissance in the late-15th and 16th centuries, classical culture was 're-discovered'. In about 330 B.C. the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, wrote the *Poetics*, in which he outlined what he believed to be the hallmarks of a good tragic drama. He often used Oedipus to illustrate his points. At the end of the 15th century, *Poetics* was printed on the newly-invented printing presses. Some ingredients of the tragic drama as defined by Aristotle may be seen in Shakespeare's tragedies.

Aristotle described tragedy as 'an imitation of an action of high importance . . . in language enhanced by distinct and varying beauties . . . (and) by means of pity and fear effecting the purgation of these

emotions'. *Macbeth* certainly shows an action of 'hi
importance': it is a play about kings and princ
whose fortunes shape the fate of a whole nati
Aristotle would have no cause to grumble about
language of the play, either, for it is both distinct
and beautiful.

But what did Aristotle mean by 'pity and fear' be
purged? Firstly, the drama should make us feel pity
the hero and fear at the disaster that overtakes him.
the play reaches its climax, these emotions well up
us, and we feel relief when the tragedy has finally r
its course. But to feel such pity and fear, we must fee
good deal of sympathy for the hero, and some identi
cation with him. Therefore, the hero must be skilfu
drawn by the dramatist.

Aristotle argued that the hero should be a man
great reputation, of great standing, so that the aud
ence looks up to him. At heart he should be a good m
that we can admire. But he should not be perfe
because then we would feel his misfortune, when
happens, to be entirely undeserved. Instead, he eith
commits a fatal error, or has a fatal flaw in
make-up, which leads to his downfall. Sometim
the gods lend a hand as well, as in Greek tragedy.
Macbeth, the witches provide the supernatur
element. But even though there may be forces great
than the hero that seem to be shaping his path, the
must be something in himself that causes disaste
And yet the hero must not be an entirely bad ma
because then we would simply cheer at his downfa
and feel no pity.

How does Macbeth fit this picture of the hero?
great deal depends on one's personal reaction to Ma

beth. Macbeth qualifies as a tragic hero, in Aristotle's terms, if we see him as a man who is admired as a warrior and as a 'worthy gentleman'; as a man who sins against his own better instincts; whose downfall is due to a 'fatal flaw' rather than to a wholly evil personality; and who finally dies with nobility and courage, having recognised himself for what he is. However, Macbeth does come dangerously close to being an out-and-out villain, which would disqualify him. It must be admitted that in spite of Shakespeare's dramatic artistry, sympathy for this hero cannot be guaranteed, as it can be for Othello or King Lear. A great deal depends on the person seeing or reading the play, and, if it is being acted, on the interpretation offered by the actor playing Macbeth (and on his ability as well).

Aristotle also pointed out that the device of 'recognition' was important in tragedy. This means that the hero may be unconscious of a hidden evil in his actions (as Oedipus is when he kills his father and marries his mother). Or, the hero may not recognise the significance of someone around him, who carries the key to his doom (Oedipus again, and Macbeth). Or, perhaps, he entirely misunderstands his own circumstances (Oedipus and Macbeth). The audience, watching in suspense, is aware of these secrets, which one day will hurl the great man down from his high position. All this contributes to irony, a central element in tragedy: we, the audience, can hear a double meaning in the words spoken by the hero, or by the people in his life, but the hero cannot, until it is too late. The climax of the play comes when the hero sees the truth that he was blind to, or that he had shunned. Often this involves seeing himself for what he is, or, in

Macbeth's case, for what he has become. It literally, the moment of truth, and the time of reck ing. There must be no escape. The hero must pa usually with his life, and accept that it must be Macbeth's moment of recognition comes when Ma duff reveals himself to be the man not born of woma who alone can kill Macbeth. Macbeth realises tha huge trick has been played upon him, and that he d not bear a charmed life. He knows then that he doomed. Besides this recognition when Macbe realises that he has been tricked, is there a mom when he recognises himself for what he is? Th depends on one's personal reading of the play. If does, then it comes earlier ('My life is fallen into t sere . . .'), just before he learns of Lady Macbet suicide, and sees how he has destroyed all that he h dear in pursuit of a hollow crown.

As you can see, Aristotle had many thoughts th are still useful today in considering what make tragedy. But there are still some questions th remain. Why is tragedy thought to be the highest fo of drama? Why do people, from the ancient Greeks the playgoers today, like tragedy? Is it because we l to be made miserable? Or because we like to see oth afflicted by misery, and the proud humbled? This unlikely. No, the great tragedies do much more th just make us feel sad. We watch the hero meeting doom, and being defeated. But is it really a defe The hero confronts his fate, accepts the reasons th brought him to it, and remains unbroken. In so doi he rises above his defeat. It is a triumph of courage, Oedipus the-king-that-was, to accept his blinding a his banishment, and to leave us, knowing who a

what he is, but still unbroken. It is a triumph of courage for Macbeth, who has lost his friends, his wife, his crown, and finally his belief in his invincibility, to face his doom crying: 'Lay on, Macduff, and damned be him that first cries "Hold, enough!" '. The best tragedies are not pessimistic, but optimistic, because they affirm the greatness of man in his darkest hour. We might still feel sad, but we are comforted as well.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

Macbeth was not published until 1623, seventeen years after it was first written and seven years after Shakespeare's death. Before 1623, it would probably have been performed from a hand-written copy of the manuscript, called a promptbook. By the time it came to be published, the playhouse copy of *Macbeth* was probably not as Shakespeare had left it. Many scholars believe that the play has been added to in some places (for instance Hecat's speeches), and some think it may have been cut in other places. If so, this would have been done well before the promptbook arrived at the printing house. Macbeth was printed with other plays by Shakespeare in a collection called the First Folio. Because the First Folio contains the earliest known copy of Macbeth, we have used it in producing our own edition.

When the promptbook, already slightly different from Shakespeare's original version, arrived at the publishing house, it would have been subjected to still more changes. In 1623, as today, printers sometimes made errors, mixing up words, and changing punctuation. Moreover, printers would typeset a manuscript using the conventions of the printing house. For instance, a manuscript may not have been written using capital letters at the beginning of each line, even if it were a verse line. Punctuation, the use of capital letters, and spelling were very erratic in the 16th century: there were no hard and fast rules as there are today. So the printing house would sometimes put in its own punctuation. In particular, the printing house would always use capitals at the beginning of each line in a play (and remember, Shakespeare's plays were always in verse, unless a passage was obviously meant to be prose). We don't know that Shakespeare began all his verse lines with a capital letter, and given the writing styles of the day, it seems unlikely. It could just as well have been a printing house convention, which came to be adopted as a 'rule' by poets themselves.

This is one reason why we have checked closely all punctuation and spelling in the First Folio, changing them where we do not feel they reflect Shakespeare's real intention. (All serious editions do this to a greater or lesser extent, which is why no two are ever exactly the same.) In addition we have dispensed with the tradition of beginning each line with a capital letter. Instead, we have used capitals only at the beginning of sentences (and, of course, for proper names). This is perhaps closer to Shakespeare's own manuscript, and it does not affect the poetry of the play — which lies essentially in the sound and not in the capital letters! Moreover, we also feel that dispensing with the capitals makes it easier to read the play, because it avoids confusion about where a sentence ends, and where another begins.

Also to reduce confusion in the reader who doesn't know the play well, we have given fuller stage directions than is usual. For instance, when a speech shifts direction in mid-delivery we have usually indicated who is being addressed at that particular moment.

The Hecat speeches are marked off by brackets, to remind the reader that they are probably not written

by Shakespeare.

In case readers confuse 'Siward' with eithe 'Seyton' or 'Young Siward', we call 'Siward' by hi full title, which is 'Earl of Northumberland'.

The three witches are called 'the weird sisters' in th stage directions and speech prefixes. This is becaus the characters in the play always call the witche 'weird sisters'. Shakespeare was partly thinking o English 'witches' of his own day when he drew thes characters. But in Scottish tradition, 'weird' wome were thought to be Fates, who could actually contro destiny. It is part of the play's richness that we ca never be absolutely certain whether Shakespeare' three women have the more modest power of onl being able to foretell the future (as some Englis witches were believed to have), or whether they are i control of men's destiny (as Scottish weirds, or Fates).

We have kept the traditional act-scene division a given in the Folio, to make it easier for the reader t refer to other editions. But you will notice that thes are in brackets, and that we also give scene number from one to thirty-one (these are at the top of each page). We have stressed scenes rather than acts as the main divisions in the play, because it is probable tha the act divisions were added later, perhaps by the printing house. All recent work in the area has reinforced the view that Shakespeare's dramatic structure is essentially scenic. In other words, he conceived and wrote his play with scenes, rather than acts, in mind as the main dividing points.

Our edition of *Macbeth* is founded on a tape of the First Folio text owned by Oxford University Press, and was typeset on a Monotype Lasercomp at Oxford

University Computing Service. We gratefully acknowledge the kind permission of Oxford University Press to use this tape as the basis of our edition.

The Tragedy of Macbeth

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

Duncan, *King of Scotland*
Malcolm, *his elder son*
Donalbain, *his younger son*
Macbeth, *Thane of Glamis; later, also Thane of Cawdor; later still, King of Scotland*
Lady Macbeth, *his wife*
Banquo, *Thane of Lochaber*
Fleance, *his son*
Macduff, *Thane of Fife*
Lady Macduff, *his wife*
Young Macduff, *their son, a boy*
Thane of Lenox
Thane of Ross
Thane of Menteith
Thane of Angus
Thane of Caithness
Siward, *Earl of Northumberland, commander of the English forces against Macbeth*
Young Siward, *his son*
Seyton, *attendant officer to Macbeth*
three Weird Sisters

Except for Scene 20 (IV.iii), which is set in England, the action of the entire play occurs in Scotland

The Tragedy of Macbeth

(I.i) *Thunder and lightning. Enter three Weird Sisters*

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
When shall we three meet again?
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?
SECOND WEIRD SISTER
When the hurly-burly's done:
when the battle's lost, and won.
THIRD WEIRD SISTER
That will be ere the set of sun.
FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Where the place?
SECOND WEIRD SISTER Upon the heath.
THIRD WEIRD SISTER
There to meet with Macbeth.
FIRST WEIRD SISTER
I come, Gray-Malkin.
SECOND WEIRD SISTER Padock calls.
THIRD WEIRD SISTER Anon!
ALL THREE
Fair is foul, and foul is fair,
hover through the fog and filthy air. *Exeunt*

(I.ii) *Alarum offstage. Enter King Duncan, the Princes Malcolm and Donalbain, and the Thane of Lenox, with attendants, meeting a bleeding Sergeant*

KING DUNCAN
What bloody man is that? He can report,
as seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
the newest state.
PRINCE MALCOLM This is the sergeant
who, like a good and hardy soldier, fought
against my captivity. Hail, brave friend.
Say to the King the knowledge of the broil
as thou didst leave it.
SERGEANT Doubtful it stood,
as two spent swimmers that do cling together
and choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald—
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 damned quarrel smiling,
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 valour's minion—carved out his passage,
till he faced the slave:
which never shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
till he unseamed him from the nave to the chops,
and fixed his head upon our battlements.
KING DUNCAN
Oh, valiant cousin, worthy gentleman!
SERGEANT
As whence the sun begins 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 valour armed,
compelled these skipping kerns to trust their heels,
but the Norwegian lord, surveying vantage,
with furbished arms and new supplies of men
began a fresh assault.
KING DUNCAN Dismayed not this
our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?
SERGEANT Yes—
as sparrows, eagles; or the hare, the lion.
If I say sooth, I must report they were
as cannons over-charged with double cracks,
so they
doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe.
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
or memorize another Golgotha,
I cannot tell—
but I am faint, my gashes cry for help.
KING DUNCAN
So well thy words become thee as thy wounds—
they smack of honour both. Go, get him surgeons.
Exit Sergeant, attended

Enter the Thanes of Ross and Angus

Who comes here?
PRINCE MALCOLM The worthy Thane of Ross.
THANE OF LENOX
What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look
that seems to speak things strange.
THANE OF ROSS God save the King.
KING DUNCAN
Whence camest thou, worthy thane?
THANE OF ROSS From Fife, great King,
where the Norwegian banners flout the sky,
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,
confronted him with self-comparisons,
point against point, rebellious arm against arm,
curbing his lavish spirit—and to conclude,
the victory fell on us.

KING DUNCAN Great happiness!

THANE OF ROSS That now Sweno,
the Norways' King, craves composition—
nor would we deign him burial of his men,
till he disbursed at Saint Colme's Inch
ten thousand dollars to our general use.

KING DUNCAN
No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive
our bosom interest. Go pronounce his present death,
and with his former title greet Macbeth.

THANE OF ROSS I'll see it done.

KING DUNCAN
What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won. *Exeunt*

(I.iii) *Thunder. Enter the three Weird Sisters* 3

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Where hast thou been, sister?

SECOND WEIRD SISTER
Killing swine.

THIRD WEIRD SISTER
Sister, where thou?

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
and munched, and munched, and munched:
"Give me!" quoth I; —"Aroint thee, witch!"
the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master of the *Tiger*;
but in a sieve I'll thither sail,
and like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

SECOND WEIRD SISTER
I'll give thee a wind.

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Thou art kind.

THIRD WEIRD SISTER
And I another.

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
I myself have all the other.
And the very ports they blow
all the quarters that they know
in the shipman's card.
I'll drain him dry as hay.
Sleep shall neither night nor day
hang upon his penthouse lid.
He shall live a man forbid;
weary seven-nights, nine times nine,
shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.
Though his bark cannot be lost,
yet it shall be tempest-tossed.
Look what I have.

SECOND WEIRD SISTER
Show me, show me!

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Here I have a pilot's thumb,
wrecked, as homeward he did come.

Drum offstage

THIRD WEIRD SISTER
A drum, a drum:
Macbeth doth come.

ALL THREE
The weird sisters, hand in hand,
posters of the sea and land,
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.
BANQUO
How far is it called to Forres?
He sees the Weird Sisters
What are these,
so withered and so wild in their attire,
that look not like the inhabitants of the earth,
and yet are on it? —Live you, or are you aught
that man may question? You seem to understand me,
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.
MACBETH Speak if you can: what are you?
FIRST WEIRD SISTER
All hail, Macbeth: hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!
SECOND WEIRD SISTER
All hail, Macbeth: hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!
THIRD WEIRD SISTER
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 Weird Sisters*) In the name of truth,
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.
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 favours nor your hate.
FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Hail!
SECOND WEIRD SISTER
Hail!
THIRD WEIRD SISTER
Hail!
FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.
SECOND WEIRD SISTER
Not so happy, yet much happier.
THIRD WEIRD SISTER
Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.
So all hail Macbeth, and Banquo!
FIRST WEIRD SISTER
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
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.
The Weird Sisters vanish

BANQUO
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?
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 self-same tune and words—who's here?

Enter the Thanes of Ross and Angus

THANE OF ROSS

The King hath happily received, Macbeth,
the news of thy success, and when he reads
thy personal venture in the rebels' sight,
his wonders and his praises do contend
which should be thine or his. Silenced with that,
in viewing over the rest of the self-same day,
he finds thee in the stout Norwegian ranks,
nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
strange images of death. As thick as hail
came post with post, and every one did bear
thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
and poured them down before him.

THANE OF ANGUS

We are sent
to give thee from our royal master thanks;
only to herald thee into his sight,
not pay thee.

THANE OF ROSS

And for an earnest of a greater honour,
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
in borrowed robes?

THANE OF ANGUS

Who was the thane, lives yet,
but under heavy judgement bears that life,
which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
with those of Norway, or did line the rebel
with hidden help and vantage, or that with both
he laboured in his country's wrack, I know not:
but treasons capital, confessed, and proved,
have overthrown him.

MACBETH (*aside*)

Glamis—and Thane of Cawdor:
the greatest is behind.
(*to Ross and Angus*) Thanks for your pains.
(*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 (*to Macbeth*)

That, trusted home,
might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:
and oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
the instruments of darkness tell us truths—
win us with honest trifles—to betray us
in deepest consequence.
(*to Ross and Angus*) Cousins, a word, I pray you.

MACBETH (*aside*)

Two truths are told as happy prologues
to the swelling act of the imperial theme.
(*to Ross and Angus*) I thank you gentlemen.
(*aside*)
This supernatural soliciting
cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill,
why hath it given me earnest of success,
commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor!
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
and make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
against the use of nature? Present fears

are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
shakes so my single state of man
that function is smothered in surmise,
and nothing is, but what is not.

BANQUO (*to Ross and Angus*)
Look how our partner's rapt.

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

BANQUO (*to Ross and Angus*)
New honours come upon him
like our strange garments—cleave not to their mould,
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
Give me your favour—my dull brain was wrought
with things forgotten.
(*to Ross and Angus*) Kind gentlemen, your pains
are registered where every day I turn
the leaf to read them. Let us toward the King.
(*to Banquo*)
Think upon what hath chanced, and at more time,
the interim having weighed it, let us speak
our free hearts each to other.

BANQUO (*to Macbeth*) Very gladly.

MACBETH (*to Banquo*)
Till then, enough. (*To all*) Come, friends. *Exeunt*

(I.iv) *Flourish. Enter King Duncan, the Thane of Lenox, the Princes Malcolm and Donalbain, and attendants*

KING DUNCAN
Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not

those in commission yet returned?

PRINCE MALCOLM My liege,
they are not yet come back. But I have spoke
with one that saw him die, who did report
that very frankly he confessed his treasons,
implored your Highness's 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,
to throw away the dearest thing he owned
as 'twere a careless trifle.

KING 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, and the Thanes of Ross and Angus

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
that the proportion both of thanks and payment
might have been mine: only I have left to say,
more is thy due, than more than all can pay.

MACBETH
The service and the loyalty I owe,
in doing it, pays itself. Your Highness's part
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 honour.

KING DUNCAN Welcome hither.
I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
to make thee full of growing. Noble Banquo,
that hast no less deserved, nor must be known

no less to have done so: let me enfold thee,
and hold thee to my heart.

BANQUO
There if I grow,
the harvest is your own.

KING DUNCAN
My plenteous joys,
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
the Prince of Cumberland—which honour must
not unaccompanied invest him only,
but signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
on all deservers. From hence to Inverness,
and bind us further to you.

MACBETH
The rest is labour, 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.

KING DUNCAN
My worthy Cawdor.

MACBETH *(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,
which the eye fears when it is done to see. *Exit*

KING 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.
It is a peerless kinsman. *Flourish. Exeunt*

(I.v) *Enter Macbeth's wife alone with a letter*

LADY MACBETH *(reading)* "They met me in the day of success,
and I have learned by the perfectest report they have more in
them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to
question them further, they made themselves air, into which
they vanished. 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 mightst not lose the dues of
rejoicing by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee.
Lay it to thy heart and farewell."
Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
what thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature—
it is too full of the milk of human kindness
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,
and yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou wouldst 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,
that I may pour my spirits in thine ear
and chastise with the valour of my tongue
all that impedes thee from the golden round,
which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
to have thee crowned withal.

Enter a Messenger

What is your tidings?

MESSENGER
The King comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH
Thou art mad to say it.

Is not thy master with him? —who, were it so,
would have informed for preparation?

MESSENGER

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
than would make up his message.

LADY MACBETH

Give him tending—
he brings great news. *Exit Messenger*
The raven himself is hoarse
that croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
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,
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 murdering ministers,
wherever, in your sightless substances,
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!"

Enter Macbeth

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,
Duncan comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

And when goes hence?

MACBETH

Tomorrow, as he purposes.

LADY MACBETH

Oh, never
shall sun that morrow see.
Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men
may read strange matters. To beguile the time,
look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
your hand, your tongue—look like the innocent flower,
but be the serpent under it. He that's coming
must be provided for; and you shall put
this night's great business into my dispatch,
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 favour ever is to fear.
Leave all the rest to me. *Exeunt*

I.vi) *Enter King Duncan, the Princes Malcolm and Donalbain, Banquo, Macduff, the Thanes of Lenox, Ross and Angus, and attendants* **6**

KING DUNCAN

This castle hath a pleasant seat—
the air nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
unto our gentle senses.

BANQUO

This guest of summer—
the temple-haunting martlet—does approve,
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 pendent bed and procreant cradle.
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed
the air is delicate.

Enter Lady Macbeth

KING DUNCAN See, see our honoured 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 yield 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 honours 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.

KING DUNCAN Where's the Thane of Cawdor?
We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose
to be his purveyor; but he rides well,
and his great love—sharp as his spur—hath holp him
to his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
we are your guest tonight.

LADY MACBETH Your servants ever
have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in count,
to make their audit at your Highness's pleasure,
still to return your own.

KING DUNCAN Give me your hand.
Conduct me to mine host. We love him highly,
and shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess. *Exeunt*

(I.vii) *Hoboys. Torches. Enter a sewer, and several 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
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 judgement here, that we but teach
bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
to plague the 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,
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
the deep damnation of his taking off;
and pity, like a naked new-born babe
striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, horsed
upon the sightless couriers of the air,
shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
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 the other—

Enter Lady Macbeth

How now? What news?

LADY MACBETH
He has almost supped—why have you left the chamber?

MACBETH
Hath he asked for me?

LADY MACBETH Know you not, he has?

MACBETH
We will proceed no further in this business.
He hath honoured me of late, and I have bought
golden opinions from all sorts of people

which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
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
to be the same in thine own act and valour
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",
like the poor cat in the adage?

MACBETH Prithee peace.
I dare do all that may become a man—
who dares do more, is none.

LADY MACBETH What beast was it, then,
that made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man.
And to be more than what you were, you would
be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place
did then adhere, and yet you would make both;
they have made themselves, and that their fitness now
does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
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.

MACBETH If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH We fail.
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

that memory, the warder of the brain,
shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
a 'lembic only. When in swinish sleep
their drenchèd natures lies as in a death,
what cannot you and I perform upon
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,
when we have marked with blood those sleepy two
of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,
that they have done it?

LADY MACBETH Who dares receive it other,
as we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
upon his death?

MACBETH I am settled, and bend up
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*

(II.i) *Enter Banquo and his son Fleance, with a torch before him* **8**

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 it, '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

(*to Fleance*) Give me my sword!
(*to Macbeth, whom he does not recognize in the darkness*) Who's there?

MACBETH A friend.

BANQUO
What, sir, not yet at rest? The King's abed.
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
sent forth great largess to your offices.
This diamond he greets your wife withal
by the name of most kind hostess, and shut up
in measureless content.

MACBETH Being unprepared,
our will became the servant to defect,
which else should free have wrought.

BANQUO All's well.
I dreamed last night of the three weird sisters—
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 kindest leisure.

MACBETH
If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,
it shall make honour 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 Thanks, sir—the like to you.

Exeunt Banquo and Fleance

MACBETH
Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
she strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed. *Exit servant*

Macbeth alone

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
the handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch 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,
proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
as this (*unsheaths his dagger*) which now I draw.
Thou marshallest me the way that I was going,
and such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools of the 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
thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half world
nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
the curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates
pale Hecat's offerings; and withered murder,
alarmed by his sentinel, the wolf,
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 whereabout,
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.

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 Macbeth*

(II.ii) *Enter Lady Macbeth, alone*

LADY MACBETH
That which hath made them drunk, hath made me bold—
what hath quenched them, hath given me fire.
Hark! Peace—
it was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman
which gives the sternest goodnight. 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 (*from offstage*) Who's there? —what, ho!

LADY MACBETH
Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
and 'tis not done. The attempt, and not the deed,
confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready,
he could not miss them. Had he not resembled
my father as he slept, I had done it.

Enter Macbeth

My husband!

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

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

MACBETH When?

LADY MACBETH Now.

MACBETH As I descended?

LADY MACBETH Ay.

MACBETH Hark!
Who lies in the second chamber?

LADY MACBETH Donalbain.

MACBETH (*looking at his blood-drenched hands*) This is a sorry sight.

LADY MACBETH
A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

MACBETH
There's one did laugh in his sleep, and one cried "murder",
that they did wake each other. I stood, and heard 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.
Listening their fear, I could not say "amen"
when they did say "God bless us"—

LADY MACBETH Consider it not so deeply.

MACBETH
But wherefore could not I pronounce "amen"?
I had most need of blessing, and "amen"
stuck in my throat.

LADY MACBETH These deeds must not be thought
after these ways—so, it will make us mad.

MACBETH
Methought I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep" —the innocent sleep:
sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,
the death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
chief nourisher in life's feast—

LADY MACBETH What do you mean?

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

LADY MACBETH
Who was it, that thus cried? Why worthy thane,
you do unbend your noble strength to think
so brainsickly of things. Go get some water,

and wash this filthy witness from your hand—

She notices that Macbeth still has the daggers

Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there! Go, carry them, and smear
the sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH I'll go no more.
I am afraid to think what I have done—
look on it 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
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 Lady Macbeth*

Knock offstage

MACBETH Whence is that knocking?
How is it with me, when every noise appals me?

Looking at his hands

What hands are here? —oh, they pluck out mine eyes.
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
clean from my hand? No: this my hand will rather
the multitudinous seas incarnardine,
making the green, one red.

Enter Lady Macbeth

LADY MACBETH
My hands are of your colour—but I shame
to wear a heart so white.

Knock

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

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

Wake Duncan with thy knocking—I would thou couldst.

Exeunt

(II.iii) *Enter a Porter. Knocking offstage*

PORTER Here's a knocking indeed. If a man were porter of hell gate, he should have old turning the key. (*knock*) Knock, knock, knock. Who's there, in the name of Beëlzebub? 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 it. (*knock*) Knock, knock. Who's there, in the 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. Oh, come in, equivocator. (*knock*) Knock, knock, knock. Who's there? 'Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose. Come in, tailor, here you may roast your goose. (*knock*) 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*) Anon, anon!

He opens the door. Enter Macduff and the Thane of Lenox

I pray you, remember the porter.

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

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

MACDUFF
What three things does drink especially provoke?

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

MACDUFF
I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

PORTER That it did, sir, in the 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 Is thy master stirring?

Enter Macbeth

Our knocking has awaked him—here he comes.

THANE OF LENOX
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—
I have almost slipped the hour.

MACBETH I'll bring you to him.

MACDUFF
I know this is a joyful trouble to you:
but yet 'tis one.

MACBETH
The labour we delight in physics pain.
This is the door.

MACDUFF I'll make so bold to call,
for 'tis my limited service. *Exit Macduff*

THANE OF LENOX
Goes the King hence today?

MACBETH He does—
he did appoint so.

THANE OF LENOX
The night has been unruly. Where we lay,
our chimneys were blown down, and as they say,
lamentings heard in the 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
clamoured the live-long night. Some say the earth
was feverous, and did shake.

MACBETH 'Twas a rough night.

THANE OF LENOX
My young remembrance cannot parallel
a fellow to it.

Enter Macduff

MACDUFF Oh, horror, horror, horror!
Tongue nor heart cannot conceive nor name thee.

MACBETH and LENOX What's the matter?

MACDUFF
Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!
Most sacreligious murder hath broke ope
the Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
the life of the building.

MACBETH What is it you say—
the life?

THANE OF LENOX Mean you his majesty?

MACDUFF
Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
with a new Gorgon. Do not bid me speak—
see, and then speak yourselves. *Exeunt Macbeth and Lenox*
—Awake, awake!
Ring the alarum bell! Murder and treason!
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 spirits
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 Oh, gentle lady,
'tis not for you to hear what I can speak.
The repetition in a woman's ear
would murder as it fell.

Enter Banquo

Oh, Banquo, Banquo!
Our royal master's murdered!
LADY MACBETH Woe, alas!
What, in our house?
BANQUO Too cruel, anywhere.
Dear Duff, I prithee contradict thyself,
and say it is not so.

Re-enter Macbeth and Lenox with the Thane of Ross

MACBETH
Had I but died an hour before this chance
I had lived a blessèd time, for from this instant
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 the Princes Malcolm and Donalbain

PRINCE DONALBAIN
What is amiss?
MACBETH You are, and do not know it.
The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
is stopped—the very source of it is stopped.
MACDUFF
Your royal father's murdered.
PRINCE MALCOLM Oh! By whom?
THANE OF LENOX
Those of his chamber, as it seemed, had done it.
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,
that I did kill them.
MACDUFF Wherefore did you so?
MACBETH
Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man.
The expedition of my violent love
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 colours of their trade, their daggers
unmannerly breeched with gore—who could refrain,
that had a heart to love, and in that heart,
courage, to make his love known?
LADY MACBETH (*fainting*) Help me hence, ho!

MACDUFF
Look to the lady.
PRINCE MALCOLM (*to Donalbain*)
Why do we hold our tongues, that most may claim
this argument for ours?
PRINCE DONALBAIN (*to Malcolm*) What should be spoken
here, where our fate, hid in an augur-hole,
may rush and seize us? Let's away—
our tears are not yet brewed.
PRINCE MALCOLM (*to Donalbain*) Nor our strong sorrow
upon the foot of motion.
BANQUO Look to the lady.

Lady Macbeth is carried offstage

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.
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence,
against the undivulged pretence, I fight
of treasonous malice.
MACDUFF And so do I.
ALL So all.
MACBETH
Let's briefly put on manly readiness
and meet in the hall together.
ALL Well contented.

Exeunt all but the two Princes, Malcolm and Donalbain

PRINCE 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.
PRINCE DONALBAIN
To Ireland, I. Our separated fortune
shall keep us both the safer. Where we are,

there's daggers in men's smiles—the near in blood,
the nearer bloody.
PRINCE MALCOLM This murderous shaft that's shot
hath not yet lighted, and our safest way
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. *Exeunt*

(II.iv) *Enter Ross with an Old Man* 11

OLD MAN
Threescore and ten I can remember well,
within the volume of which time I have seen
hours dreadful and things strange—but this sore night
hath trifled former knowings.
THANE OF ROSS Ah, good father,
thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
threatens his bloody stage. By the clock 'tis day,
and yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.
Is it night's predominance or the day's shame
that darkness does the face of earth entomb,
when living light should kiss it?
OLD MAN 'Tis unnatural—
even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last
a falcon towering in her pride of place
was by a mousing owl hawked at, and killed.
THANE OF ROSS
And Duncan's horses—a thing most strange and certain—
beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
contending 'gainst obedience, as they would
make war with mankind.
OLD MAN 'Tis said they ate each other.
THANE OF ROSS
They did so—to the amazement of mine eyes
that looked upon it.

Enter Macduff

Here comes the good Macduff.
How goes the world, sir, now?

MACDUFF Why, see you not?

THANE OF ROSS
Is it known who did this more than bloody deed?

MACDUFF
Those that Macbeth hath slain.

THANE OF ROSS Alas the day,
what good could they pretend?

MACDUFF They were suborned:
Malcolm and Donalbain, the King's two sons,
are stolen away and fled, which puts upon them
suspicion of the deed.

THANE OF ROSS 'Gainst nature still—
thriftless ambition, that will raven up
thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like
the sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

MACDUFF
He is already named, and gone to Scone
to be invested.

THANE OF ROSS Where is Duncan's body?

MACDUFF Carried to Colmekill,
the sacred storehouse of his predecessors
and guardian of their bones.

THANE OF ROSS Will you to Scone?

MACDUFF
No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

THANE OF ROSS Well, I will thither.

MACDUFF
Well, may you see things well done there—adieu!—
lest our old robes sit easier than our new.

THANE OF ROSS (*to the Old Man*) Farewell, father.

OLD MAN
God's benison go with you, and with those
that would make good of bad, and friends of foes. *Exeunt*

(III.i) *Enter Banquo, alone*

BANQUO
Thou hast it now—King, Cawdor, Glamis—all,
as the weird women promised; and I fear
thou playedst most foully for it. Yet it was said
it should not stand in thy posterity,
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,
and set me up in hope?

Sennet sounded

But hush, no more.

Enter Macbeth as King, Lady Macbeth as Queen, the Thanes of Lenox and Ross, lords, and attendants

MACBETH (*referring to Banquo*)
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
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.

MACBETH
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.
Is it 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 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,
when, therewithal, we shall have cause of State,
craving us jointly. Hie you to horse—adieu,
till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

BANQUO

Ay, my good lord. Our time does call upon us.

MACBETH

I wish your horses swift and sure of foot,
and so I do commend you to their backs.
Farewell!
Let every man be master of his time *Exit Banquo*
till seven at night. To make society
the sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself,
till suppertime, alone. While then, God be with you.
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*

Macbeth alone

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,
and to that dauntless temper of his mind
he hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
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
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, prophet-like,
they hailed him father to a line of kings.
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown
and put a barren sceptre in my grip,
thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,
no son of mine succeeding. If it be so,
for Banquo's issue have I filed my mind—
for them, the gracious Duncan have I murdered,
put rancours 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 seeds of Banquo, kings!
Rather than so, come fate into the list
and champion me to the utterance—
Who's there?

Enter the Servant, and two Men

(*to the Servant*)
Now go to the door, and stay there till we call. *Exit Servant*
(*to the two Men*).
Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

FIRST MAN

It was, so please your Highness.

MACBETH Well then, now—
have you considered of my speeches? Know
that it was he in the times past which held you

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,
who wrought with them, and all things else that might
to half a soul and to a notion crazed,
say, "Thus did Banquo".

FIRST MAN
You made it known to us.

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
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 for ever?

FIRST MAN
We are men, my liege.

MACBETH
Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,
as hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are clepped
all by the name of dogs: the valued file
distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
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.
Now, if you have a station in the file
not in the worst rank of manhood, say it,
and I will put that business in your bosoms
whose execution takes your enemy off,
grapples you to the heart and love of us,
who wear our health but sickly in his life
which in his death were perfect.

SECOND MAN
I am one, my liege,

whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
hath so incensed that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.

FIRST MAN
And I another
so weary with disasters, tugged with fortune,
that I would set my life on any chance
to mend it, or be rid on it.

MACBETH
Both of you
know Banquo was your enemy.

BOTH MEN
True, my lord.

MACBETH
So is he mine—and in such bloody distance
that every minute of his being thrusts
against my nearest 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,
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.

SECOND MAN
We shall, my lord,
perform what you command us.

FIRST MAN
Though our lives—

MACBETH
Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour, at most,
I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
acquaint you with the perfect spy of the time,
the moment on it—for it 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.
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 MEN We are resolved, my lord.
MACBETH
I'll call upon you straight. Abide within.
Exeunt the two Murderers
It is concluded. Banquo, thy soul's flight,
if it find heaven, must find it out tonight. *Exit Macbeth*

(III.ii) *Enter Macbeth's Lady and a Servant*

LADY MACBETH
Is Banquo gone from court?
SERVANT
Ay, madam, but returns again tonight.
LADY MACBETH
Say to the king I would attend his leisure
for a few words.
SERVANT Madam, I will. *Exit Servant*
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.
Enter Macbeth
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.
MACBETH
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—
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
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.
LADY MACBETH Come on,
gentle my lord, 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 must lave
our honours 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 knowest that Banquo and his Fleance lives.
LADY MACBETH
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 Hecat's summons
the shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,
hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
a deed of dreadful note.
LADY MACBETH What's to be done?
MACBETH
Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
till thou applaud the deed. —Come, seeling night,

scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
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 the rooky wood—
good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
Thou marvellest at my words—but hold thee still.
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.
So prithee go with me. *Exeunt*

(III.iii) *Enter three Murderers*

FIRST MURDERER
But who did bid thee join with us?
THIRD MURDERER Macbeth.
SECOND MURDERER
He needs not our mistrust, since he delivers
our offices and what we have to do
to the direction just.
FIRST MURDERER Then stand with us.
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day.
Now spurs the lated traveller apace
to gain the timely inn, and near approches
the subject of our watch.
THIRD MURDERER Hark, I hear horses.
BANQUO (*offstage*)
Give us a light there, ho!
SECOND MURDERER Then 'tis he—
the rest that are within the note of expectation
already are in the court.
FIRST MURDERER His horses go about.
THIRD MURDERER
Almost a mile: but he does usually—
so all men do—from hence to the palace gate
make it their walk.

Enter Banquo and Fleance with a torch

SECOND MURDERER
A light, a light!
THIRD MURDERER 'Tis he.
FIRST MURDERER Stand to it.
BANQUO
It will be rain tonight.
FIRST MURDERER Let it come down!
They attack Banquo
BANQUO
Oh, treachery! *Fleance flees*
Fly, good Fleance—fly, fly, fly! *Exit Banquo, dying*
Thou mayst revenge. Oh, slave!
THIRD MURDERER
Who did strike out the light?
FIRST MURDERER Was it not the way?
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*

(III.iv) *Banquet prepared. Enter Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, the Thanes of Ross and Lenox, lords, and attendants*

MACBETH
You know your own degrees—sit down.
At first and last, the hearty welcome.
LORDS
Thanks to your Majesty.
MACBETH
Ourself will mingle with society
and play the humble host.
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.

The First Murderer appears at a door

MACBETH

See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.
Both sides are even. Here, I'll sit in the midst.
Be large in mirth; anon we'll drink a measure
the table round.

Macbeth goes to the door and speaks, privately, to the First Murderer

There's blood upon thy face.

FIRST MURDERER 'Tis Banquo's then.

MACBETH

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

FIRST MURDERER My lord, his throat is cut—
that I did for him.

MACBETH Thou art the best of the cut-throats—
yet he's good that did the like for Fleance.
If thou didst it, thou art the nonpareil.

FIRST MURDERER

Most royal sir, Fleance is escaped!

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.
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.

(aside)
There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's fled
hath nature that in time will venom breed,
no teeth for the present.
(to the Murderer) Get thee gone—tomorrow
we'll hear ourselves again. *Exit Murderer*

LADY MACBETH My royal lord,
you do not give the cheer. The feast is sold
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.

Enter the Ghost of Banquo, unnoted, who sits in Macbeth's place

MACBETH *(to Lady Macbeth)* Sweet remembrancer.
(to the guests)
Now good digestion wait on appetite,
and health on both.

THANE OF LENOX May it please your Highness sit?

MACBETH

Here had we now our country's honour roofed,
were the graced person of our Banquo present—
who, may I rather challenge for unkindness,
than pity for mischance.

THANE OF ROSS His absence, sir,
lays blame upon his promise. Please it your Highness
to grace us with your royal company?

MACBETH

The table's full.

THANE OF LENOX *(motioning to the seat in which the Ghost sits)*
Here is a place reserved, sir.

MACBETH

Where?

THANE OF LENOX

Here, my good lord.

Macbeth sees the ghost

What is it that moves your Highness?

MACBETH
Which of you have done this?

LORDS What, my good lord?

MACBETH (*aloud, but to the Ghost*)
Thou canst not say I did it—never shake
thy gory locks at me.

THANE OF ROSS
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
you shall offend him and extend his passion.
Feed, and regard him not. (*to Macbeth*) Are you a man?

MACBETH (*to Lady Macbeth*)
Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
which might appal the devil.

LADY MACBETH (*to Macbeth*) Oh, proper stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear—
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!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
you look but on a stool!

MACBETH (*to Lady Macbeth*) Prithee, see—there—
behold—look—lo—(*to the Ghost*) How say you?
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too!
If charnel houses and our graves must send
those that we bury, back, our monuments
shall be the maws of kites. *Exit Ghost*

LADY MACBETH (*to Macbeth*) What, quite unmanned in folly?

MACBETH (*to Lady Macbeth*)
If I stand here, I saw him.

LADY MACBETH (*To Macbeth*) Fie, for shame.

MACBETH (*to Lady Macbeth*)
Blood hath been shed ere now—in the olden time
ere human statute purged the gentle weal,
ay, and since, too, murders have been performed
too terrible for the ear. The times 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,
and push us from our stools. This is more strange
than such a murder is.

LADY MACBETH (*aloud*) My worthy lord,
your noble friends do lack you.

MACBETH I do forget.
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends.
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.

The Ghost re-enters, unnoted by Macbeth

I drink to the general joy of the whole table,
and to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss.
Would he were here. To all, and him, we thirst—
and all to all.

LORDS Our duties and the pledge.

Macbeth sees the Ghost

MACBETH (*aloud, but to the Ghost*)
Avaunt, and quit my sight, let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless; thy blood is cold;
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.

MACBETH (*aloud, to the Ghost*)
What man dare, I dare:
approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
the armed rhinoceros, or the 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
the baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow—
unreal mockery, hence! *Exit Ghost*
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,
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,
when mine is blanched with fear.

THANE OF ROSS
What sights, my lord?

LADY MACBETH
I pray you, speak not—he grows worse and worse.
Question enrages him. At once, goodnight—
stand not upon the order of your going,
but go at once.

THANE OF LENOX
Goodnight, and better health
attend his majesty.

LADY MACBETH
A kind goodnight to all.
Exeunt all except Macbeth and Lady Macbeth

MACBETH
It will have blood, they say—blood will have blood.

Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;
auguries and understood relations have
by maggot pies, and choughs, and rooks brought forth
the secretest man of blood. What is the night?

LADY MACBETH
Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

MACBETH
How sayst thou that Macduff denies his person
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.
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.
Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
which must be acted, ere they may be scanned.

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.
We are yet but young in deed. *Exeunt*

[(III.v) *Thunder. Enter the three Weird Sisters, meeting Hecat* 16

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Why, how now, Hecat? You look angerly.

HECAT
Have I not reason, beldams, as you are
saucy and over-bold? How did you dare
to trade and traffic with Macbeth

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?
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,
and at the pit of Acheron
meet me i'the morning. Thither he
will come, to know his destiny.
Your vessels and your spells provide,
your charms, and everything beside.
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 vaporous drop profound;
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.
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

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

Sing within: "Come away, come away," etc.

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Come, let's make haste; she'll soon be back again. *Exeunt*]

(III.vi) *Enter the Thane of Lenox and a Lord* 17

THANE OF LENOX
My former speeches have but hit your thoughts
which can interpret further—only I say,
things have been strangely borne. The gracious Duncan
was pitied of Macbeth—marry, he was dead;
and the right-valiant Banquo walked too late,
whom you may say (if it please you) Fleance killed—
for Fleance fled. Men must not walk too late.
Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous
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?
Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too—
for it would have angered any heart alive
to hear the men deny it. So that I say,
he has borne all things well. And I do think
that had he Duncan's sons under his key
(as, and it please heaven, he shall not), they should find
what it were to kill a father; so should Fleance.
But peace; for from broad words, and 'cause he 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,
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
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,
free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,
do faithful homage, and receive free honours—
all which we pine for now. And this report
hath so exasperate the King, that he
prepares for some attempt of war.

THANE OF LENOX
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."

THANE OF LENOX
And that well might
advise him to a caution, to 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,
under a hand accursed.

LORD
I'll send my prayers with him.

Exeunt

(IV.i) *Thunder. Enter the three Weird Sisters*

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Thrice the brinded cat hath mewed.

SECOND WEIRD SISTER
Thrice, and once the hedge-pig whined.

THIRD WEIRD SISTER
Harpier cries—'tis time, 'tis time.

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Round about the cauldron go.
In the poisoned entrails throw:
toad, that under cold stone

days and nights has thirty-one
sweltered venom, sleeping got—
boil thou first i'the charmèd pot.

ALL THREE SISTERS
Double, double, toil and trouble;
fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

SECOND WEIRD SISTER
Fillet of a fenny-snake,
in the cauldron boil and bake.
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
lizard's leg, and howlet's wing:
for a charm of powerful trouble,
like a hell-broth, boil and bubble.

ALL THREE SISTERS
Double, double, toil and trouble;
fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

THIRD WEIRD SISTER
Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
witch's mummy, maw and gulf
of the ravined salt-sea shark,
root of hemlock digged in the dark,
liver of blaspheming Jew,
gall of goat, and slips of yew
slivered in the moon's eclipse,
nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips,
finger of birth-strangled babe
ditch-delivered by a drab—
make the gruel thick and slab—
add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
for the ingredients of our cauldron.

ALL THREE SISTERS
Double, double, toil and trouble;
fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

SECOND WEIRD SISTER
Cool it with a baboon's blood,
then the charm is firm and good.

Enter Hecat, and the other three Witches

[HECAT
Oh well done! I commend your pains;
and everyone shall share i'the gains.
And now about the cauldron sing
like elves and fairies in a ring,
enchanting all that you put in.

Music and a song: "Blacke Spirits" etc.
Exeunt Hecat, and the other three Witches]

By the pricking of my thumbs,
something wicked this way comes.
Open locks,
whoever knocks.

Enter Macbeth

MACBETH
How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags—
what is it you do?

ALL THREE A deed without a name.

MACBETH
I conjure you, by that which you profess—
howe'er you come to know it—answer me,
though you untie the winds and let them fight
against the churches, though the yeasty waves
confound and swallow navigation up,
though bladed corn be lodged, and trees blown down,
though castles topple on their warders' heads,
though palaces and pyramids do slope
their heads to their foundations, though the treasure
of nature's germens tumble altogether,
even till destruction sicken—answer me
to what I ask you.

FIRST WEIRD SISTER Speak.

SECOND WEIRD SISTER Demand.

THIRD WEIRD SISTER We'll answer.

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Say if thou hadst rather hear it from our mouths
or from our masters'.

MACBETH Call 'em—let me see 'em.

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Pour in sow's blood that hath eaten
her nine farrow; grease that's sweaten
from the murderer's gibbet, throw
into the flame.

ALL THREE Come high or low,
thyself and office deftly show.

Thunder. A Head in Armour appears

MACBETH
Tell me, thou unknown power—

FIRST WEIRD SISTER He knows thy thought.
Hear his speech, but say thou naught.

THE ARMED HEAD
Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth—beware Macduff,
beware the Thane of Fife. Dismiss me. Enough!

The Armed Head descends

MACBETH
Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks.
Thou hast harped my fear aright. But one word more—

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
He will not be commanded. Here's another
more potent than the first.

Thunder. A Bloody Child appears

THE BLOODY CHILD
Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth—

MACBETH
Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

and an eternal curse fall on you. Let me know.

The cauldron descends

Why sinks that cauldron?

Hoboys

—and what noise is this?

FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Show!
SECOND WEIRD SISTER
Show!
THIRD WEIRD SISTER
Show!
ALL THREE
Show his eyes and grieve his heart,
come like shadows, so depart.

A show of eight kings, and Banquo last, with a mirror in his hand

MACBETH (*to the first of the eight kings*)
Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo—down,
thy crown does sear mine eyeballs.
(*to the second*) And thy hair,
thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.
A third is like the former. Filthy hags,
Why do you show me this? —A fourth? Start, eyes!
What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?
Another yet? A seventh? I'll see no more—
and yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
which shows me many more. And some, I see,
that two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry.
Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true,
for the blood-boltered Banquo smiles upon me
and points at them for his. What, is this so?
[FIRST WEIRD SISTER
Ay, sir, all this is so. But why
stands Macbeth thus amazedly?
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites

THE BLOODY CHILD
Be bloody, bold, and resolute. Laugh to scorn
the power of man: for none of woman born
shall harm Macbeth. *The Bloody Child descends*
MACBETH
Then live Macduff—what need I fear of thee?
But yet I'll make assurance double sure,
and take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live,
that I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
and sleep in spite of thunder.

Thunder. A Crowned Child appears, with a tree in his hand

What is this,
that rises like the issue of a king,
and wears upon his baby brow the round
and top of sovereignty?
ALL THREE Listen, but speak not to it.
THE CROWNED CHILD
Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are—
Macbeth shall never vanquished be until
great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill
shall come against him. *The Crowned Child descends*
MACBETH That will never be—
who can impress the forest, bid the tree
unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements! Good!
Rebellious dead, rise never till the wood
of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
to time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
throbs to know one thing—tell me, if your art
can tell so much, shall Banquo's issue ever
reign in this kingdom?
ALL THREE Seek to know no more.
MACBETH
I will be satisfied. Deny me this,

and show the best of our delights.
I'll charm the air to give a sound,
while you perform your antic round,
that this great king may kindly say
our duties did his welcome pay.

Music.] *The Weird Sisters* [*dance, and*] *vanish*

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

Enter the Thane of Lenox

THANE OF LENOX What's your Grace's will?
MACBETH
Saw you the weird sisters?
THANE OF LENOX No, my lord.
MACBETH
Came they not by you?
THANE OF LENOX No, indeed, my lord.
MACBETH
Infected be the air whereon they ride,
and damned all those that trust them. —I did hear
the galloping of horse. Who was it came by?
THANE OF LENOX
'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word—
Macduff is fled to England.
MACBETH Fled to England?
THANE OF LENOX Ay, my good lord.
MACBETH (*aside*)
Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits.
The flighty purpose never is overtook
unless the deed go with it. From this moment,
the very firstlings of my heart shall be
the firstlings of my hand. And even now,
to crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:
the castle of Macduff I will surprise,

seize upon Fife, give to the edge of the sword
his wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
that trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool—
this deed I'll do before this purpose cool.
But no more sights.
(*to Lenox*) Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are. *Exeunt*

(IV.ii) *Enter Macduff's Wife, their Son, and the Thane of Ross* **19**

LADY MACDUFF
What had he done, to make him fly the land?
THANE OF ROSS
You must have patience, madam.
LADY MACDUFF He had none—
his flight was madness. When our actions do not,
our fears do make us traitors.
THANE OF ROSS You know not
whether it was his wisdom or his fear.
LADY MACDUFF
Wisdom? To leave his wife, to leave his babes,
his mansion, and his titles, in a place
from whence himself does fly? He loves us not—
he wants the natural touch. For the poor wren,
the most diminitive of birds, will fight,
her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
All is the fear, and nothing is the love,
as little is the wisdom, where the flight
so runs against all reason.
THANE OF ROSS My dearest coz,
I pray you school yourself. But for your husband—
he is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
the fits of the season. I dare not speak much further—
but cruel are the times when we are traitors,
and do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour
from what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
but float upon a wild and violent sea

each way, and move. I take my leave of you;
shall not be long but I'll be here again.
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
to what they were before. (*to the boy*) My pretty cousin,
blessing upon you.

LADY MACDUFF
Fathered he is, and yet he's fatherless.

THANE OF ROSS
I am so much a fool—should I stay longer
it would be my disgrace and your discomfort.
I take my leave at once. *Exit Ross*

LADY MACDUFF Sirrah, your father's dead—
and what will you do now? How will you live?

YOUNG MACDUFF
As birds do, mother.

LADY MACDUFF What, with worms and flies?

YOUNG MACDUFF
With what I get, I mean—and so do they.

LADY MACDUFF
Poor bird, thou'dst never fear the net nor lime,
the pitfall, nor the gin?

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

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

YOUNG MACDUFF
Nay, how will you do for a husband?

LADY MACDUFF Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

YOUNG MACDUFF Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

LADY MACDUFF
Thou speakest with all thy wit—and yet, i'faith,
with wit enough for thee.

YOUNG MACDUFF Was my father a traitor, mother?

LADY MACDUFF Ay, that he was.

YOUNG MACDUFF What is a traitor?

LADY MACDUFF Why, one that swears and lies.

YOUNG MACDUFF And be all traitors that do so?

LADY MACDUFF Every one that does so is a traitor, and must be hanged.

YOUNG MACDUFF And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

LADY MACDUFF Every one.

YOUNG MACDUFF Who must hang them?

LADY MACDUFF Why, the honest men.

YOUNG MACDUFF Then the liars and swearers are fools, for there are liars and swearers enough to beat the honest men, and hang up them.

LADY MACDUFF Now, God help thee, poor monkey! But how wilt thou do for a father?

YOUNG MACDUFF If he were dead you'd weep for him—if you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

LADY MACDUFF Poor prattler, how thou talkest!

Enter a Messenger

MESSENGER
Bless you, fair dame—I am not to you known,
though in your state of honour I am perfect.
I doubt some danger does approach you nearly.
If you will take a homely man's advice,
be not found here. Hence with your little ones!
To fright you thus, methinks, I am too savage—
to do worse to you were fell cruelty,
which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you—
I dare abide no longer. *Exit Messenger*

LADY MACDUFF Whither should I fly?
I have done no harm—but I remember now
I am in this earthly world, where to do harm
is often laudable, to do good sometime
accounted dangerous folly. Why then, alas,
do I put up that womanly defence

to say I have done no harm?

Enter Murderers

What are these faces?

MURDERER
Where is your husband?

LADY MACDUFF
I hope in no place so unsanctified
where such as thou mayst find him.

MURDERER
He's a traitor.

YOUNG MACDUFF
Thou liest, thou shag-eared villain!

MURDERER
What, you egg—
young fry of treachery—

He stabs the boy

YOUNG MACDUFF
He has killed me!
Mother, run away, I pray you.

Exeunt all, Young Macduff dying and Lady Macduff crying "murder"

(IV.iii) *Enter Prince Malcolm and Macduff*

PRINCE MALCOLM
Let us seek out some desolate shade and there
weep our sad bosoms empty.

MACDUFF
Let us rather
hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men,
bestride our downfallen birthdom. Each new morn
new widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
as if it felt with Scotland, and yelled out
like syllable of dolour.

PRINCE MALCOLM
What I believe, I'll wail;
what know, believe; and what I can redress,
as I shall find the time to friend, I will.
What you have spoke, it may be so, perchance.
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,

was once thought honest. You have loved him well;
he hath not touched you, yet. I am young, but something
you may deserve of him through me, and wisdom
to offer up a weak, poor innocent lamb
to appease an angry god.

MACDUFF
I am not treacherous.

PRINCE MALCOLM
But Macbeth is.
A good and virtuous nature may recoil
in an imperial charge. But I shall crave your pardon—
that which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose.
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell.
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
yet grace must still look so.

MACDUFF
I have lost my hopes.

PRINCE MALCOLM
Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.
Why, in that rawness, left you wife and child—
those precious motives, those strong knots of love—
without leave-taking? I pray you,
let not my jealousies be your dishonours,
but mine own safeties. You may be rightly just,
whatever I shall think.

MACDUFF
Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure—
for goodness dare not check thee. Wear thou thy wrongs—
the title is afeard! Fare thee well, lord—
I would not be the villain that thou thinkest
for the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp,
and the rich east to boot.

PRINCE MALCOLM
Be not offended—
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke—
it weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
is added to her wounds. I think, withal,
there would be hands uplifted in my right,

and here from gracious England have I offer
of goodly thousands. But for all this,
when I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
shall have more vices than it had before—
more suffer, and more sundry ways than ever,
by him that shall succeed.

MACDUFF What should he be?

PRINCE MALCOLM
It is myself I mean—in whom I know
all the particulars of vice so grafted
that when they shall be opened, black Macbeth
will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
esteem him as a lamb, being compared
with my confineless harms.

MACDUFF Not in the legions
of horrid hell can come a devil more damned
in evils to top Macbeth.

PRINCE MALCOLM I grant him bloody,
luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
that has a name. But there's no bottom—none—
in my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,
your matrons, and your maids, could not fill up
the cistern of my lust, and my desire
all continent impediments would o'er-bear
that did oppose my will. Better Macbeth,
than such an one to reign.

MACDUFF Boundless intemperance
in nature is a tyranny. It hath been
the untimely emptying of the happy throne,
and fall of many kings. But fear not yet
to take upon you what is yours. You may
convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
and yet seem cold. The time you may so hoodwink—
we have willing dames enough. There cannot be

that vulture in you to devour so many
as will to greatness dedicate themselves,
finding it so inclined.

PRINCE MALCOLM With this, there grows
in my most ill-composed affection, such
a staunchless avarice, that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,
desire his jewels, and this other's house,
and my more-having would be as a sauce
to make me hunger more, that I should forge
quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
destroying them for wealth.

MACDUFF This avarice
sticks deeper—grows with more pernicious root
than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been
the sword of our slain kings. Yet do not fear—
Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will,
of your mere own. All these are portable,
with other graces weighed.

PRINCE MALCOLM But I have none.
The king-becoming graces—as justice,
verity, temperance, stableness, bounty,
perseverance, mercy, lowliness, devotion,
patience, courage, fortitude—
I have no relish of them, but abound
in the division of each several crime,
acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
uproar the universal peace, confound
all unity on earth.

MACDUFF Oh, Scotland, Scotland!

PRINCE MALCOLM
If such a one be fit to govern, speak—
I am as I have spoken.

MACDUFF Fit to govern?
No, not to live! Oh, nation miserable—

with an untitled tyrant, bloody-sceptred—
when shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
since that the truest issue of thy throne
by his own interdiction stands accused,
and does blaspheme his breed? Thy royal father
was a most sainted king. The queen that bore thee,
oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
died every day she lived. Fare thee well—
these evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
hath banished me from Scotland. Oh, my breast—
thy hope ends here.

PRINCE MALCOLM Macduff, this noble passion—
child of integrity—hath from my soul
wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
to thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth,
by many of these trains, hath sought to win me
into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me
from over-credulous haste. But God above
deal between thee and me, for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
unspeak mine own detraction—here abjure
the taints and blames I laid upon myself,
for strangers to my nature. I am yet
unknown to woman, never was forsworn,
scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
at no time broke my faith, would not betray
the devil to his fellow, and delight
no less in truth than life. My first false speaking
was this upon myself. What I am truly,
is thine and my poor country's to command,
whither indeed—before thy here-approach—
old Siward with ten thousand warlike men
already at a point, was setting forth.
Now we'll together, and the chance of goodness
be like our warranted quarrel. Why are you silent?

MACDUFF
Such welcome and unwelcome things at once—
'tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor

PRINCE MALCOLM Well, more anon.
(*to the Doctor*) Comes the King forth, I pray you?

DOCTOR
Ay, sir. There are a crew of wretched souls
that stay his cure. Their malady convinces
the great assay of art, but at his touch,
such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
they presently amend.

PRINCE MALCOLM I thank you, doctor. *Exit Doctor*

MACDUFF
What's the disease he means?

PRINCE MALCOLM 'Tis called the Evil.
A most miraculous work in this good King,
which often since my here-remain in England
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
himself best knows—but strangly-visited people,
all swollen and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
the mere despair of surgery, he cures,
hanging a golden stamp about their necks
put on with holy prayers. And, 'tis spoken,
to the succeeding royalty he leaves
the healing benediction. With this strange virtue
he hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
and sundry blessings hang about his throne
that speak him full of grace.

Enter the Thane of Ross

MACDUFF See who comes here.

PRINCE MALCOLM
My countryman—but yet I know him not.

MACDUFF
My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.
PRINCE MALCOLM
I know him now. Good God betimes remove
the means that makes us strangers.
THANE OF ROSS Sir, amen.
MACDUFF
Stands Scotland where it did?
THANE OF ROSS Alas, poor country,
almost afraid to know itself. It cannot
be called our mother, but our grave—where nothing
but who knows nothing is once seen to smile;
where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rent the air
are made not marked; where violent sorrow seems
a modern ecstasy. The deadman's knell
is there scarce asked for who, and good men's lives
expire before the flowers in their caps,
dying, or ere they sicken.
MACDUFF Oh, relation
too nice, and yet too true.
PRINCE MALCOLM What's the newest grief?
THANE OF ROSS
That of an hour's age, doth hiss the speaker—
each minute teems a new one.
MACDUFF How does my wife?
THANE OF ROSS
Why, well.
MACDUFF And all my children?
THANE OF ROSS Well, too.
MACDUFF
The tyrant has not battered at their peace?
THANE OF ROSS
No, they were well at peace when I did leave them.
MACDUFF
Be not a niggard of your speech—how goes it?

THANE OF ROSS
When I came hither to transport the tidings
which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
of many worthy fellows that were out,
which was to my belief witnessed the rather,
for that I saw the tyrant's power afoot.
Now is the time of help. Your eye in Scotland
would create soldiers, make our women fight,
to doff their dire distresses.
PRINCE MALCOLM Be it their comfort,
we are coming thither. Gracious England hath
lent us good Siward and ten thousand men—
an older and a better soldier, none
that Christendom gives out.
THANE OF ROSS Would I could answer
this comfort with the like. But I have words
that would be howled out in the desert air,
where hearing should not latch them.
MACDUFF What, concern they
the general cause, or is it a fee-grief
due to some single breast?
THANE OF ROSS No mind that's honest
but in it shares some woe, though the main part
pertains to you alone.
MACDUFF If it be mine,
keep it not from me—quickly let me have it.
THANE OF ROSS
Let not your ears despise my tongue forever,
which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
that ever yet they heard.
MACDUFF Humh—I guess at it.
THANE OF ROSS
Your castle is surprised—your wife and babes
savagely slaughtered. To relate the manner
were on the quarry of these murdered deer
to add the death of you.

PRINCE MALCOLM Merciful heaven!
What, man—never pull your hat upon your brows—
give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak
whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break.
MACDUFF
My children, too?
THANE OF ROSS Wife, children, servants—all
that could be found.
MACDUFF And I must be from thence?
My wife killed too?
THANE OF ROSS I have said.
PRINCE MALCOLM Be comforted.
Let's make us medicines of our great revenge
to cure this deadly grief.
MACDUFF
He has no children. All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? Oh, hell-kite! All?
What, all my pretty chickens, and their dam—
at one fell swoop?
PRINCE MALCOLM
Dispute it like a man.
MACDUFF I shall do so—
but I must also feel it as a man.
I cannot but remember such things were
that were most precious to me. Did heaven look on
and would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
they were all struck for thee. Naught that I am,
not for their own demerits, but for mine,
fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now.
PRINCE MALCOLM
Be this the whetstone of your sword—let grief
convert to anger—blunt not the heart, enrage it.
MACDUFF
Oh, I could play the woman with mine eyes
and braggart with my tongue. But, gentle heavens,
cut short all intermission. Front to front

bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself.
Within my sword's length set him—if he 'scape,
heaven forgive him, too.
PRINCE MALCOLM This tune goes manly.
Come, go we to the King. Our power is ready,
our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth
is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may—
the night is long that never finds the day. *Exeunt*

(V.i) *Enter a Doctor of Physic, and a Gentlewoman-in-Waiting* 21

DOCTOR I have two nights watched with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walked?
GENTLEWOMAN Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon it, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed—yet all this while in a most fast sleep.
DOCTOR A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of watching. In this slumbery agitation, besides her walking, and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say?
GENTLEWOMAN That, sir, which I will not report after her.
DOCTOR
You may to me, and 'tis most meet you should.
GENTLEWOMAN Neither to you, nor any one, having no witness to confirm my speech.

Enter Lady Macbeth, with a taper

Lo you, here she comes. This is her very guise—and upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her—stand close.
DOCTOR How came she by that light?
GENTLEWOMAN Why, it stood by her. She has light by her continually—'tis her command.
DOCTOR You see her eyes are open.

GENTLEWOMAN Ay, but their sense are shut.
DOCTOR What is it she does now? Look how she rubs her hands.
GENTLEWOMAN It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.
LADY MACBETH Yet here's a spot.
DOCTOR Hark, she speaks. I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.
LADY MACBETH Out, damned spot! Out, I say! One—two—why then 'tis time to do it. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord, fie—a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear? Who knows it, when none can call our power to account? —Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him.
DOCTOR Do you mark that?
LADY MACBETH The Thane of Fife had a wife—where is she now? —What, will these hands never be clean? —No more of that, my lord, no more of that—you mar all with this starting.
DOCTOR Go to, go to—you have known what you should not.
GENTLEWOMAN She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that—heaven knows what she has known.
LADY MACBETH Here's the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!
DOCTOR What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.
GENTLEWOMAN I would not have such a heart in my bosom, for the dignity of the whole body.
DOCTOR Well, well, well.
GENTLEWOMAN Pray God it be, sir.
DOCTOR This disease is beyond my practice—yet, I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.
LADY MACBETH Wash your hands, put on your nightgown—look not so pale! I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried—he cannot come out on his grave.
DOCTOR Even so?

LADY MACBETH To bed, to bed—there's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done, cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed.
Exit Lady Macbeth

DOCTOR Will she go now to bed?
GENTLEWOMAN Directly.
DOCTOR
Foul whisperings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
do breed unnatural troubles—infected minds
to their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God—forgive us all! Look after her,
remove from her the means of all annoyance,
and still keep eyes upon her. So goodnight—
my mind she has mated, and amazed my sight.
I think, but dare not speak.
GENTLEWOMAN Goodnight, good doctor. *Exeunt*

(V.ii) *Drum and colours. Enter the Thanes of Menteith, Caithness, Angus, and Lenox, with soldiers* 22

THANE OF MENTEITH
The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
his uncle Siward, and the good Macduff.
Revenges burn in them, for their dear causes
would, to the bleeding and the grim alarm,
excite the mortified man.
THANE OF ANGUS Near Birnam Wood
shall we well meet them—that way are they coming.
THANE OF CAITHNESS
Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?
THANE OF LENOX
For certain, sir, he is not. I have a file
of all the gentry: there is Siward's son,
and many unrough youths that even now
protest their first of manhood.
THANE OF MENTEITH What does the tyrant?

THANE OF CAITHNESS
Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies.
Some say he's mad; others, that lesser hate him,
do call it valiant fury—but for certain
he cannot buckle his distempered cause
within the belt of rule.
THANE OF ANGUS Now does he feel
his secret murders sticking on his hands.
Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach.
Those he commands move only in command,
nothing in love. Now does he feel his title
hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
upon a dwarfish thief.
THANE OF MENTEITH Who then shall blame
his pestered senses to recoil and start,
when all that is within him does condemn
itself for being there?
THANE OF CAITHNESS Well, march we on
to give obedience where 'tis truly owed.
Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,
and with him pour we, in our country's purge,
each drop of us.
THANE OF LENOX Or so much as it needs
to dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.
Make we our march towards Birnam. *Exeunt, marching*

(V.iii) *Enter Macbeth, the Doctor, and attendants*

MACBETH
Bring me no more reports—let them fly all!
Till Birnam Wood remove to Dunsinane
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
all mortal consequences, have pronounced me thus:
"Fear not Macbeth: no man that's born of woman
shall e'er have power upon thee." Then fly false thanes,
and mingle with the English epicures.

The mind I sway by and the heart I bear
shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.

Enter Servant

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon—
where got'st thou that goose look?
SERVANT
There is ten thousand—
MACBETH Geese, villain?
SERVANT Soldiers, sir.
MACBETH
Go prick thy face and over-red thy fear,
thou lily-livered boy. What soldiers, patch?
Death of thy soul, those linen cheeks of thine
are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?
SERVANT
The English force, so please you.
MACBETH
Take thy face hence. *Exit Servant*
(*calls*) Seyton!—(*aside*) I am sick
at heart when I behold—(*calls*) Seyton, I say!
(*aside*)
This push will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough. My way of life
is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf;
and that which should accompany old age,
as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but in their stead,
curses—not loud, but deep—mouth-honour, breath
which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
(*calls*) Seyton!

Enter Seyton

SEYTON
What's your gracious pleasure?
MACBETH What news more?

SEYTON
All is confirmed, my lord, which was reported.
MACBETH
I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hacked.
Give me my armour.
SEYTON 'Tis not needed yet.
MACBETH
I'll put it on.
Send out more horses, skirr the country round,
hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour.
(to the Doctor)
How does your patient, doctor?
DOCTOR Not so sick, my lord,
as she is troubled with thick-coming fancies
that keep her from her rest.
MACBETH Cure her of that.
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
raze out the written troubles of the brain,
and with some sweet oblivious antidote
cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
which weighs upon the heart?
DOCTOR Therein the patient
must minister to himself.
MACBETH
Throw physic to the dogs—I'll none of it.
(to Seyton)
Come, put mine armour on. Give me my staff.
Seyton, send out.
(to the Doctor) Doctor, the thanes fly from me.
(to Seyton, who is dressing Macbeth in armour)
Come sir, dispatch.
(to the Doctor) If thou couldst, doctor, cast
the water of my land, find her disease,
and purge it to a sound and pristine health,

I would applaud thee to the very echo
that should applaud again.
(to Seyton) Pull it off I say!
(to the Doctor)
What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug
would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of them?
DOCTOR
Ay, my good lord. Your royal preparation
makes us hear something.
MACBETH *(to Seyton)* Bring it after me.
I will not be afraid of death and bane,
till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.
Exeunt all but the Doctor
DOCTOR
Were I from Dunsinane away and clear—
profit again should hardly draw me here. *Exit Doctor*

(V.iv) *Drum and colours. Enter Prince Malcolm, Macduff the Thane of Fife, Siward the Earl of Northumberland, his son Young Siward, the Thanes of Menteith, Caithness and Angus, together with soldiers, marching*

PRINCE MALCOLM
Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
that chambers will be safe.
THANE OF MENTEITH We doubt it nothing.
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND
What wood is this before us?
THANE OF MENTEITH The wood of Birnam.
PRINCE MALCOLM
Let every soldier hew him down a bough
and bear it before him—thereby shall we shadow
the numbers of our host, and make discovery
err in report of us.
SOLDIER It shall be done.
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND
We learn no other but the confident tyrant

keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
our setting down before it.

PRINCE MALCOLM 'Tis his main hope—
for where there is advantage to be gone,
both more and less have given him the revolt,
and none serve with him, but constrained things
whose hearts are absent, too.

MACDUFF Let our just censures
attend the true event, and put we on
industrious soldiership.

EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND The time approaches
that will, with due decision, make us know
what we shall say we have, and what we owe.
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
but certain issue, strokes must arbitrate—
towards which, advance the war. *Exeunt, marching*

(V.v) *Enter Macbeth, Seyton, and soldiers, with drum and colours*

MACBETH
Hang out our banners on the outward walls.
The cry is still, "They come!" Our castle's strength
will laugh a siege to scorn. Here let them lie,
till famine and the ague eat them up.
Were they not forced with those that should be ours,
we might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
and beat them backward home.

A cry of women from offstage

What is that noise?

SEYTON
It is the cry of women, my good lord. *Exit Seyton*

MACBETH
I have almost forgot the taste of fears.
The time has been, my senses would have cooled
to hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir

as life were in it. I have supped full with horrors—
direness familiar to my slaughterous thoughts
cannot once start me.

Re-enter Seyton

Wherefore was that cry?

SEYTON
The Queen, my lord, is dead.

MACBETH
She should have died hereafter—
there would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
to the last syllable of recorded time;
and all our yesterdays have lighted fools
the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow—a poor player
that struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
and then is heard no more. It is a tale
told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
signifying nothing.

Enter a Messenger

Thou comest to use
thy tongue—thy story, quickly.

MESSENGER Gracious my lord,
I should report that which I say I saw,
but know not how to do it.

MACBETH Well, say, sir.

MESSENGER
As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I looked toward Birnam, and anon, methought
the wood began to move.

MACBETH Liar and slave!

MESSENGER
Let me endure your wrath if it be not so.
Within this three mile may you see it coming—

I say, a moving grove!
MACBETH If thou speakest false,
upon the next tree shall thou hang alive
till famine cling thee. If thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou doest for me as much.
I pull in resolution, and begin
to doubt the equivocation of the fiend,
that lies like truth. "Fear not till Birnam Wood
do come to Dunsinane"—and now a wood
comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!
If this which he avouches does appear,
there is nor flying hence, nor tarrying here.
I begin to be aweary of the sun,
and wish the estate of the world were now undone.
Ring the alarum bell. Blow wind, come wrack—
at least we'll die with harness on our back. *Exeunt*

(V.vi) *Drum and colours. Enter Prince Malcolm, the Earl of Northumberland, Macduff, and their army, with boughs* 26

PRINCE MALCOLM
Now, near enough—your leafy screen throw down,
and show like those you are.
(*to Northumberland*) You, worthy uncle,
shall with my cousin, your right noble son,
lead our first battle. Worthy Macduff and we
shall take upon us what else remains to do,
according to our order.
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND Fare you well.
Do we but find the tyrant's power tonight,
let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.
MACDUFF
Make all our trumpets speak, give them all breath,
those clamorous harbingers of blood and death. *Exeunt*

(V.vii) *Alarums continued. Enter Macbeth* 27

MACBETH
They have tied me to a stake: I cannot fly,
but bear-like I must fight the course. What's he
that was not born of woman? Such a one
am I to fear, or none.

Enter Young Siward

YOUNG SIWARD
What is thy name?
MACBETH Thou wilt be afraid to hear it.
YOUNG SIWARD
No—though thou callest thyself a hotter name
than any is in hell.
MACBETH My name's Macbeth.
YOUNG SIWARD
The devil himself could not pronounce a title
more hateful to mine ear.
MACBETH No—nor more fearful.
YOUNG SIWARD
Thou liest, abhorrèd tyrant. With my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speakest.

They fight, and Young Siward is slain

MACBETH Thou wast born of woman.
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
brandished by man that's of a woman born.
Exit Macbeth, with Young Siward's body

Alarums. Enter Macduff 28

MACDUFF
That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!
If thou be'st slain, and with no stroke of mine,
my wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.
I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms
are hired to bear their staves. Either thou, Macbeth,

or else my sword with an unbattered edge
I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst be—
by this great clatter one of greatest note
seems bruited. Let me find him, Fortune,
and more I beg not.

Exit Macduff

Alarums. Enter Prince Malcolm and the Earl of Northumberland 29

EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND
This way, my lord. The castle's gently rendered:
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight.
The noble thanes do bravely in the war.
The day almost itself professes yours,
and little is to do.

PRINCE MALCOLM We have met with foes
that strike beside us.

EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND Enter, sir, the castle. *Exeunt*

(V.viii) *Alarum. Enter Macbeth* 30

MACBETH
Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
on mine own sword? Whiles I see lives, the gashes
do better upon them.

Enter Macduff

MACDUFF Turn, hellhound, turn!

MACBETH
Of all men else I have avoided thee.
But get thee back, my soul is too much charged
with blood of thine already.

MACDUFF I have no words:
my voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain
than terms can give thee out.

They fight. Alarum

MACBETH Thou losest labour.
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air

with thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed.
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests—
I bear a charmèd life, which must not yield
to one of woman born.

MACDUFF Despair thy charm,
and let the angel whom thou still hast served
tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
untimely ripped.

MACBETH
Accursèd be that tongue that tells me so,
for it hath cowed my better part of man.
And be these juggling fiends no more believed
that palter with us in a double sense,
that keep the word of promise to our ear,
and break it to our hope. I'll not fight with thee.

MACDUFF Then yield thee, coward,
and live to be the show and gaze of the time.
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
"Here may you see the tyrant".

MACBETH I will not yield
to kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
and to be baited with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam Wood be come to Dunsinane,
and thou opposed being of no woman born,
yet I will try the last. Before my body,
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff,
and damned be him that first cries "Hold, enough!"

Alarums. They fight, and Macbeth is slain

Exit Macduff with Macbeth's body

(V.ix) *Retreat and flourish. Enter with drum and colours, Prince Malcolm, the Earl of Northumberland, the Thane of Ross, other thanes, and soldiers* 31

PRINCE MALCOLM
I would the friends we miss, were safe arrived.
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND
Some must go off—and yet by these I see,
so great a day as this is cheaply bought.
PRINCE MALCOLM
Macduff is missing, and your noble son.
THANE OF ROSS
Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt—
he only lived but till he was a man,
the which no sooner had his prowess confirmed
in the unshrinking station where he fought,
but like a man he died.
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND Then is he dead?
THANE OF ROSS
Ay, and brought off the field. Your cause of sorrow
must not be measured by his worth, for then
it hath no end.
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND Had he his hurts before?
THANE OF ROSS
Ay, on the front.
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND
Why, then, God's soldier be he.
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death.
And so his knell is knolled.
PRINCE MALCOLM He's worth more sorrow,
and that I'll spend for him.
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND He's worth no more.
They say he parted well, and paid his score—
and so God be with him. Here comes newer comfort.

Enter Macduff, with Macbeth's head

MACDUFF
Hail, King, for so thou art. Behold where stands
the usurper's cursèd head. The time is free.
I see thee compassed with thy kingdom's pearl
that speak my salutation in their minds
whose voices I desire aloud with mine:
Hail, King of Scotland!
ALL Hail, King of Scotland!
Flourish
KING MALCOLM
We shall not spend a large expense of time
before we reckon with your several loves,
and make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
in such an honour named. What's more to do,
which would be planted newly with the time—
as calling home our exiled friends abroad
that fled the snares of watchful tyranny,
producing forth the cruel ministers
of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,
who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands
took off her life—this, and what need full else
that calls upon us, by the grace of Grace,
we will perform in measure, time, and place.
So thanks to all at once, and to each one
whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone.
Flourish. Exeunt

GLOSSARY

Scene 1 (I.i)

line

weird sister a witch

5 *ere* before

8 *Gray-Malkin* a grey cat, the 'familiar' of the first weird sister

8 *Padock* a toad, the 'familiar' of the second weird sister

Scene 2 (I.ii)

9 *choke their art* frustrate their own efforts and skill

Macdonwald leader of the rebels

13 *kerns* Irish foot soldiers, lightly armed

gallowglasses heavily armed, axe-wielding horsemen

19 *minion* favourite, darling

20 *slave* Macdonwald

31 *Norwegian lord* King Sweno of Norway

surveying vantage seeing a favourable opportunity

32 *furbished* fresh, polished

36 *sooth* in truth

41 *Golgotha* The Place of Skulls, Calvary

55 *Bellona's* in Greek mythology, the wife of the God of War

61 *composition* peace terms

63 *Saint Colme's Inch* Inchcolm, on the Firth of Forth (see map)

64 *dollars* 'taler', (silver coins) currency used in German states at this time

Scene 3 (I.iii)

6 *Aroint* begone
7 *ronyon* fat, unpleasant woman
8 *Aleppo* important port in Syria
Tiger name of a ship
9 *sieve* witches were believed to be able to sail through or under the seas
10 *a rat without a tail* at this time it was also believed that a witch could take the form of any animal she pleased, but the animal would never have a tail
18 *shipman's card* the compass's direction card
21 *penthouse lid* eyelid
25 *bark be lost* ship be sunk
54 *fantastical* not real, imaginary
68 *get kings* beget kings, i.e. produce a line of future kings
72 *Sinel* Macbeth's father
82 *corporal* real, physical
109 *robes* metaphor for title
121 *that, trusted home* that (i.e. the prophecy) trusted completely
141 *my single state of man* complete being
142 *function* power of physical and mental action
155 *chanced* happened

Scene 4 (I.iv)

11 one cannot tell what a man is thinking by his face
14 *cousin* Duncan and Macbeth were related

34 *wanton in fullness* unrestrained
35 *drops of sorrow* tears
kinsmen relatives
39 *Prince of Cumberland* title of the heir to the throne
58 *peerless* without equal, unrivalled

Scene 5 (I.v)

23 *hie* hasten
26 *golden round* the crown
27 *metaphysical* supernatural
36 *raven* bird of ill omen
43 *compunctious . . . nature* no natural feelings of compassion
46 *murdering ministers* spirits, or impulses which prompt one to murder
49 *dunnest* darkest
53 *all-hail hereafter* echo of the witches' earlier greeting to Macbeth
61 *beguile* deceive

Scene 6 (I.vi)

4 *martlet* house martin (a bird)
6 *jutty* projection
13 *yield* reward (show us signs of gratitude)
21 *coursed* pursued
23 *holp* helped

Scene 7 (I.vii)

3 *trammel* entangle, as in a trammel (kind of fishing net)
4 *surcease* Duncan's death
7 *jump* risk

20 *taking off* death
42 *ornament of life* the 'golden opinions' of line 33
44 *cat in the adage* 'The cat that would eat fish but was afraid to wet its feet'
64 *wassail* revelling
convince overcome
67 *'lembic* alembic, a vessel for distilling
80 *corporal agent* bodily faculty

Scene 8 (II.i)
4 *husbandry* thrift
6 *a heavy summons* a strong desire to go to sleep
46 *dudgeon* hilt of the dagger
gouts splashes
58 *prate* prattle, talk

Scene 9 (II.ii)
1 *That which... me bold* Lady Macbeth has drunk with Duncan's chamberlains
7 *possets* hot bedtime drinks
37 *it will make us mad* Note the irony here, Lady Macbeth finally goes mad herself
63 *Neptune* Roman god of the oceans
65 *multitudinous* many
incarnardine make blood red, crimson

Scene 10 (II.iii)
3 *Beëlzebub* devil
5 *napkins* handkerchiefs
7 *equivocator* one who is deliberately ambiguous to hide the truth
21 *second cock* 3 am
54 *combustion* confusion (here used metaphorically)

55 *obscure bird* owl
62 *confusion* destruction
68 *Gorgon* in Greek mythology there were three Gorgons, one of whom, Medusa, turned the beholder to stone
78 *parley* conference
91 *lees* dregs
106 *expedition* speed
107 *pauser* restrainer
137 *shaft* arrow

Scene 11 (II.iv)
7 *travelling lamp* sun
24 *what good... pretend* what advantage could they gain
suborned bribed
28 *raven up* devour
31 *Scone* ancient crowning place of Scottish kings
33 *Colmekill* Iona, the sacred isle, where Scotland's kings were buried
40 *benison* blessing

Scene 12 (III.i)
8 *verities* truth
31 *parricide* murder of one's father
63 *unlineal* not of one's family line
65 *filed* defiled
72 *champion me to the utterance* challenge me to the death
82 *passed... borne in hand* spent proving to you how you were deceived
95 *shoughs* a kind of lap-dog
clepped called

121 *avouch* justify
131 *the perfect spy of the time* the best moment

Scene 13 (III.ii)
13 *scorched* gashed, cut
32 *lave* wash
34 *vizards* masks
38 *eterne* eternal
40 *jocund* joyful

Scene 15 (III.iv)
19 *the nonpareil* the one without equal
71 *charnel houses* vaults in which bodies are piled
73 *maws* stomachs
76 *statute purged the gentle weal* law cleansed the noble community
124 *auguries* omens
125 *maggot-pies* magpies
choughs crows (the smaller kind)

Scene 16 (III.v)
1 *Hecat* a goddess, mistress of the witches
2 *beldams* old hags
15 *Acheron* underworld

Scene 18 (IV.i)
1 *brinded* streaked
2 *hedge-pig* hedgehog
3 *Harpier* bird, 'familiar' of the third witch, its name coming from 'harpy' which was a mythical monster, half woman, half bird
8 *sweltered* sweated
17 *howlet* young or little owl

31 *drab* harlot
33 *chaudron* entrails
59 *though the treasure... sickens* though nature's precious seeds mix unnaturally, so that they remain barren and prevent the creation of new life
66 *gibbet* gallows
95 *impress* compel to military service, conscript
119 *glass* mirror (reflecting the last king in the procession, so that Banquo's line seems to go on forever)
121 *two-fold balls and treble sceptres* the coronation orbs and sceptres of Scotland and England combined
130 *antic round* fantastic dance

Scene 19 (IV.ii)
14 *coz* cousin
17 *fits of the season* crises of the time
35 *gin* trap
84 *fry* spawn

Scene 20 (IV.iii)
8 *dolour* grief
15 *you may deserve... angry god* you may stand to gain something by betraying me, and it might be wise to sacrifice a young lamb (i.e. myself) in order to pacify an angry god (i.e. Macbeth)
20 *charge* command
34 *afeard* confirmed
37 *to boot* in addition
58 *luxurious* lustful
64 *continent impediments* restraints on chastity

78 *staunchless* unquenchable
88 *foisons... of your mere own* enough resources to which you have a royal right, to satisfy you
146 *Evil* scrofula, a skin disease
184 *witnessed the rather* borne out

Scene 21 (V.i)
14 *meet* correct
18 *her very guise* her habit
32 *One-two* the signal for Macbeth to murder Duncan
71 *mated* bewildered

Scene 22 (IV.ii)
15 *he cannot buckle... rule* clothing image: the belt of his rule is too small to contain the disaffection on his side
18 *Now minutely... faith-breach* every minute, revolts censure his own treason
27 *medicine... weal* cure for the sick country, i.e. Malcolm

Scene 23 (V.iii)
8 *epicures* gluttons
14 *prick* stick pins in your face to make the blood hide your pale-faced fear
15 *patch* clown
16 *are counsellors to fear* encourage others to be afraid
21 *push* attack
23 *sere* withered state
35 *skirr* scour
55 *senna* a laxative drug

59 *bane* ruin, destruction

Scene 24 (V.iv)
5 *shadow* hide
6 *discovery* reconnaissance (by enemy scouts)
11 *advantage* the chance
14 *Let our... event* have an accurate assessment (of the enemy's strength) until we have met in battle

Scene 25 (V.v)
10 *my senses... cooled* I would have felt a cold shiver
11 *fell of hair* head of hair
12 *treatise* tale
17 *hereafter* at a future time
39 *cling thee* shrivels you up

Scene 26 (V.vi)
10 *clamorous harbingers* noisy messengers

Scene 27 (V.vii)
2 *bear-like* like a bear being attacked by dogs while tied to a stake

Scene 28 (V.vii)
9 *bruited* reported

Scene 29 (V.vii)
1 *rendered* surrendered
6 *strike beside us* fight on our side; or perhaps deliberately miss us

Scene 30 (V.vii)

8 *terms* words
9 *intrenchant* incapable of being cut
16 *untimely* prematurely
18 *cowed* intimidated
20 *palter* quibble, trifle

Scene 31 (V.vii)

2 *go off* be killed
3 *cheaply bought* i.e. our losses are light
21 *The time is free* the age is delivered
22 *thy kingdom's pearl* your nobles
28 *make us even with you* reward you
34 *Producing... ministers* exposing the cruel agents
38 *grace of Grace* grace of God

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

Brown, John Russell ed. *Focus on Macbeth* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982). Excellent collection of thought-provoking studies. Highly recommended.

Bradley, A.C. *Shakespearean Tragedy* (Macmillan, 1983). Although first published in 1904, Bradley's studies of *Macbeth* (and of Shakespeare's other tragedies) have stood the test of time. Very readable, very illuminating.

Wain, John ed. *Shakespeare: Macbeth. A Casebook* (Macmillan, 1983). Includes A.C. Bradley's valuable lectures on the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Lerner, Laurence ed. *Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Penguin, 1968). Contains several excellent essays on *Macbeth*, particularly those by Wayne Booth and L.C. Knights.

Barrs, Myra ed. *Shakespeare Superscribe* (Penguin, 1980). Actors discuss Shakespeare's plays (twenty pages on *Macbeth*). Many helpful insights, seen from the actor's stance.

Rosenberg, Marvin. *The Masks of Macbeth* (University of California Press, 1978). Of great help to this study, and invaluable for the serious student of *Macbeth*. The author has collected hundreds of reviews about productions of *Macbeth* spanning the centuries, and he gives a compelling account of the many different ways that actors

have approached the play. He examines the play virtually speech by speech, comparing actors' interpretations and adding his own insights. Some marvellous anecdotes, as when he describes the famous David Garrick (Macbeth) telling Banquo's assassin that he has blood on his face with such conviction that the actor forgot himself and replied 'Is there, by God?'

Brereton, Geoffrey. *Principles of Tragedy* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968). A useful introduction to tragic drama generally, although Brereton tends to overlook the positive, optimistic side of the great tragedies.

Bullough, Geoffrey ed. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* Volume VII (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). Background to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, as well as to the other tragedies.

Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971). Path-breaking study of beliefs and superstitions in sixteenth and seventeenth century England.

Ellis, Peter Berresford. *Macbeth* (Frederick Muller, 1980). Helpful historical study of the real Macbeth. Highly recommended for those interested in Macbeth's life and times.

Dunnett, Dorothy. *King Hereafter* (Hamlyn Paperbacks, 1983). Impressive novel, rich in historical detail and unmatched in its evocation of character and country. After meticulous research, the novelist concluded that Thorfinn (Macbeth's cousin) and Macbeth were in fact the same person. Fascinating re-interpretation.

Palsson, Hermann. Edwards, Paul transl. *Orkneying*

Saga (Penguin, 1978). Saga of the Earls of Orkney, created and handed down over several centuries, in true skald style.

THE ODE TEAM

The ODE team came together in late 1983, with the intention of writing quality games software with an educational bent. Its seven members all live in Oxford, and four of them are attached to the university. The team includes a Scot, an Australian and an American.

Dr David Pringle: David is a physicist at the Nuclear Physics Laboratory, Oxford. He was responsible for the overall design of the package.

Dr Gareth Blower: Gareth is a nuclear physicist turned computer programmer. He has had experience on a wide range of machines, ranging from DEC VAX and PDP-IIs to the abacus! Gareth designed the program structure of *Macbeth — The Adventure.*

Theo Christophers: Theo moved from electronics design into computer programming six years ago. He has had responsiblity for a new machine code graphics package especially created for *Macbeth — The Adventure.*

Jennifer Coles: Jenny is a former teacher and television journalist and is writing a doctorate in history at Oxford University. She has been responsible for the historical and educational side of *Macbeth — The Adventure* and has written the 'Notes' which accompany the play.

Lee Williams: Lee is a former schoolteacher and currently editing a Shakespeare play for his doctorate. Using the original Folio edition (1623) of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Lee has produced an edition for ODE that is both scholarly and 'user friendly'.

Geoff Quilley: An Oxford-based artist, Geoff works chiefly in portraiture and computer graphics. He has also painted a mural for Wadham College, Oxford. Geoff has created the *Macbeth* graphics from pencil drawings and watercolour paintings.

Bill Turner: Bill is a Senior Lecturer in Scientific Programming at Oxford Polytechnic. He has created a sound package on the head of a needle for *Macbeth — The Adventure*.

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