



Vacbeth William Shakespeare



CHARACTERS -



Duncan, king of Scotland

His sons

Malcolm

Donalbain

Noblemen of Scotland

Macbeth

Banquo

Macduff

Lennox

Ross

Menteith (měn-těth')

Angus

Caithness (kāth'nĭs)

Fleance (fla'ens), son to Banquo

Siward (syoo'ərd), earl of Northumberland, general of the English forces

Young Siward, his son

Seyton (sā'tən), an officer attending on Macbeth

Son, to Macduff

An English Doctor

A Scottish Doctor

A Porter

An Old Man

Three Murderers

Lady Macbeth

Lady Macduff

A Gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth

Hecate (hek'it), goddess of witchcraft

Three Witches

Apparitions

Lords, Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, and

Attendants

THE TIME: THE ELEVENTH CENTURY
THE PLACE: SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND







SCENE 1

An open place in Scotland.

The play opens in a wild and lonely place in medieval Scotland. Three witches enter and speak of what they know will happen this day: The civil war will end, and they will meet Macbeth, one of the generals. Their meeting ends when their demon companions, in the form of a toad and a cat, call them away.

[Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches.]

First Witch. When shall we three meet again In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

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

5 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 Macbeth.

First Witch. I come, Graymalkin!

Second Witch. Paddock calls.

Third Witch. Anon!

All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair.

Hover through the fog and filthy air.

[Exeunt.]

3 hurlyburly: turmoil; uproar.

8–9 Graymalkin . . . Paddock: two demon helpers in the form of a cat and a toad; anon: at once.

10 Fair . . . fair: The witches delight in the confusion of good and bad, beauty and ugliness.

[Stage Direction] Exeunt Latin: They leave (the stage).





SCENE 2

King Duncan's camp near the battlefield.

Duncan, the king of Scotland, waits in his camp for news of the battle. He learns that one of his generals, Macbeth, has been victorious in several battles. Not only has Macbeth defeated the rebellious Macdonwald, but he has also conquered the armies of the king of Norway and the Scotlish traitor, the thane of Cawdor. Duncan orders the thane of Cawdor's execution and announces that Macbeth will receive the traitor's title.

[Alarum within. Enter Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Lennox, with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Captain.]

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

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

Captain. Doubtful it stood, As two spent swimmers that do cling together And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald (Worthy to be a rebel, for to that 10 The multiplying villainies 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; 15 For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name), Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel, Which smoked with bloody execution (Like valor's minion), carved out his passage Till he faced the slave; 20

Which ne'er shook hands nor bade farewell to him Till he unscamed him from the nave to the chops And fixed his head upon our battlements.

Duncan. O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

Captain. As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
 Shipwracking storms and direful thunders break,
 So from that spring whence comfort seemed to come
 Discomfort swells. Mark, King of Scotland, mark.
 No sooner justice had, with valor armed,
 Compelled these skipping kerns to trust their heels

[Stage Direction] alarum within: the sound of a trumpet offstage, a signal that soldiers should arm themselves.

- 5 'gainst my captivity: to save me from capture.6 broil: battle.
- 7–9 Doubtful...art: The two armies are compared to two exhausted swimmers who cling to each other and thus cannot swim.
- 9-13 The officer hates Macdonwald, whose evils (multiplying villainies) swarm like insects around him. His army consists of soldiers (kerns and gallowglasses) from the Hebrides (Western Isles).
- 19 valor's minion: the favorite of valor, meaning the bravest of all.
- 22 unseamed him ... chops: split him open from the navel to the jaw. What does this act suggest about Macbeth?
- 25–28 As whence . . . discomfort swells: As the rising sun is sometimes followed by storms, a new assault on Macbeth began.



But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage, With furbished arms and new supplies of men, Began a fresh assault.

Duncan. Dismayed not this Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

Yes,

As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.

If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks, so they
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe.
Except they meant to bathe in recking wounds,

40 Or memorize another Golgotha, I cannot tell—

But I am faint; my gashes cry for help.

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

[Exit Captain, attended.] [Enter Ross and Angus.]

s Who comes here?

Captain.

Malcolm. The worthy Thane of Ross.

Lennox. What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look

That seems to speak things strange.

loss. God save the King!

Duncan. Whence cam'st thou, worthy thane?

Ross. From Fife, great King,

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, lapped 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!

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.

Duncan. No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive

31–33 the Norweyan . . . assault: The king of Norway took an opportunity to attack.

36 sooth: the truth.

37 double cracks: a double load of ammunition.

39–40 Except ... memorize another Golgotha: The officer's admiration leads to exaggeration. He claims he cannot decide whether (except) Macbeth and Banquo wanted to bathe in blood or make the battlefield as famous as Golgotha, the site of Christ's crucifixion.

45 Thane: a Scottish noble, similar in rank to an English earf.

48-58 Ross has arrived from Fife, where Norway's troops had invaded and frightened the people. There the king of Norway, along with the thane of Cawdor, met Macbeth (described as the husband of Bellona, the goddess of war). Macbeth, in heavy armor (proof), challenged the enemy, and achieved victory.

59 craves composition: wants a treaty.

60 deign: allow.

61 disbursed, at Saint Colme's Inch: paid at Saint Colme's Inch, an island in the North Sea.



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. [Exeunt.]

63-64 deceive our bosom interest: betray our friendship; present death: immediate execution.

65 What reward has the king decided to give to Macbeth?

SCENE 3

A bleak place near the battlefield.

While leaving the battlefield, Macbeth and Banquo meet the witches, who are gleefully discussing the trouble they have caused. The witches hail Macbeth by a title he already holds, thane of Glamis. Then they prophesy that he will become both thane of Cawdor and king. When Banquo asks about his future, they speak in riddles, saying that he will be the father of kings but not a king himself.

After the witches vanish, Ross and Angus arrive to announce that Macbeth has been named thane of Cawdor. The first part of the witches' prophecy has come true, and Macbeth is stunned. He immediately begins to consider the possibility of murdering King Duncan to fulfill the rest of the witches' prophecy to him. Shaken, he turns his thoughts away from this "horrid image."

[Thunder, Enter the three Witches.]

First Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?

Second Witch. Killing swine.

Third Witch. Sister, where thou?

First Witch. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap

And mounched and mounched and mounched. "Give me," quoth I.

"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed ronyon cries. Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the

"Tiger":

10

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. Th' art 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.

2 Killing swine: Witches were often accused of killing people's pigs.

5 mounched: munched.

6 "Aroint thee, witch!" . . . ronyon cries: "Go away, witch!" the fat-bottomed (rump-fed), ugly creature (ronyon) cries.

7–8 The woman's husband, the master of a merchant ship (the "Tiger"), has sailed to Aleppo, a famous trading center in the Middle East. The witch will pursue him. Witches, who could change shape at will, were thought to sail on strainers (sieve).



View and Compare

In what ways do each of these images convey the eerie nature of the witches' scene?



Act 1, Scene 3: Macbeth and Banquo meet one of the witches, The Throne of Blood (film, directed by Akira Kurosawa, Japan, 1957)





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 sev'nights, nine times nine,
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.
Though his bark cannot be lost,

Yet it shall be tempest-tost.

Look what I have.

Second Witch. Show me! Show me! First Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb, Wracked as homeward he did come.

[Drum within.]

35

30 Third Witch. 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.]

Macbeth. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

Banquo. How far is't called to Forres? What are these,

So withered, 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 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 Witch. All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

Second Witch. All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

50 Third Witch. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter!

Banquo. Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear

Things that do sound so fair? 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

14–23 The witch is going to torture the woman's husband. She controls where the winds blow, covering all points of a compass (shipman's card). She will make him sleepless, keeping his eyelids (penthouse lid) from closing. Thus, he will lead an accursed (forbid) life for weeks (sev'nights), wasting away with fatigue.

33 posters: quick riders.

36 Nine was considered a magical number by superstitious people.

42–46 aught: anything; choppy: chapped; your beards: Beards on women identified them as witches. Banquo vividly describes the witches. What does he notice about them?

48–50 What is surprising about the three titles the witches use to greet Macbeth?

53 Are ye fantastical: Are you (the witches) imaginary?



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 favors nor your hate.

First Witch. Hail!

Second Witch. Hail!

Third Witch. Hail!

65 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, Λ 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.

[Witches 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 selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

[Enter Ross and Angus.]

Ross. The King hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success; and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend

54-57 My noble partner..., rapt withal: The witches' prophecies of noble possessions (having)—the lands and wealth of Cawdor—and kingship (royal hope) have left Macbeth dazed (rapt withal). Look for evidence that shows what Macbeth thinks of the prophecies.

65–68 The witches speak in riddles. Though Banquo will be less fortunate (happy) than Macbeth, he will be father to (get) future kings. What do the witches predict for Banquo? What do you think their predictions mean?

75–76 whence: where. Macbeth wants to know where the witches received their knowledge (strange intelligence).

80 whither: where.

81 corporal: physical; real.

84 insane root: A number of plants were believed to cause insanity when eaten.

92-93 His wonders . . . Silenced with that: King Duncan hesitates between awe (wonders) and gratitude (praise) and is, as a result, speechless.

85



Which should be thine or his. Silenced with that, In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day, He 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 his kingdom's great defense And poured them down before him.

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125

Angus. We are sent

To give thee from our royal master thanks; Only to herald thee into his sight, Not pay thee.

Ross. And for an earnest of a greater honor,

He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor;
In which addition, hail, most worthy Thane!
For it is thine.

Banquo. What, can the devil speak true?

Macbeth. The Thane of Cawdor lives. Why do you dress me In borrowed robes?

Angus. Who was the Thane lives yet,

But under heavy judgment bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labored in his country's wrack, I know not;

But treasons capital, confessed and proved,
Have overthrown him.

Macbeth. [Aside] Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor! The greatest is behind.—[To Ross and Angus] Thanks for your pains.

[Aside to Banquo] Do you not hope your children shall be kings,

When those that gave the Thane of Cawdor to me Promised no less to them?

Banquo. [Aside 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's In deepest consequence.—

Cousins, a word, I pray you.

96–97 nothing afeard... of death: Although Macbeth left many dead (strange images of death), he obviously did not fear death himself.

104 earnest: partial payment.

106 addition: title.

111–116 Whether he was...
overthrown him: The former thane
of Cawdor may have been secretly
allied (combined) with the king of
Norway, or he may have supported
the traitor Macdonwald (did line
the rebel). But he is guilty of
treasons that deserve the death
penalty (treasons capital), having
aimed at the country's ruin
(wrack).

116 aside: a stage direction that means Macbeth is speaking to himself, beyond hearing.

120 home: fully; completely.

121 enkindle you unto: inflame your ambitions.

123–126 to win us... consequence: Banquo warns that evil powers often offer little truths to tempt people. The witches may be lying about what matters most (in deepest consequence).



Macbeth. [Aside] Two truths are told,

As happy prologues to the swelling act

Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentlemen.—

130 [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

135 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.

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Banquo. Look how our partner's rapt.

Macbeth. [Aside] If chance will have me King, why

chance may crown me,

Without my stir.

Banquo. New honors come upon him,

Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mold

But with the aid of use.

Macbeth. [Aside] Come what come may,

Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

Banquo. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

Macbeth. Give me your favor. My dull brain was wrought

With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains

Are registered where every day I turn

The leaf to read them. Let us toward the King.

[Aside to Banquo] Think upon what hath chanced, and, at

more time,

The interim having weighed it, let us speak

Our free hearts each to other.

Banquo. [Aside to Macbeth] Very gladly.

Macbeth. [Aside to Banquo] Till then, enough.—Come, friends.

[Exeunt.]

144 my stir: my doing anything.

146–147 Come what . . . roughest day: The future will arrive no matter what.

148 stay: wait.

150–152 your pains . . . read them: I will always remember your efforts. The metaphor refers to keeping a diary and reading it regularly.

153–155 at more time...other: Macbeth wants to discuss the prophecies later, after he and Banquo have had time to think about them.



A room in the king's palace at Forres.

King Duncan receives news of the execution of the former thane of Cawdor. As the king is admitting his bad judgment concerning the traitor, Macbeth enters with Banquo, Ross, and Angus. Duncan expresses his gratitude to them and then, in a most unusual action, officially names his own son Malcolm as heir to the throne. To honor Macbeth, Duncan decides to visit Macbeth's castle at Inverness. Macbeth, his thoughts full of dark ambition, leaves to prepare for the king's visit.

[Flourish. Enter Duncan, Lennox, Malcolm, Donalbain, and Attendants.]

Duncan. Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not Those in commission yet returned?

Malcolm. My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die; who did report

That very frankly he confessed his treasons,
Implored your Highness' pardon, and set forth
A deep repentance. Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it. He died
As one that had been studied in his death

To throw away the dearest thing he owed As 'twere a careless trifle.

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

[Enter Macbeth, Banquo, Ross, and Angus.]

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; and our duties 2 those in commission: those who have the responsibility for Cawdor's execution.

6 set forth: showed.

8-11 He died as . . . trifle: He died as if he had rehearsed (studied) the moment. Though losing his life (the dearest thing he owed), he behaved with calm dignity.

14–21 O worthiest . . . pay: The king feels that he cannot repay (recompense) Macbeth enough. Macbeth's qualities and accomplishments are of greater value than any thanks or payment Duncan can give.



Are to your throne and state children and servants, Which do but what they should by doing everything Safe toward your love and honor.

Duncan. Welcome hither.

I have begun to plant thee and will labor
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 infold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

Banquo. There if I grow,

The harvest is your own.

And bind us further to you.

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 honor must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. From hence to Inverness,

Macbeth. The rest is labor, which is not used for you.

I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful

The hearing of my wife with your approach;

So, humbly take my leave.

Duncan.

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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.]

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.]

28–29 I have ... growing: The king plans to give more honors to Macbeth. What might Macbeth be thinking now?

33–35 My plenteous . . . sorrow: The king is crying tears of joy.

- 39 Prince of Cumberland: the title given to the heir to the Scottish throne. Now that Malcolm is heir, how might Macbeth react?
- 42 Inverness: site of Macbeth's castle, where the king has just invited himself, giving another honor to Macbeth.
- **45 harbinger:** a representative sent before a royal party to make proper arrangements for its arrival.

52–53 The eye . . . to see: Macbeth hopes for the king's murder, although he does not want to see it.



SCENE 5

Macbeth's castle at Inverness.

Lady Macbeth reads a letter from her husband that tells her of the witches' prophecies, one of which has already come true. She is determined that Macbeth will be king. However, she fears that he lacks the courage to kill Duncan. After a messenger tells her the king is coming, she calls on the powers of evil to help her do what must be done. When Macbeth arrives, she tells him that the king must die that night but reminds him that he must appear to be a good and loyal host.

[Enter Lady Macbeth alone, with a letter.]

Lady Macbeth. [Reads] "They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by the perfect'st 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 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 valor of my tongue All that impedes thee from the golden round Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem To have thee crowned withal.

[Enter Messenger.]

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16-21 Yet do . . . holily: Lady Macbeth fears her husband is too good (too full o' the milk of human kindness) to seize the throne by murder (the nearest way). Lacking the necessary wickedness (illness), he wants to gain power virtuously (holily).



What is your tidings?

Messenger. The King comes here tonight.

Lady Macbeth.

Thou'rt mad to say it!

Is not thy master with him? who, were't 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.

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Give him tending;

He brings great news.

[Exit Messenger.]

The rayon 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 45 Shake my fell purpose nor keep peace between The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers, Wherever in your sightless substances

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.

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, 35 had the speed of him: rode faster than he.

38 raven: The harsh cry of the raven, a bird symbolizing evil and misfortune, was supposed to indicate an approaching death.

40-54 Lady Macbeth calls on the spirits of evil to rid her of feminine weakness (unsex me) and to block out guilt. She wants no normal pangs of conscience (compunctious visitings of nature) to get in the way of her murderous plan. She asks that her mother's milk be turned to bile (gall) by the unseen evil forces (murd'ring ministers, sightless substances) that exist in nature. Furthermore, she asks that the night wrap (pall) itself in darkness as black as hell so that no one may see or stop the crime. Do you think Lady Macbeth could actually kill Duncan?



Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue; look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't. He that's coming
Must be provided for; and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch,
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

Macbeth. We will speak further.

Lady Macbeth. Only look up clear.

To alter favor ever is to fear. Leave all the rest to me.

[Exeunt.]

63-66 To beguile . . . under't: To fool (beguile) everyone, act as expected at such a time, that is, as a good host. Who is more like a serpent, Lady Macbeth or her husband?

68 my dispatch: my management.

70 give solely sovereign sway: bring absolute royal power.

72 To alter... fear: To change your expression (favor) is a sign of fear

SCENE 6

In front of Macbeth's castle.

King Duncan and his party arrive, and Lady Macbeth welcomes them. Duncan is generous in his praise of his hosts and eagerly awaits the arrival of Macbeth.

[Hautboys and torches. Enter Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Banquo, Lennox, Macduff, Ross, Angus, and Attendants.]

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.]

Duncan. See, see, our honored hostess!

The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid God 'ield us for your pains
And thank us for your trouble.

Lady Macbeth. All our service
In every point twice done, and then done double

[Stage Direction] hautboys: oboes.

1 seat: location.

3–10 This guest . . . delicate: The martin (martlet) usually built its nest on a church (temple), where every projection (jutty), sculptured decoration (frieze), support (buttress), and convenient corner (coign of vantage) offered a good nesting site. Banquo sees the presence of the martin's hanging (pendent) nest, a breeding (procreant) place, as a sign of healthy air.



Were poor and single business to contend Against those honors deep and broad wherewith Your Majesty loads our house. For those of old, And the late dignities heaped up to them, We rest your hermits.

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 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.

[Exeunt.]

20

25

16 single business: weak service. Lady Macbeth claims that nothing she or her husband can do will match Duncan's generosity.

20 we rest your hermits: we can only repay you with prayers. The wealthy used to hire hermits to pray for the dead.

21 coursed him at the heels: followed him closely.

22 purveyor: one who makes advance arrangements for a royal visit.

23 holp: helped.

25–28 Legally, Duncan owned everything in his kingdom. Lady Macbeth politely says that they hold his property in trust (compt), ready to return it (make their audit) whenever he wants. Why do you think Lady Macbeth is being especially gracious to Duncan?





SCENE 7

A room in Macbeth's castle.

Macbeth has left Duncan in the middle of dinner. Alone, he begins to have second thoughts about his murderous plan. Lady Macbeth enters and discovers that he has changed his mind. She scornfully accuses him of cowardice and tells him that a true man would never back out of a commitment. She reassures him of success and explains her plan. She will make sure that the king's attendants drink too much. When they are fast asleep, Macbeth will stab the king with the servants' weapons.

[Hautboys. Torches. Enter a Sewer, and divers Servants with dishes and service over the stage. Then enter Macbeth.]

Macbeth. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly. If the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success, that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'ld 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 ingredience 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

[Enter Lady Macbeth.]

And falls on the other-

5

10

15

2.5

How now? What news?

[Stage Direction] Sewer: the steward, the servant in charge of arranging the banquet and tasting the King's food; divers: various.

1–10 Again, Macbeth argues with himself about murdering the king. If it could be done without causing problems later, then it would be good to do it soon. If Duncan's murder would have no negative consequences and be successfully completed with his death (surcease), then Macbeth would risk eternal damnation. He knows, however, that terrible deeds (bloody instructions) often backfire.

12–28 Macbeth reminds himself that he is Duncan's relative, subject, and host and that the king has never abused his royal powers (faculties). In fact, Duncan is such a good person that there is no possible reason for his murder except Macbeth's own driving ambition.



Act 1, Scene 7: Orson Welles as Macbeth and Jeanette Nolan as Lady Macbeth (film, 1948)

Lady Macbeth. He has almost supped. Why have you left the chamber?

30 Macbeth. Hath he asked for me?

Lady Macbeth. K

Know you not he has?

Macbeth. We will proceed no further in this business.

He hath honored me of late, and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

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 valor
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that

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.

32–35 I have ... so soon: The praises that Macbeth has received are, like new clothes, to be worn, not quickly thrown away. What has Macbeth decided?

35–38 Was the hope drunk . . . freely: Lady Macbeth sarcastically suggests that Macbeth's ambition must have been drunk, because it now seems to have a hangover (to look so green and pale).

39–45 Such I... adage: Lady Macbeth criticizes Macbeth's weakened resolve to secure the crown (ornament of life) and calls him a coward. She compares him to a cat in a proverb (adage) who wouldn't catch fish because it feared wet feet.

45

Who dares do more is none.

50

5.5

75

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 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 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 up

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't?

Lady Macbeth. Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamor roar
Upon his death?

Macbeth. I am settled and bend up

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.]

54 I have given suck: I have nursed a baby.

60 but... place: When each string of a guitar or lute is tightened to the peg (sticking place), the instrument is ready to be played.

65–67 that memory . . . a limbeck only: Memory was thought to be at the base of the brain, to guard against harmful vapors rising from the body. Lady Macbeth will get the guards so drunk that their reason will become like a still (limbeck), producing confused thoughts.

72 quell: murder.

72–74 Bring forth . . . males: Your bold spirit (undaunted mettle) is better suited to raising males than females. Do you think Macbeth's words express admiration?

79–82 I am settled . . . know: Now that Macbeth has made up his mind, every part of his body (each corporal agent) is tightened like a bow. He and Lady Macbeth will return to the banquet and deceive everyone (mock the time), hiding their evil intent with gracious faces.

Thinking LITERATURE

Connect to the Literature

What Do You Think?
 At this point, what are your impressions of Macbeth and his wife?

Comprehension Check

- What predictions do the three witches make about Macbeth's future?
- What do Macbeth and his wife plan to do to make the last prediction come true?
- What predictions do the witches make about Banquo?

Think Critically

- 2. What values do you think motivate Macbeth?
- 3. At this point in the play, who would you say is the more forceful character, Macbeth or Lady Macbeth? Why?



- · their ambitions and fears
- · their attitudes toward Duncan
- · their attitudes toward murder
- · their attitudes toward each other
- 4. Do you think Macbeth would have formed his murderous plan if the witches hadn't made their predictions to him? Explain who you think controls Macbeth's fate.
- 5. What might the witches' predictions about Banquo mean?
- 6. ACTIVE READING SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE In Act One, Scene 7, what does Macbeth mean in the final sentence of his soliloquy, lines 25–28? You may want to refer to your PREADER'S NOTEBOOK for notes you took on the Strategies for Reading Shakespeare's Language.

Extend Interpretations

- 7. What If? Imagine that you are a friend and adviser of Macbeth and his wife. What advice would you give them? What would you tell them about the three witches' predictions?
- 8. Critic's Corner According to the critic L. C. Knights, "Macbeth defines a particular kind of evil—the evil that results from a lust for power." On the basis of what you have read so far, do you agree? Is excessive ambition the only source of Macbeth's "evil"? Support your opinion with details from Act One.

Literary Analysis

is a speech that reveals a character's private thoughts to the audience. An **aside** is a character's remark that others on the stage are not supposed to hear. Although unrealistic, the soliloquy and the aside allow playwrights to reveal characters' thoughts and motives that would otherwise remain hidden.

Paired Activity Working with a partner, identify revealing soliloquies and asides in Act One of *Macbeth*, and explain the thoughts and motives that they reveal. You might fill in a chart like the one below.

Act, Scene,	Soliloquy	What It
Lines	or Aside?	Reveals
Act One, Scene 3, lines 116–117	Aside	Macbeth's ambition and his belief in the witches' prophecies

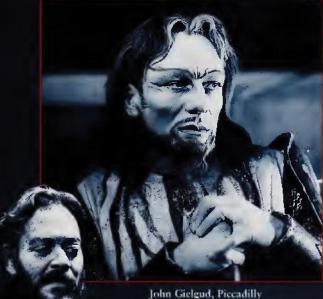
REVIEW CHARACTERIZATION

Consider Duncan's speeches and actions, as well as the remarks that Macbeth and others make about him. What sort of person does Duncan seem to be? How good a king is he?



View and Compare

What aspects of Macbeth's character do these images convey?



John Gielgud, Piccadilly Theatre, London (1942)

Laurence Olivier, Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, England (1955)





Toshiro Mifune as Macheth, The Throne of Blood (film, 1957)

Raul Julia, New York Shakespeare Festival