

William Shakespeare

Macbeth

the complete play — original text and a plain modern English translation, side by side

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Act 1, Scene 1

AN OPEN PLACE

Scotland is at war, and somewhere nearby a battle is raging. On a stormy heath, three witches arrange to meet again once the fighting is over — this time to intercept a soldier named Macbeth.

Original

Translation

Thunder and Lightning. Enter three Witches

FIRST WITCH

When shall we three meet again?

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

When will the three of us meet again — in

thunder, in lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH

When the hurlyburly's done,

When the battle's lost and won.

When the uproar is over.

When the battle has been lost by one side and
won by the other.

THIRD WITCH

That will be ere the set of sun.

That will be before the sun sets.

FIRST WITCH

Where the place?

Where should we meet?

SECOND WITCH

Upon the heath.

On the heath.

THIRD WITCH

There to meet with Macbeth.

We'll meet Macbeth there.

FIRST WITCH

I come, Graymalkin!

I'm coming, Graymalkin, my cat!

SECOND WITCH

Paddock calls.

Paddock — my toad — is calling.

THIRD WITCH

Anon.

Right away.

ALL

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:

Beautiful is ugly, and ugly is beautiful.

Hover through the fog and filthy air.

Let's hover away through the fog and the filthy
air.

Exeunt.

Act 1, Scene 2

A CAMP NEAR FORRES

Scotland's King Duncan is at war on two fronts: the rebel Macdonwald has risen against him, and Norway's king has invaded — helped by a Scottish traitor, the Thane of Cawdor. At Duncan's camp, a wounded officer and then the Thane of Ross arrive with news from the battlefield.

Original

Translation

*Alarum within. Enter King Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Lennox, with
Attendants, meeting a bleeding Captain*

DUNCAN

What bloody man is that?

Who is that bleeding man?

He can report,

Judging by the state he's in, he can give us the
latest news of the rebellion.

As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt

The newest state.

MALCOLM

This is the sergeant

This is the sergeant who fought like a good,

Who, like a good and hardy soldier, fought

tough soldier to keep me from being captured.

'Gainst my captivity.

Hail, brave friend!

Welcome, brave friend!

Say to the King the knowledge of the broil

Tell the King how the battle stood when you left
it.

As thou didst leave it.

SOLDIER

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 villainies 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 smok'd with bloody execution,
Like Valour's minion, carv'd out his passage,
Till he fac'd the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to
him,
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the
chops,
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

DUNCAN

O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

SOLDIER

For a while it hung in the balance, like two
exhausted swimmers clinging to each other and
dragging each other down.
The merciless Macdonwald — a born rebel, since
every villainy in nature swarms to him — was
reinforced from the Western Isles with Irish
light infantry and heavy-armed mercenaries, and
Fortune smiled on his cursed cause like a rebel's
whore.

But none of it was enough.
Brave Macbeth — and he has earned that name
— scorned Fortune.
With his drawn sword steaming with blood, like
courage's own favorite, he carved his way
through until he stood face to face with the
wretch
— and he never shook hands or said goodbye
until he had split him open from the navel to the
jaw and stuck his head on our battlements.

O my brave cousin! A worthy gentleman!

As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
Shipwracking storms and direful thunders
break,
So from that spring, whence comfort seem'd to
come
Discomfort swells.

Mark, King of Scotland,

mark:

No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd,
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their
heels,
But the Norwegian 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?

SOLDIER

Yes;
As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.
If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharg'd with double cracks;
So they
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,
I cannot tell—

But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

But just as shipwrecking storms and terrible
thunder can break from the east, where the sun
rises, so from the very source of our comfort
came a new swell of trouble.

Listen, King of Scotland, listen:

no sooner had justice, armed with courage,
forced those skirmishing Irish soldiers to run for
it, than the King of Norway, seeing his chance,
launched a fresh assault with polished weapons
and fresh troops.

Didn't that shake our captains, Macbeth and
Banquo?

Yes — the way sparrows shake eagles, or a hare
frightens a lion.

To tell you the truth, they were like cannons
loaded with a double charge of shot: they
hammered the enemy with doubled and
redoubled blows.

Whether they meant to bathe in steaming
wounds, or to make the battlefield as famous for
death as Golgotha — the hill of skulls — I can't
say.

But I'm growing faint; my wounds are crying out
for help.

DUNCAN

So well thy words become thee as thy wounds:
They smack of honour both.

surgeons.

Exit Captain, attended.

Enter Ross and Angus

DUNCAN

Who comes here?

MALCOLM

The worthy Thane of Ross.

LENNOX

What a haste looks through his eyes!

he look

That seems to speak things strange.

ROSS

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.

Your words suit you as well as your wounds do:
both of them smell of honor.

Go — get him surgeons.

Who's this coming?

The worthy Thane of Ross.

What urgency in his eyes!

That's how a man looks when he has strange
news to tell.

God save the King!

Where have you come from, worthy thane?

From Fife, great King, where the Norwegian
banners mock our sky and fan our people cold
with fear.

Norway himself, with terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor,
The Thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, 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!

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
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.

The King of Norway himself, with terrifying
numbers and helped by that utterly disloyal
traitor the Thane of Cawdor, began a grim battle
— until Macbeth, like a bridegroom of Bellona,
the goddess of war, clad in battle-proven armor,
met him strength for strength, sword-point
against sword-point, arm against rebellious arm,
and broke his wild spirit.

To sum it up: the victory fell to us.

What great happiness!

So complete that Sweno, the king of Norway, is
now begging for peace terms.

We wouldn't even allow him to bury his men
until he paid out ten thousand dollars at Saint
Colme's Inch for our general treasury.

That Thane of Cawdor will never again betray my
heart's trust.

Go, announce his immediate execution — and
greet Macbeth with the title that was his.

I'll see it done.

What he has lost, noble Macbeth has won.

Act 1, Scene 3

A HEATH

Fresh from victory, Macbeth and Banquo cross the heath where the witches are waiting for them. Neither man yet knows that King Duncan has already awarded Macbeth the executed traitor's title, Thane of Cawdor.

Original

Translation

Thunder. Enter the three Witches

FIRST WITCH

Where hast thou been, sister?

Where have you been, sister?

SECOND WITCH

Killing swine.

Killing pigs.

THIRD WITCH

Sister, where thou?

Sister, where have you been?

FIRST WITCH

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd.

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap, and she
munched, and munched, and munched.

"Give me," quoth I.

'Give me some,' I said.

"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed ronyon cries.

'Get away from me, witch!' the fat-bottomed,
scabby hag yells.

Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th'

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.

Her husband has sailed to Aleppo as master of
the ship the Tiger — but I'll sail there in a
kitchen sieve, and like a rat without a tail I'll
work my mischief on him.

I'll do it, I'll do it, and I'll do it.

SECOND WITCH

I'll give thee a wind.

I'll give you a wind to sail by.

FIRST WITCH

Th'art kind.

You're 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 sev'n-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,
Wrack'd as homeward he did come.

Drum within.

THIRD WITCH

A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

ALL

And I'll give you another.

And I already control all the rest — the very ports
they blow toward, every direction on a sailor's
compass chart.

I'll drain him as dry as hay.
Sleep will never settle on his drooping eyelids,
night or day: he'll live like a man under a curse.

Through eighty-one exhausting weeks he'll
shrink, waste, and wither away.
And though his ship can't actually be sunk, it
will be battered by storms all the same.
Look what I have.

Show me, show me.

Here — I have the thumb of a ship's pilot who
was wrecked on his way home.

A drum, a drum!
Macbeth is coming.

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 call'd to Forres?

What are these,

So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' th' 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!

The Weird Sisters, hand in hand, swift travelers
over sea and land, go circling round and round
like this: three turns for you, three for me, and
three more to make it nine.

Quiet — the spell is wound up and ready.

I've never seen a day so foul and fair at once.

How far is it supposed to be to Forres?

— What are these creatures, so withered and so
wild in what they wear?

They don't look like anything that lives on the
earth, and yet here they are, standing on it.

Are you alive?

Are you anything a human being is allowed to
question?

You seem to understand me — each of you at
once laying a cracked finger on her skinny lips.

You look like you should be women, and yet your
beards make it impossible for me to believe you
are.

Speak, if you can.

What are you?

All hail, Macbeth!

hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

Hail to you, Thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH

All hail, Macbeth!

All hail, Macbeth!

hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

Hail to you, Thane of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be king hereafter!

All hail, Macbeth, who will be king one day!

BANQUO

Good sir, why do you start

and seem to fear

Things that do sound so fair?

Good sir, why do you flinch?

Why do you seem afraid of things that sound so good?

—I' th' 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.

— In the name of truth, are you illusions, or
really the things you appear to be?

You greet my noble companion with his existing
title and with grand predictions of new honors
and hopes of kingship, until he seems lost in a
trance.

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.

To me you say nothing.

If you can look into the seeds of time and say
which grain will grow and which will not, then
speak to me — I neither beg for your favors nor
fear your hatred.

FIRST WITCH

Hail!

Hail!

SECOND WITCH

Hail!

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.

Witches vanish.

Hail!

Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

Not as happy, yet much happier.

You will father kings, though you will never be one.

So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

Wait, you half-finished speakers — tell me more.

Since my father Sinel died, I know I'm Thane of Glamis.

But how Thane of Cawdor?

The Thane of Cawdor is alive and a prosperous gentleman.

And as for being king — that's no more believable than being Cawdor.

Tell me where you got this strange information, and why you stop us on this blasted heath with such prophetic greetings.

Speak — I command you.

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

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 earth has bubbles, just as the water does,
and these were some of them.

Where did they vanish to?

Into the air.

What seemed to have a body melted like breath
into the wind.
I wish they had stayed!

Were these things actually here, the way we're
talking about them?

Or have we eaten some of that insane root that
takes reason prisoner?

Your children will be kings.

You will be king.

And Thane of Cawdor too — isn't that how it
went?

Exactly the same tune and words.

Who's this?

The King hath happily receiv'd, Macbeth,
The news of thy success,
and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his:

silenc'd with that,
In viewing o'er the rest o' th' selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks,
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death.

As thick as tale
Came post with post; and everyone did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
And pour'd them down before him.

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

BANQUO

What, can the devil speak true?

MACBETH

The Thane of Cawdor lives:

Macbeth, the King has received the news of your
victory with joy,
and when he reads about the risks you
personally took in the fight against the rebels,
his amazement and his praise compete over
which should be yours and which should stay
his.

Struck silent by that, and looking over the rest of
that same day, he finds you deep in the sturdy
Norwegian ranks, not at all afraid of the strange
images of death you yourself were creating.

Messenger after messenger arrived, thick and
fast as words can be counted, and every one of
them carried praise of you for your great defense
of his kingdom and poured it out before him.

We've been sent to give you thanks from our
royal master — only to escort you into his
presence, not to pay you what you're owed.

And as a down payment on a greater honor, he
told me to call you Thane of Cawdor, from him.

So hail in that new title, most worthy thane —
for it is yours.

What — can the devil tell the truth?

The Thane of Cawdor is alive.

why do you dress me

Why are you dressing me in borrowed robes?

In borrow'd robes?

ANGUS

Who was the Thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgement bears that life
Which he deserves to lose.

The man who was the Thane still lives, but he's
under a heavy sentence and deserves to lose that
life.

Whether he was

combin'd
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 wrack, I know not;
But treasons capital, confess'd and prov'd,
Have overthrown him.

Whether he was openly allied with the
Norwegians, or secretly reinforced the rebel with
hidden help and advantages, or worked with
both of them for his country's ruin, I don't
know.
But capital treasons — confessed and proven —
have brought him down.

Aside.

MACBETH

Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor:
The greatest is behind.

(To himself) Glamis, and now Thane of Cawdor:
the greatest title is still to come.

[_To Ross and Angus._]

Thanks for your pains.

(To Ross and Angus) Thank you for your trouble.

To Banquo.

MACBETH

Do you not hope your children shall be kings,

When those that gave the Thane of Cawdor to
me
Promis'd no less to them?

(To Banquo) Aren't you hoping now that your
children will be kings?

The same creatures who gave me the title of
Cawdor promised them nothing less.

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.

Aside.

MACBETH

Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.

—I thank you, gentlemen.

Aside.

BANQUO

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.

If you trust all of it completely, it might yet set
you on fire to reach for the crown itself, beyond
just being Thane of Cawdor.

But this is strange.

Often, to lure us to our own destruction, the
agents of darkness tell us truths: they win us
over with honest trifles so they can betray us in
the things that matter most.

— Cousins, a word with you, please.

(To himself) Two truths have been told — like
happy opening scenes to a swelling drama
whose theme is kingship.

(To the others) I thank you, gentlemen.

(To himself) This supernatural invitation can't
be bad — and it can't be good.

If it's bad, why has it handed me a guarantee of
success by starting with a truth?

I am Thane of Cawdor.

If it's good, why do I find myself giving in to a
suggestion whose horrifying image makes my
hair stand on end and my steady heart pound
against my ribs, against everything natural?

The fears in front of me right now are smaller
than my 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.

Aside.

MACBETH

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.

Aside.

MACBETH

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.

The mere thought of murder — still nothing but
a fantasy — shakes my whole being so badly that
the power to act is smothered in speculation,
and nothing feels real to me except the thing
that doesn't exist.

Look how spellbound our companion is.

(To himself) If chance wants me to be king, then
chance can crown me without my lifting a
finger.

New honors have settled on him, and like new
clothes, they won't fit his shape until they've
been worn a while.

(To himself) Come what may, time and the hour
push on through even the roughest day.

Worthy Macbeth, we're ready whenever you are.

Forgive me —
my dull brain was wrestling with forgotten
things.

Kind gentlemen, your
pains
Are register'd where every day I turn
The leaf to read them.

Kind gentlemen, your trouble is written down in
a book where I turn the page every day to read it.

—
—Let us toward the King.
—
Think upon what hath chanc'd;
and at more
time,
The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

Let's go to the King.

(Quietly, to Banquo) Think about what has
happened;
and later, when we've had time to weigh it all,
let's speak our minds openly to each other.

BANQUO
Very gladly.

Very gladly.

MACBETH
Till then, enough.—Come, friends.

Until then — enough. Come, friends.

Exeunt.

Act 1, Scene 4

FORRES. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

At the royal palace at Forres, Duncan hears how the traitor Cawdor died, then welcomes Macbeth and Banquo home as heroes. The witches' second prophecy has already come true — Macbeth is Thane of Cawdor — and the question hanging over the scene is the third.

Original

Translation

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

DUNCAN
Is execution done on Cawdor?
Are not
Those in commission yet return'd?

Has the execution been carried out on Cawdor?
Aren't the officers I assigned to it back yet?

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,

Implor'd 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 ow'd

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

DUNCAN

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.

My lord, they haven't returned yet.

But I spoke with someone who watched him die,

and he reported that Cawdor confessed his

treasons very openly, begged your Highness's

forgiveness, and showed deep repentance.

Nothing in his life suited him as well as the way

he left it:

he died like a man who had rehearsed his own

death, throwing away the most precious thing

he owned as if it were a worthless trinket.

There's no skill that can read a man's mind in his face.

He was a gentleman I built an absolute trust on.

O worthiest cousin!

The sin of my own ingratitude was weighing on

me just now.

You've run so far ahead of me that the swiftest

wing of reward is too slow to catch up with you.

Would thou hadst less
deserv'd;
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
Are to your throne and state, children and
servants;
Which do but what they should, by doing
everything
Safe toward your love and honour.

DUNCAN

Welcome hither:
I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing.
—Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserv'd, 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.

DUNCAN

I almost wish you had deserved less, so that my
thanks and payment could have matched what I
owe!

All that's left to say is this: I owe you more than
more than everything could ever pay.

The service and loyalty I owe you pays for itself
in the doing.

Your Highness's part is simply to receive our
duties
— and our duties to your throne and state are
like children and servants, who only do what
they should when they do everything to protect
your love and honor.

Welcome here.

I have begun to plant you, and I'll work to make
you grow tall and full.
— Noble Banquo, you deserve no less, and it
must be known that you did no less: let me
embrace you and hold you to my heart.

If I grow there, the harvest is yours.

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 us'd 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!

Aside.

MACBETH

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.

My joys are so overflowing, so extravagant in
their fullness, that they try to hide themselves in
tears of sorrow.

— Sons, kinsmen, thanes, and you whose places
are closest to me: know that we are settling the
succession of our kingdom on our eldest son,
Malcolm, whom we now name Prince of
Cumberland.

But that honor won't be worn by him alone:
marks of nobility will shine like stars on
everyone who deserves them.

— Now, on to Inverness, to bind me even closer
to you.

Any rest I take that isn't spent serving you is
hard labor.

I'll ride ahead myself as your herald and make
my wife's ears glad with the news of your arrival.
And so I humbly take my leave.

My worthy Cawdor!

(To himself) The Prince of Cumberland!

That's a step lying in my path — I must either
trip over it and fall, or leap right over it.

Stars, hide your fires!
Don't let any light see my black, 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.

Let my eye look away from what my hand does
— and yet let the thing be done, the thing the
eye will be afraid to look at once it's finished.

Truly, worthy Banquo —

he's every bit that brave, and hearing him
praised is food to me: it's a banquet.

Let's follow the man whose thoughtfulness has
ridden ahead to prepare our welcome.

He's a kinsman without equal.

Act 1, Scene 5

INVERNESS. A ROOM IN MACBETH'S CASTLE

At Inverness, Lady Macbeth reads her husband's letter describing the witches' prophecy and his new title, Thane of Cawdor. Before Macbeth even arrives home, word comes that King Duncan will spend tonight under their roof.

Original

Translation

Enter Lady Macbeth, reading a letter

LADY MACBETH

"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.

"They met me on the day of my victory,

and I have learned on the most reliable evidence
that they have more than mortal knowledge in
them.

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
might'st not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being
ignorant of what
greatness is promis'd thee.

Lay it to thy heart,

and farewell."

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promis'd.

Yet do I fear thy nature;

It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way.

When I burned with desire to question them
further, they turned themselves into air and
vanished into it.

While I stood dazed with wonder at it,
messengers arrived from the King, who hailed
me 'Thane of Cawdor'

— the very title these Weird Sisters had greeted
me with earlier, before pointing me toward the
future with 'Hail, king that shall be!'

I thought it right to share this with you, my
dearest partner in greatness, so that you
wouldn't lose your rightful share of the rejoicing
by not knowing what greatness is promised you.

Take it to heart, and farewell."

You are Glamis, and Cawdor — and you will be
what you were promised.

But I'm afraid of your nature: it's too full of the
milk of human kindness to take the shortest
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'dst 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

LADY MACBETH

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 inform'd for preparation.

You want to be great, and you're not without
ambition — but you lack the wickedness that
should go with it.

What you want badly, you want to get
virtuously: you won't cheat, and yet you'd
happily win what isn't rightly yours.

Great Glamis, you want the thing that cries out
'This is what you must do' if you're going to have
it

— the thing you're more afraid of doing than
you truly wish undone.

Hurry home, so I can pour my spirit into your
ear and drive out, with the courage of my
tongue, everything that stands between you and
the golden crown — the crown that fate and
supernatural help both seem to intend for you.

What news do you have?

The King comes here tonight.

You'd have to be mad to say that.

Isn't your master with him?

If it were true, he would have sent word so we
could prepare.

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.

LADY MACBETH

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 th' access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
Th' effect and it!

Come to my woman's breasts,

And take my milk for gall, your murd'ring
ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief!

If it please you, it's true.

Our thane is on his way.

One of my fellow servants rode ahead of him,
and arrived so nearly dead for breath that he
barely had enough left to gasp out his message.

Take good care of him —

he brings great news.

Even the raven that croaks Duncan's fatal
entrance under my battlements has croaked
itself hoarse.

Come, you spirits that wait on deadly thoughts:
unsex me here — strip everything soft and
womanly out of me — and fill me from head to
toe, brim-full, with the direst cruelty.

Thicken my blood; block every opening and
channel where remorse might pass, so that no
natural pang of conscience shakes my deadly
purpose or steps in between the purpose and
the deed.

Come to my woman's breasts, you murdering
agents, and take my milk in exchange for bitter
gall, wherever you wait — invisible — to do
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

LADY 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,
Look like the time;

Come, thick night, and wrap yourself in the
darkest smoke of hell, so that my sharp knife
can't see the wound it makes, and heaven can't
peek through the blanket of the dark to cry,
'Stop! Stop!'

Great Glamis! Worthy Cawdor!
And greater than both, by the 'all hail' still to
come!
Your letter has carried me beyond this ignorant
present, and I can feel the future in this very
instant.

My dearest love — Duncan comes here tonight.

And when does he leave?

Tomorrow — that's his plan.

Oh, the sun will never see that tomorrow!
Your face, my thane, is like a book where men
can read strange things.
To deceive the world, look the way the world
expects:

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 favour ever is to fear.

Leave all the rest to me.

Exeunt.

carry welcome in your eye, your hand, your
tongue.

Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent
hiding under it.

The guest who's coming must be provided for

— and you're going to put tonight's great
business into my hands.

This one night will give absolute royal power and
mastery to all our nights and days to come.

We'll talk about it further.

Just keep your face clear and untroubled —
changing your expression is always a sign of
fear.

Leave all the rest to me.

Act 1, Scene 6

THE SAME. BEFORE THE CASTLE

King Duncan and his court arrive at the Macbeths' castle at Inverness to spend the night. The audience has just heard Lady Macbeth call on darkness to help murder him — but Duncan, admiring the sweet evening air, suspects nothing.

Original

Translation

Hautboys. Servants of Macbeth attending

*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 jutting, frieze,

Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird

hath made his pendant bed and procreant

cradle.

Where they most breed and haunt, I have

observ'd

The air is delicate.

Enter Lady Macbeth

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

This castle sits in a pleasant spot.

The air is light and sweet — it soothes and

appeals to my senses.

This summer visitor, the martlet that nests in

churches, proves by building its beloved home

here that heaven's breath smells inviting in this

place.

There isn't a ledge, a carved border, a buttress,

or a convenient corner where this bird hasn't

hung its nest and made a cradle for its young.

And I've noticed that wherever these birds most

breed and gather, the air is delicate.

Look, look — our honored hostess!

The love people show us can sometimes be a

nuisance to us, but we still thank it, because it's

love.

By which I'm teaching you a lesson: ask God to

reward me for the trouble I put you to, and

thank me for the bother — because it all comes

from love.

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 cours'd 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:

Even if every act of our service were done twice
over, and then doubled again, it would still be
poor, thin work set against the deep and broad
honors your Majesty is heaping on our house.

For the old honors, and the new dignities piled
on top of them, we remain your devoted
servants, praying for you always like hermits.

Where's the Thane of Cawdor?

We chased hard at his heels, hoping to arrive
ahead of him and be the one to arrange his
welcome.

But he rides well, and his great love, sharp as his
spur, carried him home before us.

Fair and noble hostess, we are your guest
tonight.

Your servants hold their own servants,
themselves, and everything they own in trust for
you, ready to present the accounts whenever
your Highness pleases — everything we have is
already yours; we only give it back.

Give me your hand.

Lead me to my host.

we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess.

We love him highly, and we will keep showing
him our favor.
After you, hostess.

Exeunt.

Act 1, Scene 7

THE SAME. A LOBBY IN THE CASTLE

Duncan is feasting inside Macbeth's castle while Macbeth slips out alone to think through the murder — and talks himself out of it. Lady Macbeth comes after him to find out why he has left the table.

Original

Translation

Hautboys and torches. Enter, and pass over, a Sewer and divers

Servants with dishes and service. Then enter Macbeth

MACBETH

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly.

If th' assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all—here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come.

But in these cases
We still have judgement here;
that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught, return
To plague th' inventor.

This even-handed justice
Commends th' ingredience of our poison'd
chalice
To our own lips.

If it were really finished once it's done, then it
would be best to do it quickly.

If the assassination could sweep up all its
consequences in a net, and with Duncan's death
catch success — if this one blow could be the
be-all and the end-all right here — then here, on
this narrow sandbank in the river of time, I'd
gladly gamble away the life to come.

But in cases like this, we're still judged here in
this world.
We give lessons in bloodshed, and once they're
learned, they come back to torment the teacher.

This even-handed justice lifts the cup we
ourselves poisoned 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, hors'd
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.

—I have no spur

To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on th' other—

Enter Lady Macbeth

MACBETH

How now!

what news?

LADY MACBETH

He has almost supp'd.

Why have you left the
chamber?

MACBETH

Hath he ask'd for me?

He's here under a double trust.

First, I'm his kinsman and his subject — both
strong arguments against the deed.

Then, I'm his host — the man who should bolt
the door against his murderer, not carry the
knife myself.

Besides, this Duncan has used his royal powers
so gently, and has been so incorruptible in his
great office, that his virtues will plead like
trumpet-tongued angels against the deep
damnation of killing him;
and pity, like a naked newborn baby striding the
storm-wind, or like heaven's cherubim riding
the invisible horses of the air, will blow the
horrible deed into every eye until tears drown
the wind.

I have no spur to drive my plan forward — only
vaulting ambition, which leaps so high over the
saddle that it crashes down on the other side—

Well?

What news?

He's nearly finished his supper.

Why did you leave the dining hall?

Has he asked for me?

LADY MACBETH

Know you not he has?

You know perfectly well he has.

MACBETH

We will proceed no further in this business:

We're going no further with this business.

He 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.

He has just honored me, and I've earned golden
opinions from all kinds of people — opinions
that should be worn now, while they're new and
shining, not thrown away so soon.

LADY MACBETH

Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself?

Was the hope you dressed yourself in drunk,
then?

Hath it slept
since?

Has it been sleeping it off since?

And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely?

And is it waking up now, green and sick, looking
at what it did so eagerly?

From this time
Such I account thy love.

From now on, that's what I'll consider your love
to be worth.

Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire?

Are you afraid to be the same man in action and
courage that you are in your desires?

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' th' adage?

Would you have the thing you call the crown
jewel of life, and yet live as a coward in your own
eyes — letting 'I don't dare' trail along behind 'I
want to,' like the poor cat in the old story, who
wanted the fish but wouldn't wet her paws?

MACBETH

Pr'ythee, peace!
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

Please — enough!
I dare do everything that's fitting for a man.
Whoever dares do more is no man at all.

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 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:

Then what kind of beast was it that made you
reveal this plan to me?

When you dared to do it — that's when you were
a man.

And to be more than you were then, you'd be
that much more a man.

Back then, neither the time nor the place was
right, and yet you were ready to force them both
into place.

Now they've fallen into place on their own —
and their very readiness is unmanning you.

I have nursed a baby, and I know how tender it is
to love the child at my breast.

But even while it was smiling up into my face, I
would have pulled my nipple out of its soft,
toothless gums and dashed its brains out — if I
had sworn to do it the way you have sworn to do
this.

But if we fail?

We — fail?

Just screw your courage tight to its notch, like a
crossbow string, and we will not fail.

When Duncan is asleep — and his hard day's
journey will make sure he sleeps soundly — I'll
flood his two personal attendants with so much
wine and partying that memory, the brain's
guard, will turn to fumes, and the vessel that
holds their reason will be nothing but a still,
cooking vapor.

when in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
Th' 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 receiv'd,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy
two
Of his own chamber, and us'd 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 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.

When they lie in their pig-like sleep, soaked and
dead to the world,
what can't you and I do to the unguarded
Duncan?
And what can't we pin on his sponge-soaked
officers, who will carry the guilt of our great
killing?

Have nothing but sons!

A spirit as fearless as yours should produce
nothing but males.

Once we've smeared blood on the two sleeping
servants of his own bedchamber, and used their
own daggers to do it, won't everyone accept that
they were the killers?

Who would dare take it any other way, once
we've set our grief and outcry roaring over his
death?

I'm resolved. Every muscle in my body is bent to
this terrible act.

Let's go — and fool the world with the
friendliest of faces:

a false face must hide what the false heart
knows.

Act 2, Scene 1

INVERNESS. COURT WITHIN THE CASTLE

King Duncan is spending the night as a guest at Macbeth's castle at Inverness, and Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have secretly resolved to murder him tonight. It's past midnight; Banquo — who heard the witches promise Macbeth the crown — is uneasy and can't sleep.

Original

Translation

Enter Banquo and Fleance with a torch before him

BANQUO

How goes the night, boy?

How is the night going, boy?

FLEANCE

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

The moon has set, and I haven't heard the clock strike.

BANQUO

And she goes down at twelve.

And the moon sets at midnight.

FLEANCE

I take't, 'tis later, sir.

I'd say it's later than that, sir.

BANQUO

Hold, take my sword.

Here, hold my sword.

There's husbandry in
heaven;

Heaven is being thrifty tonight — all its candles
are out.

Their candles are all out.

Take thee that too.

Take this too.

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep.

Sleepiness is weighing on me like lead, and yet I
don't want to sleep.

Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose!

Merciful powers, hold back the cursed thoughts
my mind slips into whenever it rests!

Enter Macbeth and a Servant with a torch

BANQUO

Give me my sword.

Who's there?

MACBETH

A friend.

BANQUO

What, sir, not yet at rest?

The King's abed:

He hath been in unusual pleasure and

Sent forth great largess to your offices.

This diamond he greets your wife withal,

By the name of most kind hostess, and shut up

In measureless content.

MACBETH

Being unprepar'd,

Our will became the servant to defect,

Which else should free have wrought.

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.

Give me my sword.

Who's there?

A friend.

What, sir — still up?

The King has gone to bed.

He's been in unusually high spirits, and he sent generous gifts to your household staff.

This diamond is his present for your wife — he calls her "the kindest of hostesses" — and he has gone to bed perfectly content.

Because we had no warning of his visit, our hospitality fell short of what we wanted to offer. If we'd been prepared, our goodwill could have worked freely.

Everything went well.

I dreamed last night of the three Weird Sisters. For you, at least, some of what they said has come true.

I don't think about them.

Still, when we can find a spare hour, I'd like to spend it talking with you about that business — if you'll give me the time.

Whenever it's convenient for you.

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 franchis'd, and allegiance clear,
I shall be counsell'd.

MACBETH

Good repose the while!

BANQUO

Thanks, sir:
the like to you.

Exeunt Banquo and Fleance.

MACBETH

Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell.
Get thee to bed.

Exit Servant.

MACBETH

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?

If you stand with me when the moment comes,
there will be honor in it for you.

As long as I lose no honor in trying to gain more
— as long as my conscience stays free and my
loyalty stays clean — I'm willing to listen.

Sleep well in the meantime!

Thank you, sir.
The same to you.

Go tell your mistress to strike the bell when my
drink is ready.
Then get yourself to bed.

Is this a dagger I see in front of me, its handle
pointing toward my hand?

Come, let me grab you. —

I can't hold you, and yet I still see you.
Deadly vision, can't you be felt as well as seen?

or art thou but

A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed 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.

Now o'er the one half-world

Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep.

Witchcraft celebrates

Pale Hecate's off'rings; and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy
pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his
design
Moves like a ghost.

Or are you only a dagger of the mind — a false
creation coming out of my fevered, overworked
brain?

I still see you, and you look as solid and real as
this dagger I'm drawing now.

You're leading me down the very road I was
already going, with exactly the kind of weapon I
meant to use.

Either my eyes are being made fools of by my
other senses, or they're seeing better than all the
rest put together.

I still see you — and now there are thick drops of
blood on your blade and handle that weren't
there before.

No. There's no such thing.

It's this bloody business ahead that's making my
eyes see it.

Right now, over one half of the world, nature
seems dead, and wicked dreams torment
sleepers behind their bed-curtains.

Witches are offering sacrifices to their pale
goddess Hecate; and withered old Murder,
woken by his lookout the wolf — whose howl is
his signal — moves toward his victim with silent,
stealthy steps, like Tarquin creeping toward his
crime, gliding like a ghost.

Thou sure and firm-set
earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it.

Whiles I threat, he
lives.
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath
gives.

A bell rings.

MACBETH

I go, and it is done.

The bell invites me.

Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

Exit.

You solid, firmly fixed earth, don't listen to my
footsteps or notice which way they go, in case
your very stones cry out where I am and break
this dreadful silence — a silence that suits this
moment so well.

But while I stand here making threats, he goes
on living.
Talk only cools the heat of action.

I'm going now, and it's as good as done.

The bell is inviting me.

Don't hear it, Duncan — it's a funeral bell,
calling you to heaven or to hell.

Act 2, Scene 2

THE SAME

Macbeth has just gone to murder King Duncan in his sleep, urged on by the witches' prophecy and Lady Macbeth's goading; she waits below, having drugged Duncan's guards. Macbeth staggers back with bloody hands — and the daggers he was supposed to leave at the scene.

Original

Translation

Enter Lady Macbeth

LADY MACBETH

That which hath made them drunk hath made
me bold;

The drink that made the servants drunk has
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.

Within.

MACBETH

Who's there?—what, ho!

LADY MACBETH

Alack!

I am afraid they have awak'd,
And 'tis not done.

Th' attempt and not the deed

Confounds us.

Hark!

what put their fires out has lit mine.

— Listen!

Quiet!

That was the owl that shrieked — the fatal night-
bellman who gives the harshest of goodnights.

He's doing it right now.

The doors are open, and the guards, stuffed full
of drink, mock their duty with snores.

I drugged their nightcaps so heavily that death
and nature are arguing over them, whether
they'll live or die.

Who's there? Hello?

Oh no —

I'm afraid they've woken up, and it isn't done.

It's the attempt, not the deed, that would ruin
us.

Listen!

I laid their daggers
ready;
He could not miss 'em.

Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.

My
husband!

Enter Macbeth

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' th' second chamber?

LADY MACBETH

I laid their daggers out where he couldn't miss
them.

If Duncan hadn't looked so much like my father
while he slept, I'd have done it myself.

My husband!

I've done the deed.

Didn't you hear a noise?

I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Didn't you say something?

When?

Just now.

As I was coming down?

Yes.

Listen!

Who's sleeping in the second bedroom?

Donalbain.

MACBETH

This is a sorry sight.

Looking on his 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 lodg'd together.

MACBETH

One cried, "God bless us!" and, "Amen," the
other,

As they had seen me with these hangman's
hands.

List'ning their fear, I could not say "Amen,"

When they did say, "God bless us."

LADY MACBETH

Consider it not so deeply.

MACBETH

But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?

Donalbain.

This is a sorry sight.

That's a foolish thing to say — a sorry sight.

One of them laughed in his sleep, and the other
cried out "Murder!" — so loud they woke each
other up.

I stood still and listened to them.

But they only said their prayers and settled back
down to sleep.

There are two of them sleeping in that room.

One cried "God bless us!" and the other
answered "Amen," as if they'd seen me standing
there with these executioner's hands.

Listening to their fear, I couldn't say "Amen"
when they said "God bless us."

Don't dwell on it so deeply.

But why couldn't I say "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, worthythane,
You do unbend your noble strength to think
So brainsickly of things.
Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.—

I was the one who needed a blessing most, and
"Amen" stuck in my throat.

We can't let ourselves think about these deeds
that way.
It will drive us mad.

I thought I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more!
Macbeth is murdering sleep" — innocent sleep,
the sleep that untangles the day's frayed threads
of worry; the death of each day's life; a soothing
bath after hard labor; medicine for hurt minds;
nature's second course; the chief nourisher at
life's feast.

What are you talking about?

It kept crying "Sleep no more!" through the
whole house: "Glamis has murdered sleep, and
therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more —
Macbeth shall sleep no more!"

Who was it that cried out like that?
Really, worthythane, you're letting these sick
thoughts unstring your noble strength.

Go get some water and wash this filthy evidence
off your hands.

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 he do bleed,

I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,

For it must seem their guilt.

Exit. 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?

— Why did you carry these daggers away from the room?

They have to stay there.

Take them back, and smear the sleeping guards with the blood.

I'm not going back.

I'm afraid even to think about what I've done.

Look at it again? I don't dare.

You weak-willed man!

Give me the daggers.

The sleeping and the dead are no more than pictures;

only a child's eye is afraid of a painted devil.

If he's still bleeding, I'll paint the guards' faces with his blood

— because it has to look like their guilt.

Where is that knocking coming from?

What's happening to me, that every noise terrifies me?

Whose hands are these?

Ha — they're plucking out my eyes!

Will all the water in great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean off my hand?

No, this my hand will
rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Enter Lady Macbeth

LADY MACBETH
My hands are of your color, but I shame
To wear a heart so white.

[_Knocking within._] I
hear 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._] Hark, more knocking.
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us
And show us to be watchers.
Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

MACBETH
To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.
[_Knocking within._]
Wake Duncan with thy knocking!

I would thou
couldst!

No — this hand of mine would sooner dye the
endless seas scarlet, turning all their green to
one red.

My hands are the same color as yours now —
but I'd be ashamed to have a heart as white and
bloodless as yours.

[Knocking] I hear knocking at the south
entrance.

Let's go back to our bedroom.
A little water will clear us of this deed
— see how easy it is, then!
Your firmness has deserted you.

[Knocking] Listen — more knocking.

Put on your nightgown, in case someone comes
calling and finds we've been awake.
And don't get so pathetically lost in your own
thoughts.

Better to be lost to myself completely than to
have to look clearly at what I've done.
[Knocking] Wake Duncan with your knocking!

I wish you could!

Exeunt.

Act 2, Scene 3

THE SAME

In the small hours, Macbeth has murdered King Duncan in his sleep, and Lady Macbeth has planted the bloody daggers on the King's drugged guards — no one else knows. As dawn breaks, Macduff and Lennox knock at the castle gate, sent to wake the King.

Original

Translation

Enter a Porter. Knocking within

PORTER

Here's a knocking indeed!

Now that's what I call knocking!

If a man were porter
of hell gate, he should
have old turning the key.

If a man were porter at the gate of hell, he'd
certainly be kept busy turning the key.

[_Knocking._] Knock,
knock, knock.

[Knocking] Knock, knock, knock!

Who's
there, i' th' name of Belzebub?

Who's there, in Beelzebub's name?

Here's a farmer
that hanged himself on
the expectation of plenty:

Ah — a farmer who hanged himself because he
expected a bumper harvest and prices collapsed.

come in time;

You've come at just the right time.

have
napkins enow about you;
here you'll sweat for't.

I hope you brought plenty of handkerchiefs,
because you'll sweat for it in here.

[_Knocking._] Knock,

knock!

Who's there, i'

th' other devil's name?

Faith, here's an

equivocator, that could swear

in both the scales against either scale, who

committed treason enough

for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to

heaven:

O, come in,

equivocator.

[_Knocking._] Knock, knock,

knock!

Who's there?

Faith,

here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing

out of a French

hose:

come in, tailor;

here you may roast your

goose.

[Knocking] Knock, knock!

Who's there, in the other devil's name?

Why, it's an equivocator — a double-talker who

could swear to either side of an argument

against the other, who committed treason

enough in God's own name, and yet couldn't

talk his slippery way into heaven.

Oh, come in, equivocator.

[Knocking] Knock, knock, knock!

Who's there?

Honestly — it's an English tailor, here for

skimping fabric out of a pair of French breeches.

Come in, tailor;

you can heat your pressing iron in here.

[Knocking] Knock, knock.

[_Knocking._]

Knock, knock.

Never at quiet!

Never a moment's peace!

What are you?

Who are you?

—

— But this place is too cold to be hell.

But this place is too cold
for hell.

I'll devil-porter it no further:

I'll play the devil's porter no longer.

I had

thought to have let in
some of all professions, that go the primrose
way to th' everlasting
bonfire.

I'd been planning to let in someone from every
profession that strolls down the flowery
primrose path to the everlasting bonfire.

[_Knocking._] Anon, anon!

[Knocking] Coming, coming!

I pray you,

And please — remember to tip the porter.

remember the porter.

Opens the gate.

Enter Macduff and Lennox

MACDUFF

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

Did you go to bed so late, friend, that you're still
lying in bed this late?

PORTER

Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second
cock;

Honestly, sir, we were drinking until the second
cock-crow

and drink, sir, is
a great provoker of three things.

MACDUFF

What three things does drink especially
provoke?

PORTER

Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and urine.

Lechery, sir, it provokes
and unprovokes;

it provokes the desire, but it
takes away the
performance.

Therefore much drink may be said
to be an equivocator with
lechery:

it makes him, and it mars him;

it sets
him on, and it takes
him off;

it persuades him, and disheartens him;

— and drink, sir, is a great provoker of three
things.

What three things does drink especially
provoke?

Well, sir: a red nose, sleep, and urine.

As for lust, sir — drink provokes it and
unprovokes it.

It provokes the desire, but it takes away the
performance.

So you might say too much drink plays the
double-dealer with a man's lust:

it makes him and it ruins him;

it gets him going and it stops him cold;

it encourages him and it discourages him;

makes him stand to, and
not stand to;

in conclusion, equivocates him in a
sleep, and giving him
the lie, leaves him.

MACDUFF

I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

PORTER

That it did, sir, i' the very throat on me;

but I
requited him for his
lie;

and (I think) being too strong for him,
though he took up my legs
sometime, yet I made a shift to cast him.

MACDUFF

Is thy master stirring?

Enter Macbeth

MACDUFF

Our knocking has awak'd him;
here he comes.

LENNOX

Good morrow, noble sir!

MACBETH

Good morrow, both!

it makes him stand up ready for action, and then
not stand up at all.

In the end, it double-talks him into a sleep, calls
him a liar, and walks out on him.

I believe drink called you a liar last night — and
laid you out flat.

That it did, sir — right down my throat.

But I paid him back for his lie.

I was too strong for him in the end, I think:
though he took my legs out from under me a few
times, I managed to throw him.

Is your master awake?

Our knocking has woken him.
Here he comes.

Good morning, noble sir!

Good morning to you both!

MACDUFF

Is the King stirring, worthy thane?

MACBETH

Not yet.

MACDUFF

He did command me to call timely on him.

I have almost slipp'd the hour.

MACBETH

I'll bring you to him.

MACDUFF

I know this is a joyful trouble to you;

But yet 'tis one.

MACBETH

The labour we delight in physics pain.

This is the door.

MACDUFF

I'll make so bold to call.

For 'tis my limited service.

Exit Macduff.

LENNOX

Goes the King hence today?

MACBETH

He does.

He did appoint so.

LENNOX

The night has been unruly:

Is the King awake yet, worthy thane?

Not yet.

He ordered me to call on him early.

I've almost missed the hour.

I'll take you to him.

I know this trouble is a joy to you — but it's
trouble all the same.

Work we enjoy cures its own pain.

This is the door.

I'll take the liberty of going in to call him — it's
the specific duty I was given.

Is the King leaving today?

He is.

He arranged it so.

The night has been wild.

where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down and, as they
say,
Lamentings heard i' th' air, strange screams of
death,
And prophesying, with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion and confus'd events,
New hatch'd to the woeful time.

The obscure
bird
Clamour'd the live-long 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.

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!

Where we were sleeping, chimneys were blown
down; and people say cries of grief were heard in
the air — strange screams of death, and terrible
voices prophesying fire and chaos and disasters
newly hatched for these miserable times.

The owl, the bird of darkness, shrieked all night
long.

Some say the earth itself had a fever and shook.

It was a rough night.

In my young memory I can't find another night
to match it.

Oh, horror, horror, horror!

No tongue can name you — no heart can
imagine you!

MACBETH AND LENNOX: What's the matter?

Destruction has produced its masterpiece!

Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' th' building.

MACBETH

What is't you say?
the life?

LENNOX

Mean you his majesty?

MACDUFF

Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon.

Do not bid me speak.

See, and then speak yourselves.

Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox.

MACDUFF

Awake, awake!—
Ring the alarm 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!

Alarm-bell rings.

Enter Lady Macbeth

LADY MACBETH

The most sacrilegious murder imaginable has
broken open the Lord's anointed temple and
stolen the life from inside the building.

What are you saying?
The life?

Do you mean his majesty?

Go into that room, and let the sight destroy your
eyes like a new Gorgon.

Don't ask me to speak.

See it — and then do the speaking yourselves.

Wake up! Wake up!

Ring the alarm bell!

Murder and treason!

Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! Wake up!
Shake off this soft, downy sleep — sleep, death's
imitation — and look at death itself!

Up, up, and see the very image of Judgment Day!

Malcolm! Banquo!

Rise up as if from your graves, and walk like
ghosts to come and face this horror!

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

MACDUFF

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

LADY MACBETH

Woe, alas!
What, in our house?

BANQUO

Too cruel anywhere.—
Dear Duff, I pr'ythee, contradict thyself,
And say it is not so.

Enter Macbeth and Lennox with Ross

MACBETH

Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had liv'd 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.

What's going on, that such a hideous trumpet
blast summons everyone sleeping in this house
to a meeting?
Speak — speak!

Oh, gentle lady, what I could tell isn't fit for you
to hear.

Repeated in a woman's ear, the words would kill
as they landed.

Oh Banquo, Banquo!

Our royal master has been murdered!

How terrible!

What — in our house?

It would be too cruel anywhere.

Dear Macduff, I beg you — contradict yourself
and say it isn't so.

If I had only died an hour before this happened,
I would have lived a blessed life.

Because from this moment on, there is nothing
in human life worth taking seriously.

It's all toys and trifles.

Honor and grace are dead;

the wine of life has been drained, and only the
dregs are left for this cellar to boast about.

Enter Malcolm and 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 father's murder'd.

MALCOLM

O, by whom?

LENNOX

Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done't:

Their hands and faces were all badg'd with
blood;

So were their daggers, which, unwip'd, we
found

Upon their pillows.

They star'd, 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?

What's wrong?

You are — and you don't know it yet.

The spring, the head, the fountain your blood

flows from has been stopped up.

Its very source has been stopped.

Your royal father has been murdered.

Oh — by whom?

The men guarding his chamber did it, by all
appearances.

Their hands and faces were smeared all over
with blood, and so were their daggers, which we
found unwiped on their pillows.

They stared at us, completely out of their minds.

No one's life was safe near them.

Oh — and yet I regret the fury that made me kill
them.

Why did you do that?

MACBETH

Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate, and
furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment?

No man:

Th' expedition of my violent love
Outrun the pauser, reason.

Here lay Duncan,

His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood;
And his 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!

MACDUFF

Look to the lady.

MALCOLM

Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument for ours?

DONALBAIN

Who can be wise and stunned, calm and furious,
loyal and detached, all in the same instant?

No one.

The speed of my violent love outran my
hesitating reason.

There lay Duncan, his silver skin laced with his
golden blood, his gaping wounds like a breach in
nature itself, wide open for ruin to come
pouring in.

And there lay the murderers, soaked in the
colors of their trade, their daggers rudely
dressed in gore.

Who could have held himself back — anyone
with a heart to love, and courage enough in that
heart to prove his love?

Help me out of here — quick!

Take care of the lady.

Why are we saying nothing, when this grief
belongs to us more than anyone?

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.

BANQUO

Look to the lady:—

Lady Macbeth is carried out.

BANQUO

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 undivulg'd pretence I fight
Of treasonous malice.

MACDUFF

And so do I.

ALL

So all.

MACBETH

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

ALL

Well contented.

What could we say here — where our own
deaths may be hiding in some tiny drilled hole,
ready to rush out and seize us?

Let's get away.

Our tears aren't brewed yet.

No — and our deep sorrow isn't ready to act yet
either.

Take care of the lady. —

And once we've covered our half-dressed bodies,
shivering out here in the cold, let's meet and
investigate this bloody piece of work, to learn
everything we can.

Right now fears and doubts are shaking all of us.
I place myself in the great hand of God, and
standing there I will fight against the hidden
plot behind this treasonous crime.

So will I.

So will we all.

Let's quickly get dressed and armed like men,
and meet together in the hall.

Agreed.

Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain.

MALCOLM

What will you do?

Let's not consort with them:

To show an unfelt sorrow is an office

Which the false man does easy.

I'll to England.

DONALBAIN

To Ireland, I.

Our separated fortune

Shall keep us both the safer.

Where we are,

There's daggers in men's smiles:

the near in

blood,

The nearer bloody.

MALCOLM

This murderous shaft that's shot

Hath not yet lighted;

and our safest way

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.

What will you do?

Let's not stay with them.

Putting on a show of grief he doesn't feel is easy
work for a false man.

I'll go to England.

And I'll go to Ireland.

Keeping our fortunes separate will make us both
safer.

Here, there are daggers hidden in men's smiles

— and the closer a man is to us in blood, the
closer he is to spilling ours.

The murderous arrow that's been shot hasn't
landed yet,

and our safest course is to stay out of its path.

So — to horse.

And let's not be polite about goodbyes; let's just
slip away.

There's justification for stealing yourself off
when there's no mercy left to stay for.

Exeunt.

Act 2, Scene 4

THE SAME. WITHOUT THE CASTLE

King Duncan has been found murdered in Macbeth's castle, and his sons Malcolm and Donalbain have fled the country, drawing suspicion onto themselves. Outside the castle, Ross and an old man trade reports of the unnatural omens that have accompanied the killing — and hear that Macbeth will be crowned.

Original

Translation

Enter Ross and an Old Man

OLD MAN

Threescore and ten I can remember well,
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange, but this sore
night
Hath trifled former knowings.

I can remember seventy years clearly, and in all that time I've seen dreadful hours and strange things — but this awful night makes everything I knew before look trivial.

ROSS

Ha, good father,
Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's
act,
Threatens his bloody stage:
by the clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.
Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?

Ah, good old father —
you can see how the heavens, as if troubled by
what mankind has done, are threatening man's
bloody stage below.
By the clock it's daytime, and yet dark night is
strangling the sun, that traveling lamp.
Is it because night has grown too powerful, or
because the day is ashamed, that darkness
buries the face of the earth when living light
should be kissing it?

OLD MAN

'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done.
On Tuesday last,
A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

It's unnatural — just like the deed that's been done.

Last Tuesday, a falcon soaring at the very top of her flight was attacked and killed by an ordinary mouse-hunting owl.

ROSS

And Duncan's horses (a thing most strange and certain)

Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,

Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make

War with mankind.

OLD MAN

'Tis said they eat each other.

ROSS

They did so; to the amazement of mine eyes,
That look'd upon't.

Here comes the good Macduff.

Enter Macduff

ROSS

How goes the world, sir, now?

MACDUFF

Why, 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.

And Duncan's horses — a thing utterly strange,
but certain — beautiful, swift creatures, the
finest of their breed, turned wild, broke out of
their stalls, and charged loose, fighting against
all obedience as if they meant to make war on
mankind.

They say the horses ate each other.

They did — I watched it happen, to my own eyes'
amazement.

Here comes the good Macduff.

How goes the world now, sir?

Why — can't you see for yourself?

Is it known who committed this worse-than-
bloody deed?

The men Macbeth killed.

What a terrible day!

What could they have hoped to gain by it?

They were bribed to do it.

Malcolm and Donalbain, the King's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled; which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

ROSS

'Gainst nature still:

Thriftless ambition, that will ravin up
Thine own life's means!—

Then 'tis most like

The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

MACDUFF

He is already nam'd; and gone to Scone
To be invested.

ROSS

Where is Duncan's body?

MACDUFF

Carried to Colmekill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.

ROSS

Will you to Scone?

MACDUFF

No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

ROSS

Well, I will thither.

MACDUFF

Well, may you see things well done there.

Adieu!

Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

Malcolm and Donalbain, the King's two sons,
have slipped away and fled — which throws
suspicion for the deed onto them.

Against nature yet again!

Wasteful ambition, that devours the very source
of your own life!

Then the crown will most likely fall to Macbeth.

He's already been named king, and he's gone to
Scone to be crowned.

Where is Duncan's body?

It's been carried to Colmekill, the sacred
storehouse of his royal ancestors and the
guardian of their bones.

Are you going to Scone?

No, cousin — I'm going home to Fife.

Well, I'll go to Scone.

Well, I hope you see things done well there.

Goodbye — and let's hope our old robes don't
turn out to fit more comfortably than our new
ones!

ROSS

Farewell, father.

Farewell, father.

OLD MAN

God's benison go with you; and with those
That would make good of bad, and friends of
foes!

God's blessing go with you — and with anyone
who would turn bad into good, and enemies
into friends!

Exeunt.

Act 3, Scene 1

FORRES. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

Macbeth has been crowned king at Forres, and Duncan's sons have fled abroad under suspicion of their father's murder. But the witches promised that Banquo's descendants would inherit the throne, and tonight Macbeth hosts a feast — with Banquo as guest of honor and a secret plan to make sure he never arrives.

Original

Translation

Enter Banquo

BANQUO

Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the Weird Women promis'd;
and, I fear,
Thou play'st 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.

So now you have it all — King, Cawdor, Glamis
— everything the Weird Women promised;
and I'm afraid you played very foully to get it.

Yet they also said it wouldn't stay in your family,
and that I would be the root and father of many
kings.

If truth comes from them — and their words
have shone true on you, Macbeth — why then,
judging by how their prophecies about you came
good, couldn't they be my oracles too, and give
me reason to hope?

But hush. No more of this.

Sennet sounded. Enter Macbeth as King, Lady Macbeth as Queen; Lennox,

Ross, Lords, and Attendants

MACBETH

Here's our chief guest.

Here is our guest of honor.

LADY MACBETH

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

If he had been forgotten, it would have been a
gap in our great feast — completely unfitting.

MACBETH

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

Tonight we're holding a formal supper, sir, and I
want to request your presence.

BANQUO

Let your Highness
Command upon me, to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit.

Your Highness has only to command me; my
duty is bound to you forever by a knot that can
never be untied.

MACBETH

Ride you this afternoon?

Are you riding this afternoon?

BANQUO

Ay, my good lord.

Yes, my good lord.

MACBETH

We should have else desir'd your good advice
(Which still hath been both grave and
prosperous)
In this day's council; but we'll take tomorrow.
Is't far you ride?

Otherwise we would have asked for your good
advice — which has always been both
thoughtful and profitable — in today's council;
but tomorrow will do.
Are you riding far?

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 tomorrow,
When therewithal we shall have cause of state
Craving us jointly.

Hie you to horse:
adieu,
Till you return at night.

Goes Fleance with you?

BANQUO

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

MACBETH

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

Far enough, my lord, to fill the time between
now and supper.

Unless my horse goes faster than expected, I'll
have to borrow an hour or two of darkness from
the night.

Don't miss our feast.

My lord, I won't.

We hear our murderous cousins have settled in
England and Ireland.
They won't confess to the cruel killing of their
father, and they're filling their listeners' ears
with strange stories.

But that's a matter for tomorrow, when we'll
also have state business that needs us both.

Hurry to your horse;
goodbye until you return tonight.

Is Fleance going with you?

Yes, my good lord — and it's time we were off.

I wish your horses speed and sure footing,
and with that I commend you to their backs.
Farewell.

Exit Banquo.

MACBETH

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.

Exeunt Lady Macbeth, Lords, &c.

MACBETH

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

SERVANT

They are, my lord, without the palace gate.

MACBETH

Bring them before us.

Exit Servant.

MACBETH

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:

Let every man be master of his own time until
seven tonight.

To make your company all the sweeter when it
comes, we will keep to ourselves until supper.

Until then, God be with you.

You there — a word with you.

Are those men waiting on our pleasure?

They are, my lord — outside the palace gate.

Bring them before us.

To be king is nothing unless I am safely king.

My fears about Banquo run deep, and in his
kingly nature there is something that deserves
to be feared.

'tis much he dares;
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety.

There is none but he
Whose being I do fear:
and under him
My genius is rebuk'd; as, it is said,
Mark Antony's was by Caesar.

He chid the sisters
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him;
then, prophet-like,
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
Upon my head they plac'd 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 fil'd my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them;

and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to th' utterance!—

He dares a great deal, and on top of that fearless
temper of his he has a wisdom that guides his
courage to act safely.

He is the only man alive I'm afraid of;

beside him my guardian spirit is put to shame —
the way Mark Antony's, they say, was beside
Caesar's.

He scolded the sisters when they first put the
name of king on me, and told them to speak to
him;

and then, like prophets, they hailed him as
father to a line of kings.

On my head they placed a fruitless crown and
shoved a barren scepter into my grip — to be
wrenched away by a hand outside my family,
since no son of mine will succeed me.

If that's how it is, then it's for Banquo's
descendants that I've corrupted my mind;
for them I've murdered the gracious Duncan;
for them alone I've poured bitterness into the
cup of my peace;

and I've given my eternal jewel — my soul — to
the devil, mankind's common enemy, all to make
them kings: the seed of Banquo, kings!
Rather than that, come, fate, into the arena, and
fight me to the death!

Who's

— Who's there?

there?—

Enter Servant with two Murderers

MACBETH

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

Now go to the door and stay there until we call.

Exit Servant.

MACBETH

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

Wasn't it yesterday that we spoke together?

FIRST MURDERER

It was, so please your Highness.

It was, if it 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 craz'd

Say, "Thus did Banquo."

Well then — have you thought over what I told
you?

You should know that it was Banquo who, in
times past, kept you down in your fortunes —
the man you blamed on innocent me.

I proved this to you at our last meeting: I walked
you through the evidence of how you were
strung along, how you were blocked, what tools
were used, who worked with them, and
everything else that would make even half a soul
or a cracked mind say, "Banquo did this."

FIRST MURDERER

You made it known to us.

You made it known to us.

MACBETH

I did so; and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting.

Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature,
That you can let this go?

Are you so gossell'd,
To pray for this good man and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave,
And beggar'd yours forever?

FIRST MURDERER

We are men, my liege.

MACBETH

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
As hounds, and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels,
curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are clept
All by the name of dogs:

the valu'd file
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him clos'd;

whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike:

and so of men.

Now, if you have a station in the file,
Not i' th' worst rank of manhood, say't;
And I will put that business in your bosoms,
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,

I did — and I went further, which is the point of
this second meeting.

Do you find patience so dominant in your
natures that you can let this pass?

Are you so full of gospel meekness that you'd
pray for this good man and for his children — a
man whose heavy hand has bent you toward the
grave and beggared your families forever?

We are men, my liege.

Yes — in the catalogue you pass for men, the
way hounds, greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels,
curs, shaggy lapdogs, water-dogs, and half-
wolves are all called by the name of dog.

But the ranking list separates the swift, the
slow, the cunning, the watchdog, the hunter —
each according to the gift that generous nature
has sealed inside him,

and each receives a particular title beyond the
plain list that writes them all down alike.

It's the same with men.

Now, if you have a place in that ranking, and not
in the lowest grade of manhood, say so,
and I'll trust you with a piece of business whose
execution removes your enemy and fastens you
to my heart and love.

Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

SECOND MURDERER

I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Hath so incens'd 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 barefac'd 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:

My health is sickly while he lives; his death
would make it perfect.

I am one, my liege, whom the vile blows and
knocks of the world have so enraged that I don't
care what I do to spite the world.

And I'm another — so worn down by disasters,
so battered by fortune, that I'd stake my life on
any gamble that would either mend it or be rid
of it.

Both of you know that Banquo was your enemy.

True, my lord.

He's my enemy too — and at such close and
bloody quarters that every minute he stays alive
is a thrust at the very core of my life.
I could sweep him from my sight with open royal
power and let my will alone justify it — but I
must not, because of certain friends who are
both his and mine, whose loyalty I can't afford
to lose. Instead I'd have to publicly mourn the
fall of the very man I 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' th' time,
The moment on't;
for't must be done tonight
And something from the palace;
always thought
That I require a clearness.
And with him
(To leave no rubs nor botches in the work)
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 resolv'd, my lord.

That is why I am courting your help — masking
the business from the public eye, for various
weighty reasons.

My lord, we will perform what you command.

Even if our lives—

Your spirit shines through you.

Within this hour at most, I'll tell you where to
station yourselves and give you perfect
intelligence on the timing — the exact moment.

It must be done tonight, and at some distance
from the palace;
and always remember that I must be kept clear
of suspicion.

And along with him — to leave no rough edges
or botches in the work — his son Fleance, who
rides with him, and whose removal matters as
much to me as his father's, must embrace the
fate of that dark hour.

Make up your minds in private;
I'll come to you soon.

We are resolved, my lord.

MACBETH

I'll call upon you straight:

abide within.

I'll call for you shortly;

wait inside.

Exeunt Murderers.

MACBETH

It is concluded.

Banquo, thy soul's flight,

If it find heaven, must find it out tonight.

It is settled.

Banquo, your soul's flight, if it is going to find

heaven, must find it tonight.

Exit.

Act 3, Scene 2

THE SAME. ANOTHER ROOM IN THE PALACE

Macbeth is king and Duncan is in his grave, but neither Macbeth nor Lady Macbeth has found a moment's peace since the murder. Unknown to his wife, Macbeth has just hired murderers to kill

Banquo and his son Fleance before tonight's banquet.

Original

Translation

Enter Lady Macbeth and a Servant

LADY MACBETH

Is Banquo gone from court?

Has Banquo left the court?

SERVANT

Ay, madam, but returns again tonight.

Yes, madam, but he returns again tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Say to the King, I would attend his leisure

For a few words.

Tell the King I'd like a few words with him when

he has a moment.

SERVANT

Madam, I will.

Madam, I will.

Exit.

LADY MACBETH

Naught's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content:

'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

Enter Macbeth

LADY MACBETH

How now, my lord,
why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making,
Using those thoughts which should indeed have
died
With them they think on?

Things without all
remedy
Should be without regard:
what's done is done.

MACBETH

We have scorched the snake, not killed it.
She'll close, and be herself; whilst our poor
malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things disjoint,
Both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly.

Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy.

We have nothing, and we've spent everything,
when we get what we want and get no
contentment with it.

It's safer to be the one destroyed than to live, by
destroying, in doubtful joy.

What's this, my lord?

Why do you keep to yourself, with only your sorriest imaginings for company, clinging to thoughts that should have died with the men they're about?

Things beyond all remedy should be beyond attention.

What's done is done.

We have slashed the snake, not killed it.
She'll heal and be herself again, while our feeble
hatred stays in danger of her old fang.

But let the whole frame of the universe fall
apart, let both this world and the next suffer,
before we go on eating our meals in fear and
sleeping in the torment of these terrible dreams
that shake us every night.

Better to be with the dead — whom we sent to
their peace to gain our own peace — than to lie
on the rack of the mind in restless frenzy.

Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst:

nor steel, nor
poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
Can touch him further.

LADY MACBETH

Come on,
Gently my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial among your guests tonight.

MACBETH

So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you.
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;
Present him eminence, both with eye and
tongue:
Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering
streams,
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

LADY MACBETH

You must leave this.

MACBETH

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

LADY MACBETH

Duncan is in his grave; after life's fitful fever he
sleeps well.
Treason has already done its worst to him.

Not steel, not poison, not plots at home, not
foreign armies — nothing can touch him now.

Come now, my gentle lord: smooth over those
troubled looks,
and be bright and cheerful among your guests
tonight.

I will, love — and please, you do the same.
Keep your attention fixed on Banquo;
single him out for honor with your eyes and your
words.
It shows how unsafe we are, that we have to
bathe our honor in these streams of flattery and
make our faces masks for our hearts, disguising
what our hearts really are.

You must stop this.

Oh, my mind is full of scorpions, dear wife!
You know that Banquo and his Fleance are still
alive.

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, ere to black Hecate's

summons

The shard-born beetle, with his drowsy hums,

Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be

done

A deed of dreadful note.

LADY MACBETH

What's to be done?

MACBETH

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,

Till thou applaud the deed.

Come, seeling night,

Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,

And with thy bloody and invisible hand

Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond

Which keeps me pale!—

Light thickens; and the

crow

Makes wing to th' rooky wood.

Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,

Whiles night's black agents to their preys do

rouse.

Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee still;

But nature hasn't given them a lease on life that lasts forever.

There's comfort in that — they can still be attacked.

So be cheerful.

Before the bat has flown its cloistered flight,

before the dung-bred beetle, answering dark

Hecate's summons, has rung out night's

yawning curfew with its drowsy humming, a

deed of dreadful note will be done.

What's to be done?

Stay innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, until you can applaud the deed.

Come, blinding night, sew shut the tender eye of pitying day, and with your bloody, invisible hand cancel and tear to pieces that great bond that keeps me pale with fear!

The light is thickening, and the crow is winging its way to the darkening wood.

The good things of day begin to droop and drowse, while night's black agents rouse themselves toward their prey.

You marvel at my words — but be still.

Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.

So, pr'ythee, go with me.

Exeunt.

Things begun badly make themselves strong
through further evil.

So please, come with me.

Act 3, Scene 3

THE SAME. A PARK OR LAWN, WITH A GATE LEADING TO THE PALACE

Macbeth has hired murderers to kill Banquo and his son Fleance as they ride back to the palace for tonight's banquet, because the witches promised the throne to Banquo's descendants. At dusk, the killers — now joined by a mysterious third — lie in wait near the palace gate.

Original

Translation

Enter three Murderers

FIRST MURDERER

But who did bid thee join with us?

THIRD MURDERER

Macbeth.

SECOND MURDERER

He needs not our mistrust; since he delivers
Our offices and what we have to do
To the direction just.

FIRST MURDERER

Then stand with us.
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day.

Now spurs the lated traveller apace,
To gain the timely inn;
and near approaches
The subject of our watch.

THIRD MURDERER

But who told you to join us?

Macbeth.

We have no reason to distrust him, since he lays
out our duties, and exactly what we're to do, just
as we were instructed.

Then stand with us.

The west still glimmers with a few streaks of
daylight.

This is the hour when the late traveler spurs his
horse to reach the inn in time
— and the man we're watching for is drawing
near.

Hark! I hear horses.

Within.

BANQUO

Give us a light there, ho!

SECOND MURDERER

Then 'tis he;

the rest

That are within the note of expectation

Already are i' th' court.

FIRST MURDERER

His horses go about.

THIRD MURDERER

Almost a mile; but he does usually,

So all men do, from hence to the palace gate

Make it their walk.

Enter Banquo and Fleance with a torch

SECOND MURDERER

A light, a light!

THIRD MURDERER

'Tis he.

FIRST MURDERER

Stand to't.

BANQUO

It will be rain tonight.

FIRST MURDERER

Let it come down.

Assaults Banquo.

Listen! I hear horses.

Bring us a light over here!

Then it's him.

The rest of the expected guests are already
inside the court.

His horses are being led the long way around.

Almost a mile around — but he usually walks
from here to the palace gate, the way everyone
does.

A light, a light!

It's him.

Get ready.

It will rain tonight.

Let it come down.

BANQUO

O, treachery!

Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!

Thou mayst revenge—

O slave!

Dies. Fleance escapes.

THIRD MURDERER

Who did strike out the light?

FIRST MURDERER

Was't not the way?

THIRD MURDERER

There's but one down:

the son is fled.

SECOND MURDERER

We have lost best half of our affair.

FIRST MURDERER

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

Exeunt.

Treachery!

Run, good Fleance — run, run, run!

You can take revenge someday.

— Oh, you villain!

Who knocked out the light?

Wasn't that the plan?

Only one of them is down.

The son has fled.

Then we've lost the better half of our job.

Well, let's get away and report how much of it is done.

Act 3, Scene 4

THE SAME. A ROOM OF STATE IN THE PALACE

Macbeth hosts his first state banquet as king, having secretly sent murderers to kill Banquo and Fleance on their way to it. As the guests take their seats, one of the killers appears at the door to report on the job.

Original

Translation

A banquet prepared. Enter Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Ross, Lennox, Lords and Attendants

MACBETH

You know your own degrees, sit down.

At first

And last the hearty welcome.

LORDS

Thanks to your Majesty.

MACBETH

Ourself will mingle with society,

And play the humble host.

Our hostess keeps her state; but, in best time,

We will require her welcome.

LADY MACBETH

Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends;

For my heart speaks they are welcome.

Enter first Murderer to the door

MACBETH

See, they encounter thee with their hearts'
thanks.

Both sides are even:

here I'll sit i' th' midst.

Be large in mirth;

anon we'll drink a measure

The table round.

There's blood upon thy face.

MURDERER

'Tis Banquo's then.

MACBETH

'Tis better thee without than he within.

Is he dispatch'd?

You know your own ranks — sit accordingly.

To the first and the last of you, a hearty
welcome.

Thanks to your Majesty.

We will mingle with the company ourselves and
play the humble host.

Our hostess will keep her seat of state, but at
the right moment we'll ask her to give her
welcome.

Say it for me, sir, to all our friends

— for my heart tells me they are welcome.

See — they answer you with their hearts'
thanks.

Both sides of the table are even;

I'll sit here in the middle.

Be generous with your merriment;

in a moment we'll drink a toast around the
whole table.

— There's blood on your face.

It's Banquo's, then.

Better outside you than inside him.

Is he dispatched?

MURDERER

My lord, his throat is cut.

That I did for him.

My lord, his throat is cut.

I did that much for him.

MACBETH

Thou art the best o' th' cut-throats;

Yet he's good that did the like for Fleance:

If thou didst it, thou art the nonpareil.

You're the best of the cut-throats — though

whoever did the same for Fleance is good too.

If you did both, you have no equal.

MURDERER

Most royal sir,

Fleance is 'scap'd.

Most royal sir — Fleance has escaped.

MACBETH

Then comes my fit again:

I had else been perfect;

Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,

As broad and general as the casing air:

But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound
in

To saucy doubts and fears.

But Banquo's safe?

Then my fit comes over me again.

Otherwise I would have been perfect: whole as
marble, solid as rock, as free and boundless as
the surrounding air.

But now I'm caged, cramped, confined —
penned in by insolent doubts and fears.

But Banquo's taken care of?

MURDERER

Ay, my good lord.

Safe in a ditch he bides,

With twenty trenched gashes on his head;

The least a death to nature.

Yes, my good lord —

resting safe in a ditch, with twenty deep gashes
in his head, the smallest of them enough to kill a
man.

MACBETH

Thanks for that.

There the grown serpent lies;

Thanks for that.

There lies the full-grown serpent.

the worm that's
fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for th' present.—

Get thee gone;

tomorrow

We'll hear, ourselves, again.

Exit 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.

The Ghost of Banquo rises, and sits in Macbeth's place

MACBETH

Sweet remembrancer!—

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

LENNOX

May't please your Highness sit.

MACBETH

The young snake that fled has a nature that will
breed venom in time, though it has no fangs yet.

Get going —

tomorrow we'll hear from you again.

My royal lord, you're not giving the toast.

A feast feels like something sold, not given, if the
host doesn't keep assuring his guests they're
welcome while it's going on.

If it's only about eating, that's better done at
home;
away from home, ceremony is the sauce to the
meat,
and a gathering is bare without it.

Sweet reminder!

Now may good digestion wait on appetite, and
health on both!

May it please your Highness to sit?

Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,
Were the grac'd 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.

LENNOX

Here is a place reserv'd, sir.

MACBETH

Where?

LENNOX

Here, my good lord.

What is't that moves your
Highness?

MACBETH

Which of you have done this?

LORDS

What, my good lord?

MACBETH

Thou canst not say I did it.

We would have all our country's honor gathered
under one roof right now, if only our gracious
Banquo were present.

I hope I'll get to scold him for rudeness rather
than pity him for some accident!

His absence, sir, puts the blame on his promise.

Would it please your Highness to grace us with
your royal company?

The table's full.

Here is a place reserved, sir.

Where?

Here, my good lord.

What is it that troubles your Highness?

Which of you has done this?

Done what, my good lord?

You can't 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,

Authoris'd by her grandam.

Shame itself!

Why do you make such faces?

Don't shake your bloody hair at me.

Gentlemen, rise; his Highness is not well.

Sit, worthy friends.

My lord is often like this, and has been since his youth.

Please, keep your seats.

The fit is momentary; in an instant he'll be well again.

If you stare at him too much, you'll offend him and make the fit last longer.

Eat, and pay him no attention.

— Are you a man?

Yes — and a bold one, who dares to look at

something that might terrify the devil himself.

What perfect nonsense!

This is a picture painted by your fear, just like that dagger floating in the air which, you said, led you to Duncan.

Honestly, these outbursts and flinches — cheap imitations of real fear — would suit a woman's ghost story told by a winter fire, with her grandmother's word for proof.

Shame on you!

Why are you making such faces?

When all's done,

You look but on a stool.

MACBETH

Pr'ythee, 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.

Ghost disappears.

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' th' olden time,
Ere humane statute purg'd the gentle weal;

Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear:

the time has been,

That, when the brains were out, the man would
die,

And there an end;

When all is said and done, you're staring at a
stool.

Please — look there!

Look! See! There! —

What do you say now?

Why, what do I care?

If you can nod, then speak too.

If burial vaults and graves send back the people
we bury, then the bellies of scavenging birds will
have to be our tombs.

What — has folly completely unmanned you?

As surely as I stand here, I saw him.

Shame on you!

Blood has been shed before now — in the old
days, before humane laws civilized the
commonwealth and made it gentle;
yes, and since then too, murders have been
committed too terrible for the ear.

There was a time when, once a man's brains
were out, he died, and that was the end of it.

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' th' whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss:
Would he were here.

Ghost rises again

MACBETH

To all, and him, we thirst,
And all to all.

LORDS

Our duties, and the pledge.

But now they rise again with twenty fatal
wounds on their heads and push us off our
stools.

This is stranger than the murder itself.

My worthy lord, your noble friends are missing
your company.

I forget myself.

Don't wonder at me, my most worthy friends.
I have a strange affliction, which is nothing to
those who know me.

Come — love and health to all!

Now I'll sit down.

Give me some wine; fill it to the top.

I drink to the joy of the whole table, and to our
dear friend Banquo, whom we miss.
If only he were here!

To him, and to everyone, we drink with a will —
and every good wish to all.

Our duty to you — and the toast.

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 th' Hyrcan tiger;

Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble:

or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
The baby of a girl.

Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mock'ry, hence!

Ghost disappears.

MACBETH

Why, so;—being gone,
I am a man again.—

Pray you, sit still.

Away! Get out of my sight!

Let the earth hide you!

Your bones have no marrow, your blood is cold;
there is no sight in those eyes you're glaring
with!

Good peers, think of this as nothing but a habit
of his.

That's all it is — only it spoils the pleasure of the
evening.

Whatever a man dares, I dare.

Come at me in the shape of the rugged Russian
bear, the armored rhinoceros, or the Hyrcanian
tiger

— take any shape but that one, and my steady
nerves will never tremble.

Or be alive again, and challenge me with your
sword to a duel in some deserted place;
and if I stay home trembling then, you can
declare me a little girl's doll.

Away, horrible shadow!

Unreal mockery — away!

There — now that it's gone, I am a man again.

— Please, stay seated.

LADY MACBETH

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good
meeting

With most admir'd 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 are blanch'd 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.

LENNOX

Good night; and better health
Attend his Majesty!

LADY MACBETH

A kind good night to all!

You have driven out the good cheer and broken
up the gathering with this astonishing outburst.

Can such things happen — can they pass over
us like a summer cloud — without astonishing
us?

You make me feel like a stranger to my own
nature, when I see that you can look at such
sights and keep the natural color in your cheeks
while mine are white with fear.

What sights, my lord?

Please, don't speak to him;

he grows worse and worse.

Questions enrage him.

Good night to you all, right now — don't stand
on ceremony about leaving in order of rank, just
go, all at once.

Good night — and better health attend his
Majesty!

A kind good night to all!

Exeunt all Lords and Attendants.

MACBETH

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

Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;

Augurs, and understood relations, have
By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks,
brought forth

The secret'st man of blood.—

What is the night?

LADY MACBETH

Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

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 tomorrow

(And betimes I will) to the Weird Sisters:

More shall they speak;

for now I am bent to

know,

By the worst means, the worst.

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

Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;

fortune-tellers, reading hidden connections
through magpies and jackdaws and rooks, have
exposed the most deeply hidden murderer.

— How far gone is the night?

It's almost arguing with morning over which of
them it is.

What do you say to the fact that Macduff
refuses to appear at our royal command?

Did you send for him, sir?

I heard of it secondhand — but I will send.

There is not one of them whose house doesn't
hold a servant in my pay.

Tomorrow — and early — I will go to the Weird
Sisters.

They shall tell me more;

for now I am determined to know the worst, by
the worst possible means.

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.

Exeunt.

Every other concern must give way to my own
good.

I have stepped so far into this river of blood that
if I stopped wading now, going back would be as
exhausting as crossing to the other side.
I have strange things in my head that are
pressing toward my hand — things that must be
acted on before they can be examined too
closely.

You lack what preserves every living creature:
sleep.

Come, we'll go to sleep.

This strange self-deception of mine is only a
beginner's fear that needs hardening through
practice.

We are still just young in deeds like this.

Act 3, Scene 5

THE HEATH

Banquo is dead but his son Fleance has escaped, and a shaken Macbeth has resolved to seek out the witches again to learn the worst. Before he arrives, Hecate, the goddess of witchcraft, confronts the three witches about the prophecies they gave him without her.

Original

Translation

Thunder. Enter the three Witches meeting Hecate

FIRST WITCH

Why, how now, Hecate?

Why, what's the matter, Hecate?

you look angrily.

HECATE

Have I not reason, beldams as you are,
Saucy and overbold?

How did you dare

To trade and traffic with Macbeth
In riddles and affairs of death;
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,
Was never call'd to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art?
And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a wayward son,
Spiteful and wrathful; who, as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.
But make amends now:

get you gone,

And at the pit of Acheron

Meet me i' th' morning:

thither he

Will come to know his destiny.

Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms, and everything beside.
I am for th' air;

this night I'll spend

Unto a dismal and a fatal end.

Great business must be wrought ere noon.
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vap'rous drop profound;
I'll catch it ere it come to ground:

You look angry.

Don't I have reason, you hags — insolent and
overbold as you are?

How did you dare to trade and traffic with
Macbeth in riddles and matters of death, while I,
the mistress of your spells, the secret designer
of every harm, was never called on to play my
part or display the glory of our art?

And what's worse, everything you've done has
been for a self-willed son — a spiteful, wrathful
man who, like all the rest, loves our arts for his
own ends, not for you.

But make amends now.

Be off, and meet me in the morning at the pit of
Acheron;

he will come there to learn his destiny.

Prepare your cauldrons and your spells, your
charms and everything else.

I'm off into the air;

I'll spend this night working toward a dismal
and fatal end.

Great business must be finished before noon.
On the corner of the moon there hangs a heavy
drop of magical vapor;
I'll catch it before it reaches the ground,

And that, distill'd by magic sleights,
Shall raise such artificial sprites,
As, by the strength of their illusion,
Shall draw him on to his confusion.
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear.
And you all know, security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

Music and song within, "Come away, come away" &c.

HECATE

Hark!

I am call'd;
my little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud and stays for me.

Exit.

FIRST WITCH

Come, let's make haste;

she'll soon be back
again.

Exeunt.

and once it is distilled by magic arts, it will raise
up spirits of illusion so convincing that their
tricks will draw him on to his own ruin.
He will spurn fate, scorn death, and carry his
hopes above wisdom, grace, and fear.
And as you all know, a false sense of security is
mortals' greatest enemy.

Listen!

I'm being called.
See — my little spirit sits in a foggy cloud,
waiting for me.

Come, let's hurry;

she'll soon be back again.

Act 3, Scene 6

FORRES. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

Banquo's murder has followed Duncan's, and Scotland's nobles have privately stopped believing the official explanations for either. Macduff, having pointedly skipped Macbeth's banquet, has gone to England, where Duncan's son Malcolm is sheltered by King Edward.

Original

Translation

Enter Lennox and another Lord

LENNOX

My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
Which can interpret farther:

only, I say,
Things have been strangely borne.

The gracious
Duncan
Was pitied of Macbeth:—marry, he was dead:—
And the right valiant Banquo walk'd too late;

Whom, you may say, if't please you, Fleance
kill'd,
For Fleance fled.

Men must not walk too late.
Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous
It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
To kill their gracious father?

damned fact!
How it did grieve Macbeth!
did he not straight,
In pious rage, the two delinquents tear
That were the slaves of drink and thralls of
sleep?

Was not that nobly done?
Ay, and wisely too;
For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive,
To hear the men deny't.

So that, I say,
He has borne all things well:

What I've said so far has only matched what you
were already thinking — and you can draw the
conclusions yourself.

All I'm saying is that things have been handled
strangely.

The gracious Duncan was pitied by Macbeth —
naturally, once he was dead.

And the truly valiant Banquo went out walking
too late;
you may say, if you like, that Fleance killed him,
since Fleance ran away.

Men really must not walk too late.
And who can help thinking how monstrous it
was of Malcolm and Donalbain to kill their
gracious father?

A damnable deed!
How it grieved Macbeth!
Didn't he immediately, in his pious rage, cut
down the two culprits — who were slaves of
drink and prisoners of sleep?

Wasn't that nobly done?
Yes, and wisely too, since it would have angered
any living heart to hear the men deny it.

So, as I say, he has managed everything well.

and I do think,
That had he Duncan's sons under his key
(As, and't please heaven, he shall not) they
should find
What 'twere to kill a father;
so should Fleance.
But, peace!—

for from broad words, and 'cause
he fail'd
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear,
Macduff lives in disgrace.
Sir, can you tell
Where he bestows himself?

LORD

The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
Lives in the English court and is receiv'd
Of the most pious Edward with such grace
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect.

Thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid
To wake Northumberland, and warlike Siward
That, by the help of these (with Him above
To ratify the work), we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights;
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody
knives,
Do faithful homage, and receive free honours,
All which we pine for now.

And I think that if he had Duncan's sons under
lock and key — which, please heaven, he never
shall — they would find out what it costs to kill a
father.

And so would Fleance.
But hush! —

for speaking too freely, and for failing to appear
at the tyrant's feast, Macduff, I hear, lives in
disgrace.

Sir, can you tell me where he's keeping himself?

Duncan's son Malcolm — whose birthright this
tyrant is withholding — lives at the English
court, and is received by the most pious King
Edward with such grace that his bad fortune
takes nothing away from the high respect he is
shown.

Macduff has gone there too, to beg the holy king
for his help in rousing Northumberland and the
warlike Siward,
so that with their aid — and with God above to
sanction the work — we may once again put
food on our tables and sleep through our nights,
free our feasts and banquets of bloody knives,
pay homage owed to a rightful king, and receive
honors freely given: all the things we are
starving for now.

And this report

Hath so exasperate the King that he

Prepares for some attempt of war.

LENNOX

Sent he to Macduff?

LORD

He did:

and with an absolute "Sir, not I,"

The cloudy messenger turns me his back,

And hums, as who should say, "You'll rue the
time

That clogs me with this answer."

LENNOX

And that well might

Advise him to a caution, t' hold what distance

His wisdom can provide.

Some holy angel

Fly to the court of England, and unfold

His message ere he come, that a swift blessing

May soon return to this our suffering country

Under a hand accurs'd!

LORD

I'll send my prayers with him.

Exeunt.

This report has so enraged the King — Macbeth

— that he is preparing for some kind of war.

Did he send for Macduff?

He did —

and with a flat "Sir, not I," the scowling

messenger turned his back on him

and hummed under his breath, as if to say,

"You'll regret the day you loaded me down with
this answer."

And that might well warn Macduff to be

cautious — to keep whatever distance his

wisdom can devise.

May some holy angel fly ahead of him to the

court of England and deliver his message before

he arrives, so that a swift blessing may soon

return to this suffering country of ours, crushed

under an accursed hand!

I'll send my prayers with him.

Act 4, Scene 1

A DARK CAVE. IN THE MIDDLE, A CAULDRON BOILING

Haunted by Banquo's ghost and by the prophecy that Banquo's descendants will be kings, Macbeth has resolved to seek out the witches again and force them to reveal his future. Unknown to him, Macduff has already slipped away to England to join Malcolm, the dead King Duncan's son.

Original

Translation

Thunder. Enter the three Witches

FIRST WITCH

Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

The striped cat has meowed three times.

SECOND WITCH

Thrice, and once the hedge-pig whin'd.

Three times — and the hedgehog has whined
once.

THIRD WITCH

Harpier cries:—'Tis time, 'tis time.

Harpier, my spirit, is calling: it's time, it's time.

FIRST WITCH

Round about the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw.—

Circle around the cauldron and throw in the
poisoned guts.

Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
i' th' charmed pot!

First into the enchanted pot goes the toad that
sat under a cold stone for thirty-one days and
nights, sweating out venom in its sleep.

Boil thou first

Boil it first!

ALL

Double, double, toil and trouble;

Double, double, work and trouble — let our
labor and the world's misery both multiply.

Fire, burn; and cauldron, bubble.

Burn, fire; bubble, cauldron.

SECOND WITCH

Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and howlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

A slice of snake from the swamp — boil and bake
it in the cauldron.
Eye of newt and toe of frog, fur of bat and
tongue of dog, a snake's forked tongue and a
blindworm's stinger, a lizard's leg and a young
owl's wing: for a charm of powerful trouble, boil
and bubble like a broth from hell.

ALL

Double, double, toil and trouble;

Fire, burn; and cauldron, bubble.

THIRD WITCH

Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,

Witch's mummy, maw and gulf

Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,

Root of hemlock digg'd i' th' dark,

Liver of blaspheming Jew,

Gall of goat, and slips of yew

Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,

Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips,

Finger of birth-strangled babe

Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,

Make the gruel thick and slab:

Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,

For th' ingredients of our cauldron.

ALL

Double, double, toil and trouble;

Fire, burn; and cauldron, bubble.

SECOND WITCH

Cool it with a baboon's blood.

Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter Hecate

HECATE

O, well done! I commend your pains,

And everyone shall share i' th' gains.

Double, double, work and trouble — let our
labor and the world's misery both multiply.

Burn, fire; bubble, cauldron.

A dragon's scale, a wolf's tooth, the dried flesh
of a mummified witch, the stomach and gullet
of a shark gorged on the salt sea, hemlock root
dug up in the dark, the liver of a blaspheming
Jew, a goat's bile, twigs of yew sliced off during
an eclipse of the moon, a Turk's nose and a
Tartar's lips, the finger of a baby strangled at
birth after a prostitute delivered it in a ditch —
make the stew thick and gluey.

Then add a tiger's entrails to the ingredients of
our cauldron.

Double, double, work and trouble — let our
labor and the world's misery both multiply.

Burn, fire; bubble, cauldron.

Cool it with a baboon's blood — then the charm
is solid and complete.

Well done! I applaud your hard work, and
everyone will share in the profits.

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

Music and a song: "Black Spirits," &c.

Exit Hecate.

SECOND WITCH

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

Enter Macbeth

MACBETH

How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is'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:

Now sing around the cauldron like elves and
fairies dancing in a ring, and enchant everything
you have thrown in.

By the prickling in my thumbs, something
wicked is coming this way.
Open, locks, for whoever knocks!

Well, well — you secretive, black, midnight hags!
What are you doing?

A deed without a name.

I command you, in the name of the dark art you
practice — however you come by your
knowledge — answer me.

Though you untie the winds, and let them fight
Against the churches; though the yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up;
Though bladed corn be lodg'd, and trees blown
down;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations; though the
treasure
Of nature's germens tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken, answer me
To what I ask you.

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?

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

Even if it means you untie the winds and let
them batter the churches; even if the foaming
waves smash and swallow every ship at sea; even
if ripe grain is flattened and trees are blown
down; even if castles collapse onto their guards'
heads; even if palaces and pyramids bow their
tops down to their foundations; even if the very
seeds of nature spill together into chaos until
destruction itself grows sick of destroying —
answer my question.

Speak.

Ask.

We'll answer.

Tell us: would you rather hear it from our
mouths, or from our masters?

Call them. Let me see them.

Pour in the blood of a sow that has eaten her
own nine piglets, and throw into the flame the
grease that has dripped from a murderer's
gallows.

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

Thunder. An Apparition of an armed Head rises.

MACBETH

Tell me, thou unknown power,—

FIRST WITCH

He knows thy thought:
Hear his speech, but say thou naught.

APPARITION

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

Beware Macduff;

Beware the Thane of Fife.—

Dismiss me.—

Enough.

Descends.

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. An Apparition of a bloody Child rises.

Come, spirits high and low — show yourself and
your purpose, and be quick about it!

Tell me, you unknown power—

He knows what you're thinking.
Hear what he says, but say nothing yourself.

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

Beware Macduff.

Beware the Thane of Fife.

— Release me.

— Enough.

Whatever you are, thank you for the good
warning — you have struck the exact chord of
my fear.

But one word more—

He won't be given orders.

Here's another, more powerful than the first.

APPARITION

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

MACBETH

Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

If I had three ears, I'd listen with all three.

APPARITION

Be bloody, bold, and resolute.

Be bloody, bold, and determined.

Laugh to scorn

Laugh at the power of any man — for no one
born of a woman will ever harm Macbeth.

The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

Descends.

MACBETH

Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?

Then live, Macduff — why should I fear you?

But yet I'll make assurance double sure,

But still, I'll make certainty doubly certain and

And take a bond of fate.

take out a guarantee from fate itself:

Thou shalt not live;

you will not live. That way I can call my pale-

That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,

hearted fear a liar and sleep soundly even

And sleep in spite of thunder.

through thunder.

Thunder. An Apparition of a Child crowned, with a tree in his hand,

rises.

MACBETH

What is this,

What is this, rising like the child of a king and

That rises like the issue of a king,

wearing on its baby forehead the round crown

And wears upon his baby brow the round

of royalty?

And top of sovereignty?

ALL

Listen, but speak not to't.

Listen, but don't speak to it.

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.

Descends.

MACBETH

That will never be:
Who can impress the forest; bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root?

Sweet bodements,
good!
Rebellious head, rise never till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-plac'd Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
To time and mortal custom.—

Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing:
tell me, if your art
Can tell so much, shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?

ALL

Seek to know no more.

MACBETH

I will be satisfied:
deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you!

Let me know.
Why sinks that cauldron?
and what noise is this?

Be lion-hearted and proud, and don't worry
about who resents you, who complains, or
where the conspirators are: Macbeth will never
be defeated until Great Birnam Wood marches
up high Dunsinane Hill to attack him.

That will never happen.
Who can draft a forest into an army, or order a
tree to pull up its roots from the earth?

Sweet prophecies — excellent!
Rebellion, never raise your head until Birnam
Wood itself rises, and our high-placed Macbeth
will live out his full natural lifespan, giving up
his breath only to time and ordinary death.
And yet my heart pounds to know one thing.

Tell me — if your art can see this far — will
Banquo's descendants ever reign in this
kingdom?

Try to learn nothing more.

I will have my answer.
Deny me this, and may an eternal curse fall on
you!
Tell me.
Why is that cauldron sinking?
And what is that music?

Hautboys.

FIRST WITCH

Show!

Show him!

SECOND WITCH

Show!

Show him!

THIRD WITCH

Show!

Show him!

ALL

Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart!

Show his eyes and grieve his heart; come like
shadows, and vanish like them too!

*A show of eight kings appear, and pass over in order, the last with
a glass in his hand; Banquo following.*

MACBETH

Thou are too like the spirit of Banquo.

You look too much like Banquo's ghost.

Down!

Get down!

Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs:—

Your crown burns my eyeballs.

and thy

And your hair, you second gold-crowned head, is
just like the first one's.

hair,

Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.

A third is like the former.—

The third looks like the second.

Filthy hags!

— Filthy hags!

Why do you show me this?—

Why are you showing me this?

A fourth!—

— A fourth!

Start,

Leap out of your sockets, eyes!

eyes!

What, will the line stretch out to th' crack of
doom?

What, will this line of kings stretch on until the
crack of doom?

Another yet!—

Another one!

A seventh!—

I'll see no more:—

And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
Which shows me many more;

and some I see

That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry.

Horrible sight!—

Now I see 'tis true;

For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his.—

What! is this so?

FIRST WITCH

Ay, sir, all this is so:—

but why

Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?—

Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,

And show the best of our delights.

I'll charm the air to give a sound,

While you perform your antic round;

That this great king may kindly say,

Our duties did his welcome pay.

Music. The Witches dance, and vanish.

MACBETH

Where are they?

Gone?—

Let this pernicious

hour

Stand aye accursed in the calendar!—

Come in, without there!

A seventh!

I'll look no more — and yet an eighth appears,
carrying a mirror that shows me many more;

and some of them carry double orbs and triple
scepters.

Horrible sight!

Now I see it is true, for Banquo, his hair matted
with blood, smiles at me and points at them as
his own descendants.

— What! Is this really so?

Yes, sir, all of this is true.

But why does Macbeth stand there so stunned?

Come, sisters, let's cheer up his spirits and show
him the best of our entertainments.

I'll charm the air into making music while you
perform your wild round-dance, so this great
king can graciously say that we did our duty and
made him welcome.

Where are they?

Gone?

Let this poisonous hour stand cursed forever on
the calendar!

— Come in, whoever's out there!

Enter Lennox

LENNOX

What's your Grace's will?

What is your Grace's wish?

MACBETH

Saw you the Weird Sisters?

Did you see the Weird Sisters?

LENNOX

No, my lord.

No, my lord.

MACBETH

Came they not by you?

Didn't they pass right by you?

LENNOX

No, indeed, my lord.

No, they certainly didn't, my lord.

MACBETH

Infected be the air whereon they ride;
And damn'd all those that trust them!—

Then may the air they ride on be infected, and
may everyone who trusts them be damned!

I did

I heard horses galloping

hear

The galloping of horse:

who was't came by?

— who came by?

LENNOX

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

Two or three riders, my lord, bringing you word
that Macduff has fled to England.

MACBETH

Fled to England!

Fled to England!

LENNOX

Ay, my good lord.

Yes, my good lord.

MACBETH

Time, thou anticipat'st 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 th' edge o' th' 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.

Exeunt.

Time, you keep getting ahead of my dreadful
plans.

A fleeting intention is never caught unless the
act travels along with it.

From this moment on, the first impulses of my
heart will also be the first acts of my hand.

And starting right now, to crown my thoughts
with action, let thinking and doing be one:

I will hit Macduff's castle by surprise, seize Fife,
and put to the sword his wife, his children, and
every unlucky soul in his family line.

No fool's boasting — I'll do this deed before the
intention cools.

But no more visions!

— Where are those messengers?

Come, take me to them.

Act 4, Scene 2

FIFE. A ROOM IN MACDUFF'S CASTLE

Macduff has fled to England to join Malcolm without telling his wife, leaving his family unguarded at his castle in Fife. Macbeth, warned by the first apparition to beware Macduff, has just vowed to seize the castle and kill everyone in Macduff's line.

Original

Translation

Enter Lady Macduff her Son and Ross

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:

What had he done that made him flee the
country?

You must be patient, madam.

He had no patience.

His flight was madness.

Even when our actions don't make us traitors,
our fears can make us look like them.

You don't know whether it was wisdom or fear.

Wisdom!

To leave his wife, to leave his children, his house
and his titles, in the very place he runs away
from?
He doesn't love us.
He's missing the natural instinct — even the
poor wren, the tiniest of birds, will fight the owl
to protect the chicks in her nest.
His flight is all fear and no love;
and there's just as little wisdom in it, when
running away defies all reason.

My dearest cousin, please, control yourself.

but, for your
husband,
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' th' 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.—
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.

Exit.

LADY MACDUFF

Sirrah, your father's dead.
And what will you do now?

As for your husband: he is noble, wise, and
sensible, and he understands better than
anyone the violent fits of the times.

I don't dare say much more, but these are cruel
times — times when we're branded traitors
without knowing we've done anything wrong;
when we believe rumors because we're afraid,
without even knowing what we're afraid of, and
simply drift on a wild, violent sea, tossed in every
direction.

I'll take my leave of you now; it won't be long
before I'm back.

When things reach their worst, they either stop
or climb back up to what they were before.

— My pretty young cousin, blessings on you!

He has a father, and yet he is fatherless.

I'm enough of a fool that if I stayed any longer
I'd disgrace myself by weeping and make you
more upset.

I'll leave at once.

Young man, your father is dead.
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'dst never fear the net nor lime,
The pit-fall 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

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.

How will you live?

The way birds do, mother.

What — on worms and flies?

On whatever I can get, I mean.
That's how they live.

Poor bird!

You'd never fear the net or the sticky trap, the
pitfall or the snare.

Why should I, mother?

Nobody sets traps for poor little birds.

And my father is not dead, no matter what you
say.

Yes, he is dead.

How will you manage for a father?

No — how will you manage for a husband?

Why, I can buy myself twenty at any market.

Then you'd only be buying them to sell again.

LADY MACDUFF

Thou speak'st with all thy wit;
And yet, i' faith, with wit enough for thee.

You're talking with every bit of wit you have —
and honestly, that's wit enough for a boy your
size.

SON

Was my father a traitor, mother?

Was my father a traitor, mother?

LADY MACDUFF

Ay, that he was.

Yes, he was.

SON

What is a traitor?

What is a traitor?

LADY MACDUFF

Why, one that swears and lies.

Why, someone who swears an oath and breaks
it.

SON

And be all traitors that do so?

And is everyone who does that a traitor?

LADY MACDUFF

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

Everyone who does it is a traitor, and must be
hanged.

SON

And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

And must everyone who swears and lies be
hanged?

LADY MACDUFF

Every one.

Every single one.

SON

Who must hang them?

Who has to hang them?

LADY MACDUFF

Why, the honest men.

Why, the honest men.

SON

Then the liars and swearers are fools: for there
are liars and swearers
enow to beat the honest men and hang up
them.

LADY MACDUFF

Now, God help thee, poor monkey!

But how wilt
thou do for a father?

SON

If he were dead, you'd weep for him:

if you
would not, it were a good
sign that I should quickly have a new father.

LADY MACDUFF

Poor prattler, how thou 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 man's advice,
Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.
To fright you thus, methinks, I am too savage;
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,
Which is too nigh your person.

Heaven preserve
you!

Then the liars and oath-breakers are fools,
because there are enough liars and oath-
breakers in the world to beat the honest men
and hang them instead.

God help you, you poor little monkey!

But what will you do for a father?

If he were really dead, you'd be weeping for him.

And if you weren't weeping, it would be a good
sign that I'd soon have a new father.

Poor little chatterbox — how you talk!

Bless you, fair lady!

You don't know me, though I know your
honored position perfectly well.

I fear danger is closing in on you.

If you'll take a plain man's advice, don't be
found here — get away with your little ones.

I know it seems brutal of me to frighten you like
this, but letting something far worse happen to
you would be savage cruelty — and that worse is
already near you.

Heaven protect you!

I dare abide no longer.

Exit.

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?

What are these

faces?

Enter Murderers

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-ear'd villain!

FIRST MURDERER

What, you egg!

Stabbing him.

FIRST MURDERER

I dare not stay a moment longer.

Where should I run?

I've done no harm.

But then I remember: I live in this earthly world,

where doing harm is often praised, and doing

good is sometimes called dangerous folly.

So why, then, do I offer that womanly defense —

saying I've done no harm?

— Who are these faces?

Where is your husband?

Nowhere so unholy, I hope, that someone like

you could find him.

He's a traitor.

You're lying, you shaggy-eared villain!

What, you egg!

Young fry of treachery!

You young spawn of a traitor!

SON

He has kill'd me, mother:

Run away, I pray you!

He has killed me, mother.

Run away, I beg you!

Dies. Exit Lady Macduff, crying "Murder!" and pursued by the Murderers.

Act 4, Scene 3

ENGLAND. BEFORE THE KING'S PALACE

Macduff has arrived at the English court to beg Malcolm, King Duncan's exiled son, to lead an army against Macbeth — but Malcolm, fearing a trap, must first test whether Macduff is secretly Macbeth's agent. Neither man yet knows that Macbeth's hired killers have just slaughtered Macduff's wife and children.

Original

Translation

Enter Malcolm and Macduff

MALCOLM

Let us seek out some desolate shade and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.

Let's find some deserted, shady spot and cry our
sad hearts empty there.

MACDUFF

Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword, and, like good men,
Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom.

Let's instead keep a firm grip on our deadly
swords, and like good men stand over our fallen
homeland to defend it.

Each new
morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry; new
sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out
Like syllable of dolour.

Every new morning, new widows howl, new
orphans cry, and new sorrows strike heaven in
the face until the sky rings as if it felt Scotland's
pain and screamed out the same cry of grief.

MALCOLM

What I believe, I'll wail;

What know, believe;

and what I can redress,

As I shall find the time to friend, I will.

What you have spoke, it may be so, perchance.

This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our
tongues,

Was once thought honest:

you have loved him

well;

He hath not touch'd you yet.

I am young; but

something

You may deserve of him through me;

and

wisdom

To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb

To appease an angry god.

MACDUFF

I am not treacherous.

MALCOLM

But Macbeth is.

A good and virtuous nature may recoil

In an imperial charge.

What I believe, I'll mourn; what I know for
certain, I'll believe;

and what I can put right, I will — whenever time
is on my side.

What you've said may perhaps be true.

This tyrant, whose mere name blisters our
tongues, was once thought honest.

You loved him well, and he hasn't harmed you
yet.

I'm young, but you might earn a reward from
him by betraying me

— and it would be shrewd to offer up a weak,
poor, innocent lamb to appease an angry god.

I am not treacherous.

But Macbeth is.

Even a good and virtuous nature can give way
under a king's command.

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.

MALCOLM

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

MACDUFF

Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee!

wear thou thy
wrongs;
The title is affeer'd.—

But I beg your pardon: my suspicions can't
change what you actually are.

Angels are still bright, even though the brightest
of them fell.
Even if everything foul tried to wear the face of
goodness, goodness would still have to look like
itself — so how can I tell them apart?

Then I have lost my hopes.

Perhaps you lost them in the very place I found
my doubts.
Why did you abandon your wife and child —
those precious reasons for living, those strong
knots of love — so abruptly, without even saying
goodbye?
Please, don't take my suspicions as insults to
your honor; they're only my own safeguards.

You may be entirely honorable, whatever I
happen to think.

Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny, lay your foundations deep, since
goodness doesn't dare to stop you.

Flaunt the wrongs you've done — your stolen
title is legally confirmed.

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

Be not offended:

I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;
It weeps, it bleeds; and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds.

I think, withal,

There would be hands uplifted in my right;
And here, from gracious England, have I offer
Of goodly thousands:

but, for all this,

When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before,
More suffer, and more sundry ways than ever,
By him that shall succeed.

MACDUFF

What should he be?

MALCOLM

It is myself I mean; in whom I know
All the particulars of vice so grafted
That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow; and the poor state
Esteem him as a lamb, being compar'd
With my confineless harms.

MACDUFF

Farewell, my lord.

I wouldn't be the villain you think I am for all the
land in the tyrant's grasp, with the riches of the
East thrown in.

Don't be offended: I'm not speaking out of
settled distrust of you.

I do think our country is sinking beneath the
yoke; it weeps, it bleeds, and each new day
another gash is added to its wounds.

I also think there would be hands raised on my
behalf; and here gracious England has offered
me thousands of good soldiers.

But for all that, when I have trampled on the
tyrant's head, or carry it on my sword, my poor
country will suffer under more vices than it did
before — suffer more, and in more different
ways than ever — under the man who succeeds
him.

Who could that be?

I mean myself — a man in whom, I know, every
variety of vice is grafted so deep that when they
open into full bloom, black Macbeth will seem
as pure as snow, and our poor country will
count him a lamb compared with my limitless
capacity for harm.

Not in the legions
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd
In evils to top Macbeth.

MALCOLM

I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name:
but there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness:

your wives, your
daughters,
Your matrons, and your maids, could not fill up
The cistern of my lust;
and my desire
All continent impediments would o'erbear,
That did oppose my will:
better Macbeth
Than such an one to reign.

MACDUFF

Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny; it hath been
Th' untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings.

But fear not yet
To take upon you what is yours:
you may
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
And yet seem cold—the time you may so
hoodwink.

Not in all the legions of horrid hell could there
be a devil more damned in evil than Macbeth.

I grant he's bloody, lustful, greedy, false,
deceitful, violent, malicious — reeking of every
sin that has a name.

But there is no bottom, none, to my sexual appetite.

Your wives, your daughters, your married women, and your young girls could not fill up the tank of my lust;

and my desire would flatten every barrier of restraint standing in its way.

Better Macbeth than a king like that.

Boundless lust in a man's nature is a kind of tyranny too; it has emptied happy thrones before their time and been the downfall of many kings.

But don't be afraid yet to claim what is yours.

You can take your pleasures discreetly and in abundance while appearing cold to the world — you can blindfold the public that way.

the king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temp'rance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them;

but abound
In the division of each several crime,
Acting it many ways.

Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.

MACDUFF

O Scotland, Scotland!

MALCOLM

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

MACDUFF

Fit to govern?
No, not to live.—

O nation miserable,
With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accus'd,
And does blaspheme his breed?

Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king.

The graces that make a king — justice,
truthfulness, self-control, steadiness,
generosity, perseverance, mercy, humility,
devotion, patience, courage, fortitude — I have
no trace of them.

Instead I overflow with every possible variation
of each individual crime, and act them out in
every possible way.

No: if I had the power, I would pour the sweet
milk of harmony straight into hell, throw
universal peace into an uproar, and destroy all
unity on earth.

O Scotland, Scotland!

If a man like this is fit to govern, say so.
I am what I have described.

Fit to govern?

No — not fit to live.

O miserable nation, under a tyrant with no right
to the throne and a bloody scepter in his hand,
when will you see your healthy days again?
The truest heir to your crown stands accused by
his own confession and curses his own
bloodline.

Your royal father was a most saintly king;

The queen that bore
thee,
Oft'ner upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she lived.

Fare thee well!
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Have banish'd me from Scotland.—
O my breast,
Thy hope ends here!

MALCOLM

Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconcil'd my
thoughts
To thy good truth and honour.

Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power,

and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste:

but God above
Deal between thee and me!

for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction;

here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For strangers to my nature.

I am yet
Unknown to woman;
never was forsworn;
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own;

the queen who bore you spent more time on her
knees in prayer than on her feet, and lived every
day as if preparing to die.

Farewell!
These evils you keep reciting against yourself
have banished me from Scotland.
— O my heart, your hope ends here!

Macduff, this noble outburst of passion, the
child of your integrity, has wiped the black
doubts from my soul and reconciled my mind to
your good faith and honor.

Devilish Macbeth has tried many tricks just like
this to lure me into his power,

and plain common sense holds me back from
believing anyone too quickly.

But let God above be the judge between you and
me

— for from this moment I put myself in your
hands, and I take back every slander I spoke
against myself.

I renounce, here and now, the sins and faults I
pinned on my own name; they are strangers to
my real nature.

I have never yet been with a woman.

I have never broken an oath.

I have scarcely coveted even what was my own.

their malady convinces
The great assay of art;
but at his touch,
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.

MALCOLM

I thank you, doctor.

Exit Doctor.

MACDUFF

What's the disease he means?

MALCOLM

'Tis call'd the evil:
A most miraculous work in this good king;
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do.

How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows,

but strangely-visited
people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures;
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers:

and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction.

With this strange
virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy;

Their disease defeats the very best that medical
skill can attempt;
but at his touch — heaven has given his hand
such holiness — they recover on the spot.

Thank you, doctor.

What disease does he mean?

It's called 'the evil' — and curing it is a
miraculous work this good king performs.
I've often watched him do it since I came to
England.

How he wins heaven's help, only he knows;

but people afflicted with strange diseases — all
swollen and covered in ulcers, pitiful to look at,
utterly beyond the help of surgery — he cures,
hanging a gold coin around their necks and
saying holy prayers over them.

And they say he passes this healing blessing
down to his royal successors.

Along with this strange power, he has a heavenly
gift of prophecy;

And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace.

Enter Ross

MACDUFF

See, who comes here?

MALCOLM

My countryman; but yet I know him not.

MACDUFF

My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.

MALCOLM

I know him now.

Good God, betimes remove

The means that makes us strangers!

ROSS

Sir, amen.

MACDUFF

Stands Scotland where it did?

ROSS

Alas, poor country,

Almost afraid to know itself!

and all kinds of blessings surround his throne
and proclaim him a man full of grace.

Look — who's coming here?

A fellow Scot, by his dress; but I don't recognize
him yet.

My ever-kind cousin, welcome here.

Now I recognize him.

Good God, quickly remove whatever it is that
makes us strangers to one another!

Amen to that, sir.

Does Scotland stand where it did?

Alas, poor country — almost too frightened to
look at itself!

It cannot

Be call'd our mother, but our grave, where
nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks, that rent
the air,
Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow
seems
A modern ecstasy.

The dead man's knell

Is there scarce ask'd for who;

and good men's

lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or ere they sicken.

MACDUFF

O, relation
Too nice, and yet too true!

MALCOLM

What's the newest grief?

ROSS

That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;

Each minute teems a new one.

MACDUFF

How does my wife?

ROSS

Why, well.

MACDUFF

It can't be called our mother anymore, but our
grave: a place where no one is ever seen to smile
except those who know nothing; where sighs
and groans and shrieks tear the air and nobody
even notices; where violent grief passes for an
ordinary mood.

The funeral bell rings and people hardly ask who
it's for anymore;

good men's lives wither faster than the flowers
in their caps — they're dying before they even
fall sick.

Oh, a report almost too finely detailed — and yet
too true!

What is the newest grief?

A grief an hour old gets its teller hissed for
bringing stale news;
every minute breeds a new one.

How is my wife?

Why — well.

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 niggard of your speech:

how goes't?

ROSS

When I came hither to transport the tidings,
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
Of many worthy fellows that were out;
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power afoot.
Now is the time of help.

Your eye in Scotland

Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To doff their dire distresses.

MALCOLM

Be't their comfort

We are coming thither.

Gracious England hath

Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men;
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.

ROSS

And all my children?

Well too.

The tyrant hasn't attacked their peace?

No — they were well at peace when I left them.

Don't be stingy with your words.

How do things stand?

When I set out to carry the news that has
weighed on me so heavily, a rumor was
spreading that many worthy men had taken up
arms; and I believed it all the more because I
saw the tyrant's forces on the move.

Now is the moment for help.

One glimpse of you in Scotland would create
soldiers, and make even our women fight to
throw off their terrible sufferings.

Let it be their comfort that we are coming.

Gracious England has lent us good Siward and
ten thousand men; no older or better soldier
exists anywhere in Christendom.

Would I could answer

This comfort with the like!

But I have words

That would be howl'd out in the desert air,

Where hearing should not latch them.

MACDUFF

What concern they?

The general cause?

or is it a fee-grief

Due to some single breast?

ROSS

No mind that's honest

But in it shares some woe, though the main part

Pertains to you alone.

MACDUFF

If it be mine,

Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

ROSS

Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,

Which shall possess them with the heaviest
sound

That ever yet they heard.

MACDUFF

Humh!

I guess at it.

ROSS

Your castle is surpris'd; your wife and babes

Savagely slaughter'd.

I wish I could answer that comfort with comfort
of my own!

But I carry words that ought to be howled out
into empty desert air, where no ear could catch
them.

Whom do they concern?

The general cause?

Or is it a private grief that belongs to one heart
alone?

No honest mind can help sharing some of this
sorrow, though the greatest part of it belongs to
you alone.

If it's mine, don't keep it from me. Give it to me
quickly.

Don't let your ears hate my tongue forever, for
it's about to fill them with the heaviest sound
they have ever heard.

Hm.

I can guess it.

Your castle was taken by surprise; your wife and
children savagely slaughtered.

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.

MACDUFF

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

ROSS

I have said.

MALCOLM

Be comforted:

Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.

MACDUFF

He has no children.—

All my pretty ones?

Did you say all?—

To describe how it was done would be to pile
your own death onto the heap of these
murdered deer.

Merciful heaven!

— Come, man, don't pull your hat down over
your eyes.

Put your sorrow into words.

The grief that doesn't speak whispers to the
overburdened heart and tells it to break.

My children too?

Wife, children, servants — everyone they could
find.

And I had to be away from there!

My wife killed too?

I have said it.

Take comfort.

Let's make medicine out of our great revenge, to
cure this deadly grief.

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 hawk from hell!

All of them?

What — all my pretty chickens and their mother,
snatched in one savage swoop?

Take it like a man.

I will.

But I must also feel it like a man.

I can't help remembering that such things
existed — and that they were the most precious
things in my life.

Did heaven look on and refuse to take their side?

Sinful Macduff, they were all struck down
because of you!

Worthless as I am, it wasn't their faults but
mine that brought the slaughter down on their
souls.

Heaven rest them now.

Let this be the whetstone that sharpens your
sword.

Let grief turn into anger; don't let it dull your
heart — let it enrage it.

Original

Translation

Enter 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 nightgown 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.

I've stayed up with you for two nights now, and I
can't confirm a word of your report.

When did she last sleepwalk?

Ever since his Majesty went off to war, I've
watched her get out of bed, throw her
nightgown around her, unlock her writing
cabinet, take out paper, fold it, write on it, read
it over, seal it, and then go back to bed — and all
of it while she was fast asleep.

What a serious breakdown of nature — to
receive the benefit of sleep while doing
everything a waking person does.

In this restless sleep of hers, besides walking
around and the other things she has actually
done, what have you ever heard her say?

Things, sir, that I will not repeat after her.

You can repeat them to me — in fact, you really
should.

GENTLEWOMAN

Neither to you nor anyone; having no witness to
confirm my speech.

Not to you, and not to anyone, since I have no
witness to back up what I'd say.

Enter Lady Macbeth with a taper

GENTLEWOMAN

Lo you, here she comes!

Look, here she comes!

This is her very guise;
and, upon my life, fast
asleep.

This is exactly how she always is — and I swear
on my life, she's fast asleep.

Observe her; stand close.

Watch her. Keep out of sight.

DOCTOR

How came she by that light?

Where did she get that candle?

GENTLEWOMAN

Why, it stood by her:

It was right beside her.

she has light by her
continually; 'tis her
command.

She keeps a light next to her at all times — those
are her orders.

DOCTOR

You see, her eyes are open.

You see — her eyes are open.

GENTLEWOMAN

Ay, but their sense are shut.

Yes, but they see nothing.

DOCTOR

What is it she does now?

What is she doing now?

Look how she rubs her
hands.

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

afraid?

What need we

fear who knows it, when none can call our
power to account?

That's a habit of hers, making that hand-
washing motion.

I've seen her keep it up for a quarter of an hour.

There's still a spot here.

Listen — she's speaking.

I'll write down what she says, to fix it more
firmly in my memory.

Out, damned spot! Out, I say!

One — two —

well then, it's time to do it.

Hell is dark!

Shame on you, my lord — shame!

A soldier, and afraid?

Why should we fear anyone finding out, when
no one has the power to call us to account?

Yet who

would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

DOCTOR

Do you mark that?

LADY MACBETH

The Thane of Fife had a wife.

Where is she now?

—

What, will these hands
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.

— But still, who would have thought the old
man would have so much blood in him?

Did you hear that?

The Thane of Fife had a wife.

Where is she now? —

What, will these hands never be clean? —

No more of that, my lord, no more of that.

You'll ruin everything with this flinching.

Dear, dear.

You have known something you never should
have.

She has said something she shouldn't have, I'm
sure of that.

Heaven knows what she has known.

LADY MACBETH

Here's the smell of the blood still:

all the
perfumes of Arabia will
not sweeten this little hand.

Oh, oh, oh!

DOCTOR

What a sigh is there!

The heart is sorely charged.

GENTLEWOMAN

I would not have such a heart in my bosom for
the dignity of the whole
body.

DOCTOR

Well, well, well.

GENTLEWOMAN

Pray God it be, sir.

DOCTOR

This disease is beyond my practice:

yet I have
known those which have
walked in their sleep, who have died holily in
their beds.

LADY MACBETH

Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look
not so pale.

The smell of the blood is still here.

All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this
little hand.

Oh, oh, oh!

What a sigh that was!

Her heart is carrying a terrible burden.

I wouldn't carry a heart like that in my chest for
all the royal dignity of her whole body.

Well, well, well.

Pray God it is well, sir.

This disease is beyond my skill to treat.

Still, I have known people who walked in their
sleep and yet died holy deaths, peacefully in
their beds.

Wash your hands. Put on your nightgown. Don't
look so pale.

— I'm telling you again: Banquo is buried.

I tell you

yet again, Banquo's buried;

he cannot come out

on's grave.

He cannot come out of his grave.

DOCTOR

Even so?

Is that so?

LADY MACBETH

To bed, to bed.

To bed, to bed.

There's knocking at the gate.

There's knocking at the gate.

Come, come, come, come,
give me your hand.

Come, come, come, come — give me your hand.

What's done cannot be

undone.

What's done cannot be undone.

To bed, to bed, to bed.

To bed, to bed, to

bed.

Exit.

DOCTOR

Will she go now to bed?

Will she go to bed now?

GENTLEWOMAN

Directly.

Right away.

DOCTOR

Foul whisp'rings are abroad.

Ugly rumors are going around.

Unnatural deeds

Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician.—

God, God, forgive us all!

Look after her;

Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her.

So, good night:

My mind she has mated, and amaz'd my sight.
I think, but dare not speak.

GENTLEWOMAN

Good night, good doctor.

Exeunt.

Unnatural deeds breed unnatural troubles:

infected minds will pour out their secrets to
their pillows, which cannot hear them.

She needs a priest more than she needs a
doctor.

God, God forgive us all!

Look after her.

Take away anything she might use to hurt
herself, and keep your eyes on her constantly.

And so, good night.

She has stunned my mind and amazed my eyes.
I have thoughts I don't dare say out loud.

Good night, good doctor.

Act 5, Scene 2

THE COUNTRY NEAR DUNSINANE

The English army under Malcolm, Siward, and Macduff is closing in on Macbeth's castle at Dunsinane. A group of Scottish lords — Menteith, Caithness, Angus, and Lennox — have abandoned Macbeth and are marching to join the invaders near Birnam Wood.

Original

Translation

Enter, with drum and colours Menteith, Caithness, Angus, Lennox and

Soldiers

MENTEITH

The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward, and the good Macduff.
Revenge burn in them; for their dear causes
Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
Excite the mortified man.

The English army is close, led by Malcolm, his
uncle Siward, and the good Macduff.
Revenge burns in them: their causes are so dear
that they would rouse even a dead man to
answer the bloody, grim call to battle.

ANGUS

Near Birnam wood

Shall we well meet them.

That way are they
coming.

CAITHNESS

Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?

LENNOX

For certain, sir, he is not.

I have a file

Of all the gentry:

there is Siward's son

And many unrough youths, that even now

Protest their first of manhood.

MENTEITH

What does the tyrant?

CAITHNESS

Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies.

Some say he's mad;

others, that lesser hate him,

Do call it valiant fury:

but, for certain,

He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause

Within the belt of rule.

ANGUS

Now does he feel

His secret murders sticking on his hands;

Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach;

We'll meet up with them near Birnam Wood

— that's the way they're coming.

Does anyone know whether Donalbain is with
his brother?

He definitely is not, sir.

I have a list of all the gentry in that army.

Siward's son is there, along with many smooth-
cheeked boys who are about to prove their
manhood for the first time.

What is the tyrant doing?

He's fortifying great Dunsinane heavily.

Some say he's mad.

Others, who hate him less, call it brave fury.

But this much is certain: his cause is diseased,
and he can no longer buckle it inside the belt of
self-control.

Now he feels his secret murders sticking to his
hands.

Now, minute by minute, fresh revolts throw his
broken oaths back in his face.

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 pronounc'd me
thus:

"Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of
woman

Shall e'er have power upon thee."—

Then fly,

false thanes,

And mingle with the English epicures:

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

Enter a Servant

MACBETH

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd
loon!

Where gott'st thou that goose look?

SERVANT

There is ten thousand—

MACBETH

Bring me no more reports — let the thanes all
desert me.

Until Birnam Wood marches to Dunsinane, fear
cannot touch me.

What is this boy Malcolm?

Wasn't he born of a woman?

The spirits who know every human destiny told
me this:

'Fear not, Macbeth. No man born of woman
shall ever have power over you.'

So run, you traitor thanes, and go join the soft,
pampered English.

The mind that rules me and the heart I carry will
never sag with doubt or shake with fear.

The devil damn you black, you cream-faced idiot!

Where did you get that scared-geese look?

There are ten thousand—

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.

MACBETH

Seyton!—

I am sick at heart,

When I behold—

Seyton, I say!—

This push

Will cheer me ever or disseat me now.

I have liv'd long enough:

my way of life

Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf;

Ten thousand geese, you wretch?

Soldiers, sir.

Go stick a pin in your face and use the blood to
paint over that fear, you lily-livered boy.

What soldiers, you fool?

Death take your soul!

Those linen-white cheeks of yours will teach
everyone else to be afraid.

What soldiers, whey-face?

The English force, if it please you.

Get your face out of here.

Seyton!

— I'm sick at heart when I see —

Seyton, I say! —

This assault will either secure my throne forever
or knock me off it now.

I have lived long enough.

My life has withered into the dry, yellow leaf of
autumn,

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, senna, or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence?

Hear'st thou
of them?

DOCTOR

Ay, my good lord.

Your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.

MACBETH

Bring it after me.—

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

Exeunt all except Doctor.

DOCTOR

Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here.

Exit.

— Doctor, if you could examine my country's
urine, diagnose her disease, and purge her back
to sound, perfect health, I would applaud you
until the applause came echoing back again.

— Pull it off, I say.

— What rhubarb, senna, or other purgative drug
would flush these English out of here?

Have you heard about them?

Yes, my good lord.

Your royal war preparations make it impossible
for us not to hear something.

Bring it along after me.

— I will not be afraid of death and destruction
until Birnam Forest comes to Dunsinane.

If I were away from Dunsinane and safely clear
of it, no amount of money would easily bring me
back.

Act 5, Scene 4

COUNTRY NEAR DUNSINANE: A WOOD IN VIEW

Malcolm's combined English and Scottish army has reached Birnam Wood, the landmark from the witches' prophecy that Macbeth cannot fall until the wood itself comes to Dunsinane. Malcolm now gives the order that will unknowingly make the impossible prophecy come true.

Original

Translation

Enter, with drum and colours Malcolm, old Siward and his Son, Macduff,

Menteith, Caithness, Angus, Lennox, Ross and Soldiers, marching

MALCOLM

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

Cousins, I hope the days are close at hand when
people will be safe in their own bedrooms.

MENTEITH

We doubt it nothing.

We don't doubt it at all.

SIWARD

What wood is this before us?

What wood is this in front of us?

MENTEITH

The wood of Birnam.

The wood of Birnam.

MALCOLM

Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
And bear't before him.

Have every soldier cut himself a branch and
carry it in front of him.

Thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host, and make discovery
Err in report of us.

That way we'll hide the true numbers of our
army, and Macbeth's scouts will report us
wrongly.

SOLDIERS

It shall be done.

It will be done.

SIWARD

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

All we hear is that the confident tyrant is staying
put in Dunsinane and will let us settle in for a
siege in front of it.

MALCOLM

'Tis his main hope;

That's 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.

SIWARD

The time approaches,
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have, and what we owe.
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate;
Towards which advance the war.

Exeunt, marching.

— because wherever men have had any opening
to do it, both the great and the humble have
deserted him.

No one serves him now but conscripts, and their
hearts aren't in it either.

Let's hold off passing judgment until the actual
outcome, and in the meantime apply ourselves
to hard, disciplined soldiering.

The time is approaching that will settle the
account and show us what we can truly claim to
have and what we still owe.
Speculating only tells us our shaky hopes; actual
blows must decide the certain result
— so advance the army toward it.

Act 5, Scene 5

DUNSINANE. WITHIN THE CASTLE

Barricaded inside Dunsinane, Macbeth prepares to outlast a siege, still protected — he believes —
by the prophecy about Birnam Wood. Within minutes he receives two blows: word that Lady
Macbeth is dead, and a report that the wood itself appears to be moving toward the castle.

Original

Translation

Enter with drum and colours, Macbeth, Seyton and Soldiers

MACBETH

Hang out our banners on the outward walls;
The cry is still, "They come!"

Hang our banners out on the outer walls.
The cry is still 'They're coming!'

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 forc'd 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.

MACBETH

What is that noise?

SEYTON

It is the cry of women, my good lord.

Exit.

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.

Enter Seyton

MACBETH

Wherefore was that cry?

SEYTON

Our castle is strong enough to laugh a siege to
scorn.

Let them lie out there until famine and fever eat
them up.

If they hadn't been reinforced by the very men
who should be ours, we could have met them
boldly, beard to beard, and beaten them back
home.

What is that noise?

It's women crying, my good lord.

I've almost forgotten what fear tastes like.
There was a time when a shriek in the night
would have frozen my blood, and a terrifying
story would have made the hair on my skin rise
and stir as if it were alive.

But I have dined so full on horrors that
dreadfulness, an old companion of my
murderous thoughts, can't startle me even
once.

What was that cry for?

The Queen, my lord, is dead.

MACBETH

She should have died hereafter.

There would have been a time for such a word.

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,

To the last syllable of recorded time;

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death.

Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,

And then is heard no more:

it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing.

Enter a Messenger

MACBETH

Thou com'st to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.

MESENTER

Gracious my lord,

I should report that which I say I saw,

But know not how to do't.

MACBETH

Well, say, sir.

MESENTER

As I did stand my watch upon the hill,

I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,

The wood began to move.

The Queen, my lord, is dead.

She should have died later — there would have been time then for a word like that.

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow creeps along at this petty pace, day after day, to the last

syllable of recorded time; and all our yesterdays

have only lit the way for fools to their dusty

death.

Out, out, brief candle!

Life is nothing but a walking shadow — a poor,

pitiabie actor who struts and frets away his one

hour on the stage and then is never heard again.

It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

meaning nothing at all.

You've come to use your tongue — out with your story, quickly.

My gracious lord, I ought to report what I am certain I saw, but I don't know how to say it.

Well, say it, sir.

As I stood my watch on the hill, I looked toward Birnam, and suddenly it seemed to me 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

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.—

I pull in resolution; and begin

To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend,

That lies like truth.

“Fear not, till Birnam wood

Do come to Dunsinane;”

and now a wood

Comes toward Dunsinane.

—Arm, arm, and out!

—

If this which he avouches does appear,

There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.

I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,

And wish th' estate o' th' world were now
undone.—

Ring the alarm bell!

—Blow, wind! come, wrack!

At least we'll die with harness on our back.

Exeunt.

Liar! Slave!

Let me suffer your anger if it isn't true.

Within three miles of here you can see it coming

— I tell you, a moving grove of trees.

If you're lying, you'll hang alive from the nearest
tree until hunger shrivels you up.

If what you say is true, I don't care if you do the
same to me.

— My resolve is buckling, and I'm beginning to
doubt the devil's double-talk — the fiend who
lies in words that sound like truth.

'Fear not, till Birnam Wood do come to
Dunsinane'

— and now a wood is coming toward
Dunsinane.

To arms, to arms, and out to meet them!

If what this man swears to is real, there's no
running from here and no staying either.

I'm beginning to grow weary of the sun, and I
wish the whole structure of the world would fall
apart right now.

— Ring the alarm bell!

Blow, wind! Come, ruin!

At least we'll die with our armor on our backs.

Act 5, Scene 6

THE SAME. A PLAIN BEFORE THE CASTLE

Malcolm's army has arrived at the plain in front of Macbeth's castle, still hidden behind the branches cut from Birnam Wood. Now the soldiers throw down their camouflage and take up battle positions for the final assault on Dunsinane.

Original

Translation

Enter, with drum and colours, Malcolm, old Siward, Macduff and their

Army, with boughs

MALCOLM

Now near enough.

We're close enough now.

Your leafy screens throw

down,

Throw down your screens of leaves and show
yourselves as what you really are.

And show like those you are.—

You, worthy

uncle,

— You, worthy uncle, will lead our first division,
together with my cousin, your noble son.

Shall with my cousin, your right noble son,

Lead our first battle:

worthy Macduff and we

Shall take upon's what else remains to do,

According to our order.

Brave Macduff and I will take on whatever else
remains to be done, according to our battle
plan.

SIWARD

Fare you well.—

Farewell.

Do we but find the tyrant's power tonight,

Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

If we can just find the tyrant's army tonight, let
us be beaten if we can't out-fight them.

MACDUFF

Make all our trumpets speak; give them all

breath,

Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.

Make all our trumpets sound — give them every
bit of breath you have, those loud messengers of
blood and death.

Exeunt.

Act 5, Scene 7

THE SAME. ANOTHER PART OF THE PLAIN

The battle for Dunsinane is underway. Macbeth, cornered but still trusting the prophecy that no man born of a woman can harm him, cuts down young Siward, while Macduff hunts the field for the man who murdered his family and the castle falls to Malcolm.

Original

Translation

Alarums. Enter Macbeth

MACBETH

They have tied me to a stake.

I cannot fly,

But, bear-like I must fight the course.—

What's

he

That was not born of woman?

Such a one

Am I to fear, or none.

Enter young Siward

YOUNG SIWARD

What is thy name?

MACBETH

Thou'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.

They've tied me to a stake.

I can't run — like a baited bear, I have to stand and fight off the attack.

Where is the man who wasn't born of a woman?

He's the one I'm supposed to fear, and no one else.

What is your name?

You'll be afraid to hear it.

No — not even if you call yourself a name hotter than any in hell.

My name is Macbeth.

The devil himself couldn't speak a name I'd hate more to hear.

MACBETH

No, nor more fearful.

YOUNG SIWARD

Thou liest, abhorred tyrant.

With my sword

I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

They fight, and young Siward is slain.

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.

Exit.

Alarums. Enter Macduff

MACDUFF

That way the noise is.—

Tyrant, show thy face!

If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me
still.

I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms
Are hired to bear their staves.

Either thou,

Macbeth,

Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
I sheathe again undeeded.

No — nor one more terrifying.

You lie, you loathsome tyrant.

With my sword I'll prove that you're lying.

You were born of a woman.

I smile at swords and laugh weapons to scorn
when they're swung by any man born of a
woman.

The noise is coming from that direction.

— Tyrant, show your face!

If you've been killed by anyone's blow but mine,
my wife's and children's ghosts will haunt me
forever.

I can't waste strokes on miserable hired foot-
soldiers, paid to carry their spears.

It's you, Macbeth — either you, or I'll sheathe
my sword again with its edge unblunted, having
done nothing.

There thou shouldst
be;
By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems bruited.

Let me find him, Fortune!
And more I beg not.

Exit. Alarums.

Enter Malcolm and old Siward

SIWARD

This way, my lord;—
the castle's gently render'd:
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;

The noble thanes do bravely in the war,

The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.

MALCOLM

We have met with foes
That strike beside us.

SIWARD

Enter, sir, the castle.

Exeunt. Alarums.

That's where you should be: judging by all that
clatter, someone of the highest rank must be
there.

Let me find him, Fortune!
I ask for nothing more.

This way, my lord.

The castle gave itself up without a fight.
The tyrant's own people are fighting on both
sides,
the noble thanes are performing bravely in the
battle,
the day is practically declaring itself yours,
and there's little left to do.

We've met enemies who deliberately strike wide
to miss us.

Enter the castle, sir.

Act 5, Scene 8

THE SAME. ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD

Amid the fall of Dunsinane, Macduff finally corners Macbeth, who still believes no man born of a woman can kill him. This scene delivers the last prophecy's cruel twist, Macbeth's death, and Malcolm's restoration as Scotland's rightful king.

Original

Translation

Enter Macbeth

MACBETH

Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword?

gashes
Do better upon them.

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 charg'd
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.

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

Why should I play the Roman fool and die on my own sword?

As long as I see living enemies, the wounds look better on them than on me.

Turn around, hell-hound! Turn!

Of all men, you're the one I've avoided.
Get back — my soul is already loaded with too
much of your family's blood.

I have no words — my voice is in my sword,
you villain bloodier than any words could
describe!

You're wasting your effort.

You could as easily cut the uncuttable air with
your sharp sword as make me bleed.

Bring your blade down on heads that can be
wounded.

I carry a charmed life, which cannot yield to
anyone born of a woman.

Despair thy charm;
And let the angel whom thou still hast serv'd
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.

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 believ'd,
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' th' time.
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
"Here may you see the tyrant."

MACBETH

I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou oppos'd, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last.

Before my body
I throw my warlike shield:

Give up on your charm
— and let the fallen angel you've served all along
tell you this: Macduff was ripped from his
mother's womb before his time — cut out, never
born.

A curse on the tongue that tells me so, because
it has crippled the best part of my manhood!
And let these juggling fiends never be believed
again — they trick us with double meanings,
keeping their promise to our ear and breaking it
to our hope.

I won't fight you.

Then surrender, coward, and live to be the
spectacle everyone stares at.
We'll display you the way rare monsters are
shown at fairs — your picture painted on a
banner hung from a pole, with the caption
underneath: 'Here you may see the tyrant.'

I will not yield — not to kiss the ground in front
of young Malcolm's feet, and not to be jeered at
by the mob's curses.
Even though Birnam Wood has come to
Dunsinane, and you stand against me, a man of
no woman born, I'll fight to the very last.
I raise my soldier's shield in front of my body.

lay on, Macduff;

And damn'd be him that first cries, "Hold,
enough!"

Exeunt fighting. Alarums.

Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with drum and colours, Malcolm, old Siward,

Ross, Thanos and Soldiers

MALCOLM

I would the friends we miss were safe arriv'd.

SIWARD

Some must go off;

and yet, by these I see,

So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

MALCOLM

Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

ROSS

Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt:

He only liv'd but till he was a man;

The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd

In the unshrinking station where he fought,

But like a man he died.

SIWARD

Then he is dead?

ROSS

Ay, and brought off the field.

Lay on, Macduff — and damn the first of us who
cries 'Stop! Enough!'

I wish the friends we're missing had come back
safe.

Some men have to die.

And yet, judging by the men I see standing here,
a day as great as this one was cheaply bought.

Macduff is missing, and so is your noble son.

Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt.

He lived only until he became a man — and the
moment his courage in the fight proved that he
was one, holding the position where he stood
without flinching, he died like a man.

Then he is dead?

Yes, and carried off the field.

Your cause of
sorrow
Must not be measur'd by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

SIWARD

Had he his hurts before?

ROSS

Ay, on the front.

SIWARD

Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.

MALCOLM

He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.

SIWARD

He's worth no more.
They say he parted well and paid his score:
And so, God be with him!—

Here comes newer
comfort.

Enter Macduff with Macbeth's head

MACDUFF

Hail, King, for so thou art.

Behold, where stands
Th' usurper's cursed head:
the time is free.

Your sorrow mustn't be measured by his worth,
because then it would have no end.

Were his wounds on the front of his body?

Yes — on his front.

Why then, let him be God's soldier!
If I had as many sons as I have hairs, I couldn't
wish any of them a finer death.
And with that, his funeral bell is rung.

He deserves more grief than that, and I will
spend it for him.

He deserves no more.
They say he died well and paid what he owed.
So, God be with him!

— And here comes newer comfort.

Hail, King — because that is what you are now.
Look where the usurper's cursed head stands:
the world 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!

Flourish.

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 nam'd.

What's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time,—
As calling home our exil'd 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.

I see you surrounded by the jewels of your
kingdom — these nobles — who are saying my
greeting silently in their minds.

Now I want their voices to join mine out loud:
Hail, King of Scotland!

Hail, King of Scotland!

We won't let much time pass before we repay
each of you for your loyalty and settle our
accounts with you.

My thanes and kinsmen, from this day forward
you are earls — the first men Scotland has ever
honored with that title.

Everything else that needs doing, everything
that must be planted fresh in this new era —
calling home our exiled friends who fled abroad
from the traps of a watchful tyranny, and
bringing to justice the cruel agents of this dead
butcher and his fiend-like queen, who, it is
believed, took her own life with her own violent
hands — all this, and whatever else our duty
demands, we will carry out, by the grace of God,
in the right measure, at the right time, and in
the right place.

So thanks to all of you together and to each of
you alone, and we invite every one of you to see
us crowned at Scone.

Flourish. Exeunt.

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