

The Tragedy of Macbeth by William Shakespeare

ACT I

SCENE I. A desert place.

Enter five witches, singing. They gather at a moss and vine-covered ruin carrying candles in their hands. They place the candles down as they arrive and gather in the centre of a circle on the top step of the ruin. They stand in the circle that contains a pentagon and raise their arms to the sky. Thunder.

First Witch

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

Second Witch

When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch

That will be ere the set of sun.

First Witch

Where the place?

Second Witch

Upon the heath.

Third Witch

There to meet with

ALL

Macbeth.

Third Witch

I come, Graymalkin!

Second Witch

Paddock calls.

ALL

Anon.

ALL

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

As the witches repeat "Fair is foul," two witches are dressed in costume by the others, transforming them into the characters of Queen DUNCAN and her son, Prince MALCOLM. Once these two witches are in costume the others exit, leaving them alone on stage to begin the play.

SCENE II. A military camp near Forres.

Enter Queen DUNCAN and Prince MALCOLM, meeting a bleeding Sergeant.

DUNCAN

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

MALCOLM

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

The bleeding Sergeant holds a wound on his side and bravely struggles to stay standing while addressing the queen. He leans on MALCOLM for support near the end of his speech.

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,
Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:
For brave Macbeth--well he deserves that name--
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valour's minion carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

DUNCAN

O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

Sergeant

Mark, queen of Scotland, mark:
No sooner justice had with valour arm'd

Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels,
But the Norweyan lord surveying vantage,
With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men
Began a fresh assault.

DUNCAN

Dismay'd 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 overcharged with double cracks, so they
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

DUNCAN

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

Exit Sergeant.

Who comes here?

Enter ROSS.

MALCOLM

The worthy thane of Ross.

ROSS

God save the queen!

DUNCAN

Whence camest thou, worthy thane?

ROSS

From Fife, great queen;
Where the Norweyan 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, Macbeth, lapp'd in proof,
Confronted him with self-comparisons,

Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm.
Curbing his lavish spirit: and, to conclude,
The victory fell on us.

DUNCAN

Great happiness!

DUNCAN

No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth.

ROSS

I'll see it done.

DUNCAN

What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath won.

They go out.

SCENE III. A heath near Forres.

Thunder. Enter three witches.

Third Witch

Where hast thou been, sister?

Second Witch

Killing swine.

Third Witch

Sister, where thou?

The three witches do some physical actions and choreography in the next speech that support the First Witch's story of her revenge on a sailor and his greedy wife.

First Witch

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munch'd, and munch'd, and munch'd:--
'Give me,' quoth I:
'Aroint thee, witch!' the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' 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 Witch

I'll give thee a wind.

First Witch

Thou'rt kind.

Third Witch

And I another.

First Witch

I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card.
I will drain him dry as hay:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man forbid:
Weary se'nights nine times nine

Shall he dwindle, peak and pine:
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
Drum within

Third Witch/ALL

A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

ALL

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, generals of the Scottish army.

MACBETH

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO

How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her chappy 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 Witch

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

Second Witch

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

Third Witch

All hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter!

BANQUO

Good sir, why do you start; and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? I' 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 Witch

Hail!

Second Witch

Hail!

Third Witch

Hail!

First Witch

Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

Second Witch

Not so happy, yet much happier.

Third Witch

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

First Witch

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 witches vanish behind the ruins.

BANQUO

The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them. Whither are they vanish'd?

MACBETH

Into the air; and what seem'd corporal melted
As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!

BANQUO

Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?

*MACBETH and BANQUO bump into each other playfully in the next few lines, but
MACBETH takes it too far and pushes his friend harder than anticipated on "And thane
of Cawdor too: went it not so?"*

MACBETH

Your children shall be kings.

BANQUO

You shall be king.

MACBETH

And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

BANQUO

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

MACBETH

Ross!

Enter ROSS.

ROSS

The queen hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success; and when she reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
Her wonders and her praises do contend
Which should be thine or her: silenced with that,

In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
She finds thee in the stout Norweyan 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 her kingdom's great defense,
And pour'd them down before her. We are sent
To give thee from our royal master thanks;
Only to herald thee into her sight,
Not pay thee.

ROSS

And, for an earnest of a greater honour,
She bade me, from her, 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 borrow'd robes?

ROSS

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

MACBETH

[Aside] Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!

To ROSS.

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

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's
In deepest consequence.
Cousins, a word, I pray you.

MACBETH

[Aside] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.--I thank you, gentleman.
[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 smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

BANQUO

Look, how our partner's rapt.

MACBETH

[Aside] If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,
Without my stir.

BANQUO

New 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. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are register'd where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the Queen!

They go out towards Forres.

SCENE IV. Forres. The palace.

Flourish. Enter DUNCAN with her sons MALCOLM and DONALBAIN.

DUNCAN

Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
Those in commission yet return'd, my sons?

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 confess'd his treasons,
Implored your highness' pardon and set forth
A deep repentance: nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied in his death
To throw away the dearest thing he owed,
As 'twere a careless trifle.

DUNCAN

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

Enter MACBETH.

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

MACBETH

The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part
Is to receive our duties.

DUNCAN

Welcome hither:
I have begun to plant thee, and will labour

To make thee full of growing. My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulness, 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.

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.

MACBETH exits ahead of DUNCAN, MALCOLM and DONALBAIN, who follow behind.

SCENE V. Inverness. Macbeth's castle.

Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a letter.

LADY MACBETH

'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.'

She stops reading and addresses the audience.

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' 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'ldst 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 crown'd withal.

Enter a Messenger.

What is your tidings?

Messenger

The queen comes here to-night.

LADY MACBETH

Thou'rt mad to say it:
Is not thy master with her? who, were't so,
Would have inform'd 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.

He moves toward her and they embrace and kiss on the mouth.

MACBETH

My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.

LADY MACBETH

And when goes hence?

MACBETH

To-morrow, as she purposes.

LADY MACBETH

O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't. She 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.

They go out.

SCENE VI. Before Macbeth's castle.

Enter DUNCAN, DONALBAIN and BANQUO.

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. She hands Queen DUNCAN a bouquet of flowers.

DUNCAN

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

LADY MACBETH

All our service
In every point twice done and then done double
Were poor and single business to contend
Against those honours deep and broad wherewith
Your majesty loads our house: for those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits.

DUNCAN

Where's the thane of Cawdor?
We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor: but he rides well;
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.

LADY MACBETH

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

DUNCAN

Give me your hand;
Conduct me to mine host: we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess.

They all go into Macbeth's castle.

SCENE VII. Macbeth's castle.

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 her 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 judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. She's here in double trust;
First, as I am her kinsman and her subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as her host,
Who should against her murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. 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

She has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?

MACBETH

Hath she ask'd for me?

LADY MACBETH

Know you not she has?

MACBETH

We will proceed no further in this business:
She hath honour'd 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 dress'd 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 i' 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't, 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 pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd 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 her day's hard journey
Soundly invite her--her 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 limbeck only: when in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
Her 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 mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of her own chamber and used their very daggers,
That they have done't?

LADY MACBETH

Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon her 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.

They go out.

ACT II

SCENE I. Court of Macbeth's castle.

Enter FLEANCE bearing a lantern before him. It is late and he is struggling to stay awake. He sits on a stool as BANQUO, his father, enters.

BANQUO

How goes the night, Fleance?

FLEANCE

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

BANQUO

And she goes down at twelve.

FLEANCE

I take't, 'tis later, sir.

BANQUO hands FLEANCE his dagger and a cloth to clean it in the next section.

BANQUO

Hold, take my blade. 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 cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose!

Enter MACBETH, also carrying a lantern.

Give me my blade.
Who's there?

MACBETH

A friend.

BANQUO

What, sir, not yet at rest? The Queen's a-bed:
She hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great largess to your offices.
This diamond she 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.

Young FLEANCE has fallen asleep.

BANQUO

All's well.
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:
To you they have show'd some truth.

MACBETH

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

BANQUO

At your kind'st leisure.

MACBETH

If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,
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 counsell'd.

BANQUO touches FLEANCE's shoulder, which wakes him suddenly and causes him to hold up his father's dagger in defense.

MACBETH

Good repose the while!

BANQUO

Thanks, sir: the like to you!

BANQUO takes his dagger back from his son and he and FLEANCE go out.

MACBETH

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-oppresed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' 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. Whiles I threat, she lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

A clock chimes.

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.

He exits.

SCENE II. The same.

*Enter LADY MACBETH carrying a bowl assumed to carry water and a small towel.
She places these items on a stool.*

LADY MACBETH

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.
Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open; and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd
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 'em. Had she not resembled
My mother as she slept, I had done't.

Enter MACBETH with blood on his hands [the actor wears red gloves].

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 i' the second chamber?

LADY MACBETH

Donalbain.

MACBETH

This is a sorry sight.

Looking at his bloody hands.

LADY MACBETH

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

MACBETH

There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried
'Murder!'

That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and address'd 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 ravell'd 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 murder'd 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.
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't again I dare not.

LADY MACBETH

Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If she do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;
For it must seem their guilt.

She exits. Knocking within.

MACBETH

Whence is that knocking?

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

*He washes the blood off his hands in the bowl and dries them with the towel.
Re-enter LADY MACBETH now wearing red gloves to indicate bloody hands.*

LADY MACBETH

My hands are of your colour; but I shame
To wear a heart so white.

*Knocking within. She begins to wash her hands [remove the red gloves] in the bowl
to remove the blood.*

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.

Knocking within. She dries her hands and carries the towel out with the bowl.

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.

She exits.

MACBETH

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

Knocking within.

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!

He follows her out.

SCENE III. The same.

Knocking within. The Porter enters drinking out of a flask, and fumbles throughout this scene with a ring of skeleton keys.

Porter

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

Knocking within.

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

Knocking within.

Knock, knock! [Who's there?]
Aaron. [Aaron who?]
Aaron the side of caution tonight!

Knocking within.

Knock, knock! [Who's there?]
Shelley. [Shelley who?]
Shelley compare thee to a summer's day?

Knocking within.

Knock, knock! [Who's there?]
Doris. [Doris who?]
Doris locked that's why they're knocking.

Knocking within.

Knock, knock! [Who's there?]
Anita. [Anita who?]
Anita-n Advil - my head is pounding!

Knocking within.

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

He exits to open the gate. Enter MACDUFF and LENNOX.

MACDUFF

[To the Porter who is now offstage] Is thy master stirring?

Enter MACBETH.

Our knocking has awaked Macbeth; here he comes.

LENNOX

Good morrow, noble sir.

MACBETH

Macduff, Lennox.

MACDUFF

Is the queen stirring, worthy thane?

MACBETH

Not yet.

MACDUFF

She did command me to call timely on her:
I have almost slipp'd the hour.

MACBETH

I'll bring you to her.

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.

He exits into DUNCAN's chamber.

LENNOX

Goes the queen hence to-day?

MACBETH

She does: she did appoint so.

LENNOX

The night has been unruly: where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air; strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confused events
New hatch'd to the woeful time: the obscure bird
Clamour'd the livelong night: some say, the earth
Was feverous and did shake.

MACBETH

'Twas a rough night.

LENNOX

My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

Re-enter MACDUFF.

MACDUFF

O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee!

MACBETH / LENNOX

What's the matter?

MACDUFF

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

MACBETH

What is 't you say? the life?

LENNOX

Mean you her majesty?

MACDUFF

Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon: do not bid me speak;

See, and then speak yourselves.

MACBETH and LENNOX go into the chamber.

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 sprites,
To countenance this horror! Ring the bell.

A clock chimes and alarums ring. Enter LADY MACBETH.

LADY MACBETH

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

MACDUFF

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

Enter BANQUO.

O Banquo, Banquo,
Our royal monarch 's murder'd!

LADY MACBETH

Woe, alas!
What, in our house?

BANQUO

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

Re-enter MACBETH from DUNCAN's chamber.

MACBETH

Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had lived a blessed 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 DONALBAIN.

DONALBAIN

What is amiss?

MACBETH

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

MACDUFF

Your royal mother 's murder'd.

DONALBAIN

O, by whom?

MACDUFF

Those of her chamber, as it seem'd, had done 't:
Their hands and faces were an 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

O, 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 my violent love
Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,
Her silver skin laced with her golden blood;
And her gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore: who could refrain,

That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make 's love known?

LADY MACBETH

Help me hence, ho!

BANQUO

Look to the lady.

MACDUFF

Look to the lady:

LADY MACBETH is carried out by BANQUO.

MACDUFF

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.

MACBETH

And so do I.

ALL

So all.

Enter MALCOLM.

MALCOLM

[Aside to DONALBAIN] Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument for ours?

DONALBAIN

[Aside to MALCOLM] What should be spoken here,
where our fate,
Hid in an auger-hole, may rush, and seize us?
Let 's away;
Our tears are not yet brew'd.

MALCOLM

Nor our strong sorrow
Upon the foot of motion.

MACBETH

Let's briefly put on manly readiness,
And meet i' the hall together.

ALL

Well contented.

They go out but MALCOLM and DONALBAIN remain.

MALCOLM

What will you do? Let's not consort with them:
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office
Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.

DONALBAIN

To Ireland, I; our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer: where we are,
There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.

MALCOLM offers his brother a handshake but DONALBAIN hugs him instead before exiting.

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.

He exits.

SCENE IV. Outside Macbeth's castle.

Enter ROSS.

ROSS

There goes the good Macduff.

Enter MACDUFF.

How goes the world, sir, now?

MACDUFF

Ross, see you not?

ROSS

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

MACDUFF

Those that Macbeth hath slain.

ROSS

Alas, the day!

What good could they pretend?

MACDUFF

They were suborn'd:
Malcolm and Donalbain, the queen's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled; which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

ROSS

'Gainst nature still!
Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin 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.

ROSS

Where is Duncan's body?

MACDUFF

Carried to Colmekill,

The sacred storehouse of her predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.

ROSS

Will you to Scone?

MACDUFF

No, cousin, I'll home to Fife.

ROSS

Well, I will thither.

MACDUFF

Well, may you see things well done there: adieu!
Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

They exit in opposite directions.

ACT III

SCENE I. Forres. The palace.

Enter BANQUO.

BANQUO

Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and, I fear,
Thou play'dst most foully for't: 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? But hush! no more.

Sennet sounded. Enter MACBETH, as king, LADY MACBETH, as queen. They are both wearing crowns. MACBETH wears DUNCAN's three-pointed gold crown.

MACBETH

[Seeing 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

To-night 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
For ever 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 to-morrow.
Is't far you ride?

BANQUO

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

MACBETH

Fail not our feast.

BANQUO

My lord, I will not.

MACBETH

We hear, our bloody cousins are bestow'd
In England and in Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention: but of that to-morrow,
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's.

MACBETH

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

Exit BANQUO.

Let every man be master of his time
Till seven at night: to make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper-time alone: while then, God be with you!

LADY MACBETH is surprised to be dismissed, but goes out leaving MACBETH alone.

MACBETH

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 fear'd: '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: He chid the sisters
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him: then prophet-like
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come fate into the list.
And champion me to the utterance! Who's there!

Enter two Murderers. MACBETH sees them and invites them into the room by gesturing to them. He then hurries to play host and offers them both stools to sit upon.

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

First Murderer

It was, so please your highness.

MACBETH

Well then, now
Have you consider'd 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, pass'd in probation with you,
How you were borne in hand, how cross'd,
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 Murderer

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?

Second Murderer

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

First Murderer

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

MACBETH

Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.

Both Murderers

True, my lord.

MACBETH

So is he mine; and in such bloody distance,
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life: and though I could
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
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 Murderer

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

First Murderer

Though our lives--

MACBETH

Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most
I will advise you where to plant yourselves;
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,
The moment on't; for't must be done to-night,
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 Murderers

We are resolved, my lord.

MACBETH

I'll call upon you straight: abide within.

The Murderers go out in opposite directions.

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

He exits.

SCENE II. The palace.

Enter a Servant and LADY MACBETH. The Servant dresses LADY MACBETH throughout the following exchange. LADY MACBETH stops the Servant from finally placing the crown upon her head and insists on doing it herself.

LADY MACBETH

Is Banquo gone from court?

Servant

Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

LADY MACBETH

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

Servant

Madam, I will.

Servant exits.

LADY MACBETH

Nought'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 scorch'd the snake, not kill'd 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 her grave;
After life's fitful fever she sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch her further.

LADY MACBETH

Come on;
Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.

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

O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st 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 cloister'd flight, 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.
Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee still;

Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.
So, prithee, go with me.

He goes out and she follows.

SCENE III. A park near the palace.

The two Murderers from earlier enter.

First Murderer

The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day:
Now spurs the lated traveller apace
To gain the timely inn; and near approaches
The subject of our watch.

Second Murderer

Hark! I hear horses.

BANQUO

[From offstage] Give us a light there, ho!

Second Murderer

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

First Murderer

His horses go about.
Almost a mile: but he does usually,
So all men do, from hence to the palace gate
Make it their walk.

Second Murderer

A light, a light!

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE with a lantern.

First Murderer

Stand to't.

*The Murderers turn upstage and lean against each other in an effort to look
"casual."*

BANQUO

It will be rain to-night.

First Murderer

Let it come down.

The First Murderer grabs BANQUO's arms from behind as the Second Murderer grabs FLEANCE and tries to stab him with his dagger. Before he can do this, BANQUO steps on the First Murderer's foot and elbows him hard, forcing him to temporarily release his victim. BANQUO's release causes the Second Murderer to drop FLEANCE, who escapes, still holding the lantern. Both Murderers turn on Banquo now, the First holding his arms back while the Second slits his throat with the dagger.

BANQUO

O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!
Thou mayst revenge. O slave!

BANQUO dies. FLEANCE escapes.

Second Murderer

Who did strike out the light?

First Murderer

Wast not the way?

Second 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.

They go out, carrying BANQUO's dead body.

SCENE IV. The same. Hall in the palace.

The witches sing rhythmically as they transform the bare stage into a banquet hall in what is now the Macbeths' castle at Forres. A dining table is set in the centre of the stage on the top deck, with two chairs with high backs on either end, and two stools upstage of the table. A large rectangular tablecloth is placed over top of the table, and on it a wooden tray with a pitcher and four metal goblets. Enter MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, ROSS, and Lords.

MACBETH

You know your own degrees; sit down: at first
And last the hearty welcome.
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 the door.

MACBETH

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

Approaching the door.

There's blood on thy face.

First Murderer

'Tis Banquo's then.

MACBETH

'Tis better thee without than he within.
Is he dispatch'd?

First Murderer

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

MACBETH

Thou art the best o' 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 'scaped.

MACBETH

Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect,
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad and general as the casing air:
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, 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 trenched gashes on his head;
The least a death to nature.

MACBETH

Thanks for that:
There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for the present. Get thee gone: to-morrow
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 vouch'd, 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.

MACBETH

Sweet remembrancer!
Now, good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!

ROSS

May't please your highness sit.

The GHOST OF BANQUO enters and sits in MACBETH's place at the table.

MACBETH

Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,
Were the graced person of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance!

ROSS

His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please't your highness
To grace us with your royal company.

MACBETH

The table's full.

ROSS

Here is a place reserved, sir.

MACBETH

Where?

MACBETH sees the GHOST OF BANQUO, who appears wearing a grey hood and with fabric blood pouring from his throat and wrists. He points a finger at Macbeth and lurches towards him. No one else can see the GHOST.

ROSS

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

MACBETH

Which of you have done this?

Lords

What, my good lord?

MACBETH

Thou canst not say I did it: never shake
Thy gory locks at me.

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. Are you a man?

MACBETH

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

LADY MACBETH

O proper stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear:
This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O, 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

Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo!
how say you?
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel-houses and our graves must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites.

The GHOST OF BANQUO vanishes.

LADY MACBETH

What, quite unmann'd in folly?

MACBETH

If I stand here, I saw him.

LADY MACBETH

Fie, for shame!

MACBETH

Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden time,
Ere human statute purged the gentle weal;
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear: the times have 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

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.
I drink to the general joy o' 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.

Re-enter the GHOST OF BANQUO.

MACBETH

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

What man dare, I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd 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!

The GHOST OF BANQUO vanishes.

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.

ROSS

What sights, my lord?

LADY MACBETH

I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;
Question enrages him. At once, good night:
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

Lord

Good night; and better health
Attend his majesty!

LADY MACBETH

A kind good night to all!

They all go out but MACBETH and LADY MACBETH.

MACBETH

It will have blood; they say, blood will have blood.
What is the night?

LADY MACBETH

Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

MACBETH

How say'st 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 to-morrow,
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
Stepp'd 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 scann'd.

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.

They are now both standing behind their chairs at either end of the dining table. The two actors, now witches again, bang their chairs on the stage at the same time, which begins another musical transition where all five witches remove the furniture from the banquet scene. Two witches stand downstage holding up the long, tea-stained tablecloth hiding the set change happening behind it. When the tablecloth is dropped moments later, a cauldron has appeared upstage with a purple light inside. A window in the set has been revealed upstage centre where the grey stones of the ruins once lay, with stretchy grey material covering it. This is a Hellmouth or portal to Hell. Smoke fills the stage to create a supernatural atmosphere as four witches (save for the one playing MACBETH) sing their spells around the cauldron.

ACT IV

SCENE I. A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron.

Thunder. Enter four witches. As they sing they take turns holding the tablecloth material, imbuing it with magic. At the end of the song the material will be dunked into the cauldron.

Fourth Witch

And now about the cauldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.

The witches sing:

*Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Fillet of a fenny snake
In the cauldron boil and bake*

*For a charm of powerful trouble;
Like a hell broth boil and bubble.*

*Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing.*

*For a charm of powerful trouble;
Like a hell broth boil and bubble.*

*Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf,
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digg'd in dark*

*For a charm of powerful trouble;
Like a hell broth boil and bubble.*

Second Witch

By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!

Knocking within. Enter MACBETH.

MACBETH

How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is't you do?

ALL

A deed without a name.

MACBETH

I conjure you, by that which you profess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me.

First Witch

Speak.

Second Witch

Demand.

Third Witch

We'll answer.

First Witch

Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters?

The witches look upstage at the Hellmouth portal. An unknown pair of hands pushes against the fabric as if trying to get out.

MACBETH

Call 'em; let me see 'em.

First Witch

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

Come, high or low;
Thyself and office deftly show!

Thunder. The First Apparition appears: an armed Head. All Apparitions are played by the Fourth Witch, who is the youngest. The tablecloth from earlier is pulled out of

the cauldron and across her face by two other witches as she is possessed by the First Apparition, creating the image of a head screaming from another dimension.

MACBETH

Tell me, thou unknown power,--

First Witch

He knows thy thought:

Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

First Apparition

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff;

Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me. Enough.

The First Apparition descends as the Fourth Witch sits motionless and the pair of unknown hands reappear in the Hellmouth.

MACBETH

Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks;

Thou hast harp'd my fear aright: but one

word more,--

First Witch

He will not be commanded: here's another,

More potent than the first.

Thunder. Second Apparition: A bloody Child. For this Apparition, the Fourth Witch gathers the tablecloth in a bundle at her stomach with a piece of it hanging down. She takes on the image of a pregnant woman (presumably MACDUFF's mother) who screams as her child is from her womb untimely ripp'd.

Second Apparition

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

MACBETH

Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

Second Apparition

Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn

The power of man, for none of woman born

Shall harm Macbeth.

The Second Apparition descends as the Fourth Witch sits motionless and the pair of unknown hands reappear in the Hellmouth.

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. Third Apparition: a Child crowned, with a tree in his hand. For this Apparition, the Fourth Witch drapes the tablecloth over one shoulder as another witch flaps the remainder behind the Apparition as if it were a cape blowing in the wind as she strikes a heroic pose, like a strange image of MALCOLM.

What is this
That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby-brow the round
And top of sovereignty?

ALL

Listen, but speak not to't.

Third Apparition

Be lion-mettled, proud; and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him.

The Third Apparition descends as the Fourth Witch is released from her possession and runs offstage in a disturbed state. The pair of unknown hands reappear in the Hellmouth.

MACBETH

That will never be
Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements! good!
Rebellion's head, 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.

The Apparitions and hands in the Hellmouth vanish. The witches gather up the cauldron and stand. The purple light and smoke have disappeared. The witches now appear as regular women.

What, is this so?

First Witch

Ay, sir, all this is so: but why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?

The witches smirk at MACBETH as they sing and then vanish behind the ruins.

MACBETH

Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious hour
Stand aye accursed in the calendar!
Come in, without there!

Enter LENNOX.

LENNOX

What's your grace's will?

MACBETH

Saw you the weird sisters?

LENNOX

No, my lord.

MACBETH

Came they not by you?

LENNOX

No, indeed, my lord.

MACBETH

Infected be the air whereon they ride;
And damn'd all those that trust them! I did hear
The galloping of horse: who was't came by?

LENNOX

'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
Macduff is fled to England.

MACBETH

Fled to England!

LENNOX

Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH

Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits:
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
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 o' 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!--Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are.

They go out.

SCENE II. Fife. Macduff's castle.

A young boy, the MACDUFF's Son, enters pretending to have a sword fight with an invisible opponent using a stool as a shield and a toy wooden sword. Enter a pregnant LADY MACDUFF and ROSS. The Son sits down on the stool to listen in on the adults' conversation.

LADY MACDUFF

What had he done, to make him fly the land?

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.

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 diminutive 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.

ROSS

My dearest coz,

I pray you, school yourself: but for your husband,

He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows

The fits o' 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 MACDUFF Son]* My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you!

LADY MACDUFF

Father'd he is, and yet he's fatherless.

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.

He exits.

LADY MACDUFF

Sirrah, your father's dead;
And what will you do now? How will you live?

Son

As birds do, mother.

LADY MACDUFF

What, with worms and flies?

Son

With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

LADY MACDUFF

Poor bird! thou'ldst never fear the net nor lime,
The pitfall nor the gin.

Son

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

LADY MACDUFF chuckles then holds her pregnant belly in discomfort. Her Son helps her by bringing a stool center stage for her to sit upon. He kneels next to his mother and rests his head on her lap.

LADY MACDUFF

Yes, he is dead; how wilt thou do for a father?

Son

Nay, how will you do for a husband?

LADY MACDUFF

Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

Son

Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

LADY MACDUFF

Thou speak'st with all thy wit: and yet, i' faith,
With wit enough for thee.

Son

Was my father a traitor, mother?

LADY MACDUFF

Ay, that he was.

Son

What is a traitor?

LADY MACDUFF

Why, one that swears and lies.

Son

And be all traitors that do so?

LADY MACDUFF

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

Son

And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

LADY MACDUFF

Every one.

Son

Who must hang them?

LADY MACDUFF

Why, the honest men.

Son

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

Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

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 maid'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.

She exits.

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 a Murderer.

What is this face?

First Murderer

Where is your husband?

LADY MACDUFF

I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou mayst find him.

First Murderer

He's a traitor.

Son

Thou liest, thou shag-hair'd villain!

First Murderer

What, you egg!

Stabbing him.

Young fry of treachery!

Son

He has kill'd me, mother:
Run away, I pray you!

Exit LADY MACDUFF and Son. The Murderer removes his hood to reveal that he is MACBETH. He laughs and holds up his dagger before chasing the family offstage. We hear the Son cry 'Murder!' and then see his face and hands press suddenly against the Hellmouth, then disappear.

SCENE III. England. Before the King's palace.

Enter MALCOLM followed by MACDUFF.

MACDUFF

Malcolm, I am not treacherous.

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.

MACDUFF

Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny! lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not cheque thee: wear thou
thy wrongs;
The title is affeer'd! Fare thee well, lord:
I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp,
And the rich East to boot.

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! 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 ROSS.

MACDUFF

See, who comes here?

MALCOLM

My countryman; but yet I know him not.

MACDUFF

[To ROSS] Stands Scotland where it did?

ROSS

Alas, poor country!
Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot
Be call'd our mother, but our grave.

MACDUFF

How does my wife?

ROSS

Why, well.

MACDUFF

And all my children?

ROSS

Well too.

MACDUFF

The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace?

ROSS

No; they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.

MACDUFF

Be not a miser of your speech: how goes't?

ROSS

Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound

That ever yet they heard.

MACDUFF

Hum! I guess at it.

ROSS

Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughter'd: to relate the manner,
Were, on the quarry of these murder'd deer,
To add the death of you.

MALCOLM

Merciful heaven!
What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break.

MACDUFF

My children too?

ROSS

Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.

ROSS presents MACDUFF with his son's toy wooden sword.

MACDUFF

And I must be from thence!
My wife kill'd too?

ROSS

I have said.

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? O hell-kite! All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop?

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!

MALCOLM

Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

MACDUFF

O, 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!

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.

They go out.

ACT V

SCENE I. Dunsinane. Ante-room in the castle.

Enter two witches who place two high-backed chairs as thrones center stage on the top deck of the set. They immediately transform into a Doctor of Physic and a Waiting-Gentlewoman.

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 night-gown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon't, 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 slumbry 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 candle. She is sleepwalking.

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 is shut.

LADY MACBETH sets her candle down on the throne. Then begins to rub her hands together as she did earlier in the play when she and MACBETH washed the blood off of their hands in the bowl. But there is no bowl. She is dreaming.

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't.--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 woman
to have had so much blood in her.

Doctor

Do you mark that?

LADY MACBETH

The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?--
What, will these hands ne'er be clean?--No more o'
that, my lord, no more o' 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 practise: 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's 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!

She picks up her candle and exits.

Doctor

Will she go now to bed?

Gentlewoman

Directly.

The Gentlewoman follows her out.

Doctor

The witch playing the Doctor removes the Doctor's glasses and speaks to the audience.

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.

She replaces the glasses on her face and is the Doctor again.

God, God forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night:
My mind she has mated, and amazed my sight.

He goes out.

SCENE III. Dunsinane. A room in the castle.

Enter MACBETH wearing his crown.

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.

He sits on his throne. Enter a 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-liver'd 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.

Seyton!--I am sick at heart,
When I behold--Seyton, I say!--This push
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, 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. Seyton!

Enter SEYTON.

SEYTON

What is your gracious pleasure?

MACBETH

What news more?

SEYTON

All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.

MACBETH

I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hack'd.
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.

Exit SEYTON. Enter 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 stuff'd 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.

SEYTON re-enters and carries in MACBETH's armour and longsword. He helps the king put on his armour throughout the following.

Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff.
Seyton, send out. Doctor, the thanes fly from me.
Come, sir, dispatch. 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.--Pull't off, I say.--
What rhubarb, cyme, 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

Bring it after me.

SEYTON and the Doctor exit.

I will not be afraid of death and bane,
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

He exits.

SCENE IV. Country near Birnam wood.

Drum. Enter MALCOLM and MACDUFF. They address the audience as if they were now playing soldiers in the English army.

MALCOLM

Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.

MACDUFF

We doubt it nothing.

MALCOLM

What wood is this before us?

MACDUFF

The wood of Birnam.

MALCOLM

Let every soldier hew them down a bough
And bear't before them: thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host and make discovery
Err in report of us.

The actors instruct the audience to pick up the tree boughs that have been marking the playing space and aisles and hold them up vertically. The actor playing MALCOLM begins to move his bough in a pattern that goes: two bounces to the left, then two to the right, two up, and two down. He continues this movement pattern through the end of the scene. The audience wordlessly follow this pattern until they are told to put down their boughs at the end of the scene.

MACDUFF

It shall be done.
We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our setting down before 't.

MALCOLM

'Tis his main hope:
For where there is advantage to be given,
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.
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.

The actors put their fingers to their lips to quiet the audience, and then use gesture to instruct them to stop the movement pattern and lay their boughs down as they lie in wait for MACBETH.

SCENE V. Dunsinane. Within the castle.

Enter MACBETH and SEYTON.

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 within. Hands push briefly against the Hellmouth.

What is that noise?

SEYTON

It is the cry of women, my good lord.

SEYTON exits to investigate.

MACBETH

I have almost forgot the taste of fears;
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
As life were in't: I have supp'd 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.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
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!

The actor playing MACBETH removes their crown and holds it in their hands. They address the audience directly.

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets her 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. MACBETH puts his crown back on.

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 look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

MACBETH

Liar and slave!

Messenger

Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so:
Within this three mile may you see it coming;
I say, a moving grove.

MACBETH moves swiftly towards the Messenger and grabs him by the throat.

MACBETH

If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling thee: if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.

*MACBETH releases his grip and the Messenger runs off coughing.
MALCOLM, MACDUFF, and their Army, lift their boughs again and repeat the*

movement pattern. MACBETH looks out and sees them as if seeing the English army from the ramparts of his castle.

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!
Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack!
At least we'll die with harness on our back.

MACBETH and SEYTON exit.

SCENE VI. Dunsinane. Before the castle.

Drum. Enter MALCOLM, MACDUFF, and their Army, with boughs. MALCOLM leads a call and response chant with his army.

MALCOLM

Chanting:

*I don't know but I've been told, [I don't know but I've been told],
Macbeth has got a tyrant's hold! [Macbeth has got a tyrant's hold!]
He does not deserve the crown, [He does not deserve the crown,]
Your leafy screens now throw down! [He does not deserve the crown!]*

The actors motion for the audience to put down their boughs and reveal their army's numbers. The audience replaces their boughs on the ground.

MALCOLM

Now near enough: your leafy screens throw down.
And show like those you are. Worthy Macduff and we
Shall take upon 's what else remains to do,
According to our order.

MACDUFF

Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.

They run into battle. The audience stays seated.

SCENE VII. Another part of the field.

Drums. Enter MACBETH with sword in hand.

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, a soldier in the English army.

YOUNG SIWARD

What is thy name?

MACBETH

Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

YOUNG SIWARD

No; though thou call'st 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, abhorred tyrant; with my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

They fight using metal longswords. MACBETH wounds YOUNG SIWARD throughout the brief fight, first cutting the outside of his arm, then slicing his back, and finally, fatally stabbing him in the abdomen. YOUNG SIWARD falls to the ground and crawls to the lowest deck of the stage before dying there.

MACBETH

Thou wast born of woman
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born.

He runs off.

Enter MACDUFF and ANGUS.

MACDUFF

That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!

They see YOUNG SIWARD's dead body. ANGUS carries him off.

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 unbatter'd 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.

He runs off in search of MACBETH on the battlefield.

SCENE VIII. Another part of the field.

Re-enter MACBETH.

MACBETH

Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

Re-enter MACDUFF.

MACDUFF

Turn, hell-hound, 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 using metal longswords. The overconfident MACBETH begins to overpower MACDUFF, moving faster and more dangerously.

MACBETH

Thou lovest 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 charmed 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 ripp'd.

They fight again and MACDUFF gets a strong punch in directly to MACBETH's face.

MACBETH

Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,

For it hath cow'd 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 o' the time:
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted on 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 damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'

MACDUFF gives chase and overpowers MACBETH. They exit fighting, and it is clear that MACDUFF is going to win the fight. As he chases MACBETH off he raises his sword to strike.

Enter MALCOLM, ROSS, ANGUS and Soldiers.

MALCOLM

I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

ROSS

Some must go off: and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

Seeing MACDUFF.

Here comes newer comfort.

Re-enter MACDUFF, carrying MACBETH's crown. Exhausted and kneeling, he presents the crown to MALCOLM.

MACDUFF

Hail, king! for so thou art: behold, where stands

The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:
I see thee compass'd 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!

MALCOLM accepts the crown from MACDUFF and holds it in his hands. During the following speech the other actors on stage remove their costume pieces and transform back into witches. As they become witches again, they gather around the actor playing MALCOLM. One witch removes MALCOLM's costume so that all five witches are now on stage in a group. The witch holding the crown slowly raises it to the sky while the others reach for it.

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 needful 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 crown'd at Scone.

First Witch

Hail!

Second Witch

Hail!

Third Witch

Hail!

ALL

Peace! The charms wound up.

The Tragedie of Macbeth (The Scottish Play)

Directed and edited by Kate Smith

for a Company of Fools (2024)

*The witches drop their hands and look directly at the audience. No one wears the crown.
End of play.*