

Macbeth

William
Shakespeare

Key Moments/ Knowledge Organiser



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'Macbeth' (10.04 and 11.04)



Text: 'Macbeth'
Form: Play (Tragedy)
Era: Early-modern (1606)
Writer: William Shakespeare

- | William Shakespeare |
|---|
| - 1564-1616 |
| - Wrote around 38 plays, including famous tragedies 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Hamlet' and 'Othello'. |
| - Patronised by the British monarchy. |

Key Characters
Macbeth: the tragic hero. A Scottish lord who betrays the king to seize the throne.
Lady Macbeth: the wife of Macbeth.
Banquo: a Scottish lord and fellow soldier of Macbeth.
Macduff: a Scottish lord and Macbeth's nemesis. Assists Malcolm to take back the throne.
Duncan: the King of Scotland who is overthrown by Macbeth.
Malcolm: the eldest son of Duncan and heir to the throne.
Donalbain: the younger son of Duncan.
Steward: a general in the English army who is loyal to Duncan. Has a son (Young Siward) who is killed by Macbeth in battle.
Fleance: son of Banquo.
The Witches: supernatural creatures who prophesy that Macbeth will become king.
Seyton: an officer who assists Macbeth in the final act.
Hecate: the goddess of witchcraft.

Powerful Vocabulary/ Terminology	Definition
Tragedy	A play dealing with tragic events and having an unhappy ending, especially one concerning the downfall of the main character.
Tragic Hero	A great or virtuous character in a dramatic tragedy who is destined for downfall, suffering, or defeat.
Fatal Flaw	A negative/bad characteristic which brings about a tragic hero's downfall.
Ambition	A strong desire to do or achieve something.
Nemesis	The character whose actions bring about the rightful punishment of the protagonist.
Authority	The legitimate power of a person or group over other people.
Divine right	The right that is supposedly given to a king or queen by God to rule a country.
Natural order/ status quo	The existing system and circumstances for how a society is organised.
Atypical	Not usual, normal or expected.
Patriarchy	A system of male dominance in society.



'Macbeth' (10.04 and 11.04)



Act 1 (Exposition):

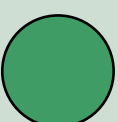
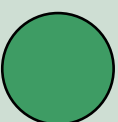
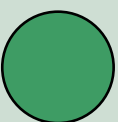
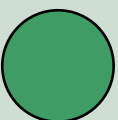
- S1: The witches gather and refer to their future meeting with Macbeth.
- S2: The witches reveal their prophecy to Macbeth.
- S3: Duncan names Malcolm as his heir.
- S7: Macbeth is encouraged to murder Duncan by Lady Macbeth.

Act 3 (Climax)

- S1: Macbeth orders murderers to assassinate Banquo.
- S4: Macbeth is haunted by Banquo's Ghost.

Act 5 (Denouement)

- S1: The doctor/nurse observe Lady Macbeth sleepwalking.
- S7: Macbeth is slain by Macduff (offstage).
- S8: Malcolm is crowned king.



Act 2 (Rising Action):

- S2: Macbeth carries out the murder of Duncan.
- S3: Macduff discovers the murder of Duncan.

Act 4 (Falling Action)

- S1: Macbeth returns to the witches. He is shown apparitions which vaguely hint at the future (helmeted head/bloodied child/child wearing a crown/procession of kings).
- S2: Macbeth orders the murder of Macduff's family.



'Macbeth' (10.04 and 11.04)



The play was written by English playwright, William Shakespeare in 1606. Shakespeare was patronised throughout his writing career by the Tudor/Stuart monarchies.



The play was written after the ascension of King James I (King James VI of Scotland) who unified the English and Scottish crowns.



The play was written one year after the Gunpowder Plot (1605) in which Catholic conspirators sought to assassinate King James I.



The play was written at a time of great paranoia about the presence of witchcraft in society. King James I was an ardent believer in the supernatural.

Key Themes and Ideas (A01)		Key Characters/Symbols (A02)	
Shakespeare uses the tragedy to demonstrate the consequences of challenging the natural order and the divine right of kings.		Character of Macbeth.	
Shakespeare uses the tragedy to demonstrate his support for patriarchal tradition in society.		Character of Lady Macbeth.	
Shakespeare uses the tragedy to demonstrate the permanence of guilt and consequence.		Motif of blood/ghosts/apparitions. Symbol of the floating dagger.	
Shakespeare uses the tragedy to display his support for the rule of King James I in the aftermath of the gunpowder plot.		Character of Duncan/Macbeth.	



ACT 1– EXPOSITION

Scene Summaries

A1, S1: Three witches plan to meet Macbeth.

A1, S2: Duncan, king of Scotland, hears an account of the success in battle of his noblemen Macbeth and Banquo. Duncan orders the execution of the rebel thane of Cawdor and sends messengers to announce to Macbeth that he has been given Cawdor's title.

A1, S3: The three witches greet Macbeth as "Thane of Glamis" (as he is), "Thane of Cawdor," and "king hereafter." They then promise Banquo that he will father kings, and they disappear. Almost as soon as they are gone, Ross and Angus arrive with news that the king has named Macbeth "Thane of Cawdor." Macbeth contemplates killing Duncan in order to become "king hereafter" as the witches have called him.

A1, S4: Duncan demands and receives assurances that the former thane of Cawdor has been executed. When Macbeth, Banquo, Ross, and Angus join Duncan, he offers thanks to Macbeth and Banquo. He then announces his intention to have his son Malcolm succeed him as king and his plan to visit Macbeth at Inverness. Macbeth sets out ahead of him to prepare for the royal visit. Now that Malcolm has been named Duncan's successor, Macbeth is convinced that he can become king only by killing Duncan.

A1, S5: Lady Macbeth reads her husband's letter about his meeting the witches. She fears that Macbeth lacks the ruthlessness he needs to kill Duncan and fulfill the witches' second prophecy. When she learns that Duncan is coming to visit, she calls upon supernatural agents to fill her with cruelty. Macbeth arrives, and Lady Macbeth tells him that she will take charge of the preparations for Duncan's visit and for his murder.

A1, S6: Duncan and his attendants arrive at Inverness. Lady Macbeth welcomes them.

A1, S7: Macbeth contemplates the reasons why it is a terrible thing to kill Duncan. Lady Macbeth mocks his fears and offers a plan for Duncan's murder, which Macbeth accepts.

KM1

A1, S1: Three witches plan to meet Macbeth.

Thunder and Lightning. Enter three Witches.

FIRST WITCH

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

SECOND WITCH

When the hurly-burly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

THIRD WITCH

5 That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH

Where the place?

SECOND WITCH

Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH

There to meet with Macbeth.

FIRST WITCH

I come, Graymalkin.

SECOND WITCH

10 Paddock calls.

THIRD WITCH

Anon.

ALL

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

They exit.

KM2

A1, S2: Duncan, king of Scotland, hears an account of the success in battle of his noblemen Macbeth and Banquo. Duncan orders the execution of the rebel thane of Cawdor and sends messengers to announce to Macbeth that he has been given Cawdor's title.

DUNCAN

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

MALCOLM

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

CAPTAIN

Doubtful it stood,
10 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
15 Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;
And Fortune, on his damnèd quarrel smiling,
Showed like a rebel's whore. But all's too weak;
For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name),
Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel,
20 Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like Valor's minion, carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseamed him from the nave to th' chops,
25 And fixed his head upon our battlements.

DUNCAN

O valiant cousin, worthy gentleman!

CAPTAIN

As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seemed to
30 come
Discomfort swells. Mark, King of Scotland, mark:

No sooner justice had, with valor armed,
Compelled these skipping kerns to trust their heels,
But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,
35 With furbished arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.

DUNCAN

Dismayed not this our captains, Macbeth and
Banquo?

CAPTAIN

Yes, as sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.
40 If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks,
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe.
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds
Or memorize another Golgotha,
45 I cannot tell—
But I am faint. My gashes cry for help.

DUNCAN

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

KM3

A1, S3: The three witches greet Macbeth as “Thane of Glamis” (as he is), “Thane of Cawdor,” and “king hereafter.” They then promise Banquo that he will father kings, and they disappear. Almost as soon as they are gone, Ross and Angus arrive with news that the king has named Macbeth “Thane of Cawdor.” Macbeth contemplates killing Duncan in order to become “king hereafter” as the witches have called him.

Enter Macbeth and Banquo.

MACBETH

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO

40 How far is 't called to 'Forres?—What are these,
So withered, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' Earth
And yet are on 't?—Live you? Or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand
45 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

50 Speak if you can. What are you?

FIRST WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH

All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

BANQUO

Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear
55 Things that do sound so fair?—I' th' name of truth,
Are you fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly you show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
60 That he seems rapt withal. To me you speak not.
If you can look into the seeds of time
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak, then, to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favors nor your hate.

FIRST WITCH

65 Hail!

SECOND WITCH

Hail!

THIRD WITCH

Hail!

FIRST WITCH

Lesser than Macbeth and greater.

SECOND WITCH

Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH

70 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.
75 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
80 Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting. Speak, I charge you.
Witches vanish.

BANQUO

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

KM3

A1, S3: The three witches greet Macbeth as “Thane of Glamis” (as he is), “Thane of Cawdor,” and “king hereafter.” They then promise Banquo that he will father kings, and they disappear. Almost as soon as they are gone, Ross and Angus arrive with news that the king has named Macbeth “Thane of Cawdor.” Macbeth contemplates killing Duncan in order to become “king hereafter” as the witches have called him.

MACBETH

Into the air, and what seemed corporal melted,
85 As breath into the wind. Would they had stayed!

BANQUO

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

MACBETH

Your children shall be kings.
BANQUO 90 You shall be king.

MACBETH

And Thane of Cawdor too. Went it not so?

BANQUO

To th' selfsame tune and words.—Who's here?

Enter Ross and Angus.

ROSS

The King hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success, and, when he reads
95 Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his. Silenced with that,
In viewing o'er the rest o' th' selfsame day
He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks,
100 Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death. As thick as tale
Came post with post, and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defense,
And poured them down before him.
ANGUS 105 We are sent
To give thee from our royal master thanks,
Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.

ROSS

And for an earnest of a greater honor,
110 He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor,
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane,
For it is thine.

BANQUO

What, can the devil speak true?

MACBETH

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

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

MACBETH,

☞aside☞ 125 Glamis and Thane of Cawdor!
The greatest is behind. ☞To Ross and Angus.☞ Thanks
for your pains.

☞Aside to Banquo.☞ Do you not hope your children
shall be kings,
130 When those that gave the Thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?

BANQUO

That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange.
135 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.—

KM3

A1, S3: The three witches greet Macbeth as “Thane of Glamis” (as he is), “Thane of Cawdor,” and “king hereafter.” They then promise Banquo that he will father kings, and they disappear. Almost as soon as they are gone, Ross and Angus arrive with news that the king has named Macbeth “Thane of Cawdor.” Macbeth contemplates killing Duncan in order to become “king hereafter” as the witches have called him.

MACBETH, *aside*

140 Two truths are told
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentlemen.

Aside.

This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,
145 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
150 Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man
That function is smothered in surmise,
155 And nothing is but what is not.

BANQUO

Look how our partner’s rapt.

MACBETH, [aside]

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

BANQUO

160 New honors come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mold
But with the aid of use.

MACBETH, [aside]

Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

BANQUO

165 Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

MACBETH

Give me your favor. My dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are registered where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the King.
[Aside to Banquo.] Think upon what hath chanced,
and at more time,
The interim having weighed it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

BANQUO

Very gladly.

MACBETH

175 Till then, enough.—Come, friends.
They exit.

KM4

A1, S4: Duncan demands and receives assurances that the former thane of Cawdor has been executed. When Macbeth, Banquo, Ross, and Angus join Duncan, he offers thanks to Macbeth and Banquo. He then announces his intention to have his son Malcolm succeed him as king and his plan to visit Macbeth at Inverness. Macbeth sets out ahead of him to prepare for the royal visit. Now that Malcolm has been named Duncan's successor, Macbeth is convinced that he can become king only by killing Duncan.

MACBETH

25 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
30 Safe toward your love and honor.

DUNCAN

Welcome hither.
I have begun to plant thee and will labor
To make thee full of growing.—Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserved nor must be known
35 No less to have done so, let me enfold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

BANQUO

There, if I grow,
The harvest is your own.

DUNCAN

My plenteous joys,
40 Wanton in fullness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow.—Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
45 The Prince of Cumberland; which honor must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers.—From hence to Inverness
And bind us further to you.

MACBETH

50 The rest is labor which is not used for you.
I'll be myself the harbinger and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach.

So humbly take my leave.

DUNCAN

My worthy Cawdor.

MACBETH, [aside]

55 The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step
On which I must fall down or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires.
The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be
60 Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

He exits.

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.
65 It is a peerless kinsman.
Flourish.

They exit.

KM5

A1, S5: Lady Macbeth reads her husband's letter about his meeting the witches. She fears that Macbeth lacks the ruthlessness he needs to kill Duncan and fulfill the witches' second prophecy. When she learns that Duncan is coming to visit, she calls upon supernatural agents to fill her with cruelty. Macbeth arrives, and Lady Macbeth tells him that she will take charge of the preparations for Duncan's visit and for his murder.

LADY MACBETH

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
20 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,
25 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
30 And chastise with the valor of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

Enter Messenger.

What is your tidings?

MESENTER

35 The King comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Thou 'rt mad to say it.
Is not thy master with him, who, were 't so,
Would have informed for preparation?

MESENTER

So please you, it is true. Our thane is coming.
40 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. Messenger exits.
45 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
50 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
55 And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
60 Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry "Hold, hold!"

KM5

A1, S5: Lady Macbeth reads her husband's letter about his meeting the witches. She fears that Macbeth lacks the ruthlessness he needs to kill Duncan and fulfill the witches' second prophecy. When she learns that Duncan is coming to visit, she calls upon supernatural agents to fill her with cruelty. Macbeth arrives, and Lady Macbeth tells him that she will take charge of the preparations for Duncan's visit and for his murder.

Enter Macbeth.

Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor,
Greater than both by the all-hail hereafter!

Thy letters have transported me beyond
65 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

70 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,
75 Look like the time. Bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue. Look like th' innocent
flower,
But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming
Must be provided for; and you shall put
80 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.

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

They exit.

KM6

A1, S7: Macbeth contemplates the reasons why it is a terrible thing to kill Duncan. Lady Macbeth mocks his fears and offers a plan for Duncan's murder, which Macbeth accepts.

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
5 Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here, that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
10 To plague th' inventor. This even-handed justice
Commends th' ingredience of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
15 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
20 The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked newborn babe
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
25 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.

How now, what news?

LADY MACBETH

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

MACBETH

Hath he asked for me?

LADY MACBETH

Know you not he has?

MACBETH

We will proceed no further in this business.
35 He hath honored me of late, and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

LADY MACBETH

Was the hope drunk
40 Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valor
45 As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would,"
Like the poor cat i' th' adage?

MACBETH 50 Prithee, peace.

I dare do all that may become a man.

Who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH

What beast was 't, then,
55 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.
60 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,
65 Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

KM6

A1, S7: Macbeth contemplates the reasons why it is a terrible thing to kill Duncan. Lady Macbeth mocks his fears and offers a plan for Duncan's murder, which Macbeth accepts.

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
75 That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbeck only. When in swinish sleep
Their drenchèd natures lies as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
80 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
85 Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have marked with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,
That they have done 't?

LADY MACBETH

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

MACBETH

I am settled and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show.
95 False face must hide what the false heart doth
know.

They exit.

ACT 2– RISING ACTION

Scene Summaries

A2, S1: Banquo, who has accompanied Duncan to Inverness, is uneasy because he too is tempted by the witches' prophecies, although only in his dreams. Macbeth pretends to have forgotten them. Left alone by Banquo, Macbeth sees a gory dagger leading him to Duncan's room. Hearing the bell rung by Lady Macbeth to signal completion of her preparations for Duncan's death, Macbeth exits to kill the king.

A2, S2: Lady Macbeth waits anxiously for Macbeth to return from killing Duncan. When Macbeth enters, he is horrified by what he has done. He has brought with him the daggers that he used on Duncan, instead of leaving them in the room with Duncan's servants as Lady Macbeth had planned. When he finds himself incapable of returning the daggers, Lady Macbeth does so. She returns to find Macbeth still paralyzed with horror and urges him to put on his gown and wash the blood from his hands.

A2, S3: A drunken porter, answering the knocking at the gate, plays the role of a devil-porter at the gates of hell. He admits Macduff and Lennox, who have come to wake Duncan. Macbeth appears and greets them. Macduff exits to wake Duncan, then returns to announce Duncan's murder. Macbeth and Lennox go to see for themselves. When they return, Lennox announces that Duncan's servants are the murderers. Macbeth reveals that he has slain the servants. When his motives are questioned, Lady Macbeth interrupts by calling for help for herself. Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, plan to flee for their lives—Malcolm to England, Donalbain to Ireland.

A2, S4: An old man and Ross exchange accounts of recent unnatural happenings. Macduff joins them to report that Malcolm and Donalbain are now accused of having bribed the servants who supposedly killed Duncan. Macduff also announces that Macbeth has been chosen king. Ross leaves for Scone and Macbeth's coronation, but Macduff resolves to stay at his own castle at Fife.

KM7

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Enter Macbeth, and a Servant with a torch.

BANQUO

Give me my sword.—Who's there?

MACBETH

A friend.

BANQUO

15 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
20 In measureless content.

He gives Macbeth a jewel.

MACBETH

Being unprepared,
Our will became the servant to defect,
Which else should free have wrought.

BANQUO

All's well.
25 I dreamt last night of the three Weïrd Sisters.
To you they have showed some truth.

MACBETH I think not of them.

Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
30 We would spend it in some words upon that
business,
If you would grant the time.

BANQUO

At your kind'st leisure.

MACBETH

If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,
35 It shall make honor for you.

BANQUO

So I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,
I shall be counseled.

MACBETH

40 Good repose the while.

BANQUO

Thanks, sir. The like to you.

Banquo and Fleance exit.

KM7

A2, S1: Banquo, who has accompanied Duncan to Inverness, is uneasy because he too is tempted by the witches' prophecies, although only in his dreams. Macbeth pretends to have forgotten them. Left alone by Banquo, Macbeth sees a gory dagger leading him to Duncan's room. Hearing the bell rung by Lady Macbeth to signal completion of her preparations for Duncan's death, Macbeth exits to kill the king.

MACBETH

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

Servant exits.

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
45 The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible

To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but

50 A dagger of the mind, a false creation

Proceeding from the heat-oppresèd brain?

I see thee yet, in form as palpable

As this which now I draw. He draws his dagger.

Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going,

55 And such an instrument I was to use.

Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' 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.

60 It is the bloody business which informs

Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one-half world

Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse

The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates

Pale Hecate's off'rings, and withered murder,

65 Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,

Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,

With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design

Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,

70 Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear

Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts

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.

75 I go, and it is done. The bell invites me.

Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell

That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

He exits.

KM8

A2, S2: Lady Macbeth waits anxiously for Macbeth to return from killing Duncan. When Macbeth enters, he is horrified by what he has done. He has brought with him the daggers that he used on Duncan, instead of leaving them in the room with Duncan's servants as Lady Macbeth had planned. When he finds himself incapable of returning the daggers, Lady Macbeth does so. She returns to find Macbeth still paralyzed with horror and urges him to put on his gown and wash the blood from his hands.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

LADY MACBETH

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold.

What hath quenched them hath given me fire.

Hark!—Peace.

5 It was the owl that shrieked, 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 drugged
their possets,

10 That death and nature do contend about them
Whether they live or die.

MACBETH

, [within] Who's there? what, ho!

LADY MACBETH

Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,

And 'tis not done. Th' attempt and not the deed

15 Confounds us. Hark!—I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done 't.

Enter Macbeth with bloody daggers.

My husband?

MACBETH

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

LADY MACBETH

20 I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

MACBETH

When?

LADY MACBETH

Now.

MACBETH

As I descended?

LADY MACBETH

25Ay.

MACBETH

Hark!—Who lies i' th' second chamber?

LADY MACBETH

Donalbain.

KM8

A2, S2: Lady Macbeth waits anxiously for Macbeth to return from killing Duncan. When Macbeth enters, he is horrified by what he has done. He has brought with him the daggers that he used on Duncan, instead of leaving them in the room with Duncan's servants as Lady Macbeth had planned. When he finds himself incapable of returning the daggers, Lady Macbeth does so. She returns to find Macbeth still paralyzed with horror and urges him to put on his gown and wash the blood from his hands.

MACBETH

This is a sorry sight.

LADY MACBETH

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

MACBETH

30 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 addressed them

35 Again to sleep.

LADY MACBETH

There are two lodged together.

MACBETH

One cried "God bless us" and "Amen" the other,
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands,
List'ning their fear. I could not say "Amen"

40 When they did say "God bless us."

LADY MACBETH

Consider it not so deeply.

MACBETH

But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?

I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"

Stuck in my throat.

LADY MACBETH

45 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 raveled sleeve of care,
50 The death of each day's life, sore labor'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.
55 "Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more."

LADY MACBETH

Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength to think
60 So brainsickly of things. Go get some water
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.—
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there. Go, carry them and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH 65 I'll go no more.

I am afraid to think what I have done.

Look on 't again I dare not.

L

LADY MACBETH

Infirm of purpose!

Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead

70 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.

KM8

A2, S2: Lady Macbeth waits anxiously for Macbeth to return from killing Duncan. When Macbeth enters, he is horrified by what he has done. He has brought with him the daggers that he used on Duncan, instead of leaving them in the room with Duncan's servants as Lady Macbeth had planned. When he finds himself incapable of returning the daggers, Lady Macbeth does so. She returns to find Macbeth still paralyzed with horror and urges him to put on his gown and wash the blood from his hands.

She exits with the daggers. Knock within.

MACBETH

Whence is that

75 knocking?

How is 't with me when every noise appalls me?

What hands are here! Ha, they pluck out mine eyes.

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood

Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather

80 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. Knock.

I hear a knocking

85 At the south entry. Retire we to our chamber.

A little water clears us of this deed.

How easy is it, then! Your constancy

Hath left you unattended. Knock.

Hark, more knocking.

90 Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us

And show us to be watchers. Be not lost

So poorly in your thoughts.

MACBETH

To know my deed 'twere best not know myself.

Knock.

Wake Duncan with thy knocking. I would thou

95 couldst.

KM9

A2, S3: A drunken porter, answering the knocking at the gate, plays the role of a devil-porter at the gates of hell. He admits Macduff and Lennox, who have come to wake Duncan. Macbeth appears and greets them. Macduff exits to wake Duncan, then returns to announce Duncan's murder. Macbeth and Lennox go to see for themselves. When they return, Lennox announces that Duncan's servants are the murderers. Macbeth reveals that he has slain the servants. When his motives are questioned, Lady Macbeth interrupts by calling for help for herself. Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, plan to flee for their lives—Malcolm to England, Donalbain to Ireland.

MACDUFF

I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my limited service. Macduff exits.

LENNOX Goes the King hence today?

MACBETH 60 He does. He did appoint so.

LENNOX

The night has been unruly. Where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' th' air, strange screams of
death,

65 And prophesying, with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion and confused events
New hatched to th' woeful time. The obscure bird
Clamored the livelong night. Some say the Earth
Was feverous and did shake.

MACBETH

70 '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 AND LENNOX

75 What's the matter?

MACDUFF

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

MACBETH

80 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.
Macbeth and Lennox exit.

85 Awake, awake!

Ring the alarum bell.—Murder and treason!
Banquo and Donalbain, Malcolm, awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself. Up, up, and see
90 The great doom's image. Malcolm, Banquo,
As from your graves rise up and walk like sprites
To countenance this horror.—Ring the bell.

Bell rings.

ACT 3– CLIMAX

Scene Summaries

A3, S1: Banquo suspects that Macbeth killed Duncan in order to become king. Macbeth invites Banquo to a feast that night. Banquo promises to return in time. Macbeth, fearing that Banquo's children, not his own, will be the future kings of Scotland, seizes upon the opportunity provided by Banquo's scheduled return after dark to arrange for his murder. To carry out the crime, Macbeth employs two men whom he has persuaded to regard Banquo as an enemy.

A3, S2: Both Lady Macbeth and Macbeth express their unhappiness. Macbeth speaks of his fear of Banquo especially. He refers to a dreadful deed that will happen that night but does not confide his plan for Banquo's murder to Lady Macbeth.

A3, S3: A third man joins the two whom Macbeth has already sent to kill Banquo and Fleance. The three assassins manage to kill Banquo. Fleance escapes.

A3, S4: As Macbeth's banquet begins, one of Banquo's murderers appears at the door to tell Macbeth of Banquo's death and Fleance's escape. Returning to the table, Macbeth is confronted by Banquo's ghost, invisible to all but Macbeth. While Lady Macbeth is able to dismiss as a momentary fit Macbeth's expressions of horror at the ghost's first appearance, the reappearance of the ghost and Macbeth's outcries in response to it force Lady Macbeth to send all the guests away. Alone with Lady Macbeth, Macbeth resolves to meet the witches again. He foresees a future marked by further violence.

A3, S5: The witches meet with Hecate (the queen of the witches).

A3, S6: Lennox and an unnamed lord discuss politics in Scotland. Lennox comments sarcastically upon Macbeth's "official" versions of the many recent violent deaths. The nameless lord responds with news of Macduff's flight to England to seek help in overthrowing Macbeth.

KM10

A3, S1: Banquo suspects that Macbeth killed Duncan in order to become king. Macbeth invites Banquo to a feast that night. Banquo promises to return in time. Macbeth, fearing that Banquo's children, not his own, will be the future kings of Scotland, seizes upon the opportunity provided by Banquo's scheduled return after dark to arrange for his murder. To carry out the crime, Macbeth employs two men whom he has persuaded to regard Banquo as an enemy.

BANQUO

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

*Sennet sounded. Enter Macbeth as King, Lady
Macbeth, Lennox, Ross, Lords, and Attendants.*

MACBETH

Here's our chief guest.

LADY MACBETH

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

MACBETH

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

BANQUO

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

MACBETH

Ride you this afternoon?

BANQUO

Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH

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

BANQUO

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

MACBETH

Fail not our feast.

BANQUO

My lord, I will not.

MACBETH

We hear our bloody cousins are bestowed
In England and in Ireland, not confessing
35 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

40 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.

Banquo exits.

KM10

A3, S1: Banquo suspects that Macbeth killed Duncan in order to become king. Macbeth invites Banquo to a feast that night. Banquo promises to return in time. Macbeth, fearing that Banquo's children, not his own, will be the future kings of Scotland, seizes upon the opportunity provided by Banquo's scheduled return after dark to arrange for his murder. To carry out the crime, Macbeth employs two men whom he has persuaded to regard Banquo as an enemy.

MACBETH

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

MACBETH

Both of you
130 Know Banquo was your enemy.

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
135 With barefaced power sweep him from my sight
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
Who I myself struck down. And thence it is
140 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.

KM11

A3, S2: Both Lady Macbeth and Macbeth express their unhappiness. Macbeth speaks of his fear of Banquo especially. He refers to a dreadful deed that will happen that night but does not confide his plan for Banquo's murder to Lady Macbeth.

MACBETH

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

LADY MACBETH

30 Come on, gentle my lord,
Sleek o'er your rugged looks. Be bright and jovial
Among your guests tonight.

MACBETH

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

LADY MACBETH

40 You must leave this.

MACBETH

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

LADY MACBETH

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

MACBETH

There's comfort yet; they are assailable.
45 Then be thou jocund. Ere the bat hath flown
His cloistered 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

50 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
55 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
60 rouse.—
Thou marvel'st at my words, but hold thee still.
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.
So prithee go with me.

They exit.

KM12

A3, S4: As Macbeth's banquet begins, one of Banquo's murderers appears at the door to tell Macbeth of Banquo's death and Fleance's escape. Returning to the table, Macbeth is confronted by Banquo's ghost, invisible to all but Macbeth. While Lady Macbeth is able to dismiss as a momentary fit Macbeth's expressions of horror at the ghost's first appearance, the reappearance of the ghost and Macbeth's outcries in response to it force Lady Macbeth to send all the guests away. Alone with Lady Macbeth, Macbeth resolves to meet the witches again. He foresees a future marked by further violence.

Enter the Ghost of Banquo, and sits in Macbeth's place.

MACBETH,

to Lady Macbeth Sweet remembrancer!—
Now, good digestion wait on appetite
And health on both!

LENNOX

45 May 't please your Highness sit.

MACBETH

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

ROSS 50 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

55 Here is a place reserved, sir.

MACBETH

Where?

LENNOX

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

MACBETH

Which of you have done this?

LORDS

60 What, my good lord?

MACBETH, to the Ghost

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

ROSS

Gentlemen, rise. His Highness is not well.

LADY MACBETH

Sit, worthy friends. My lord is often thus
65 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. Drawing Macbeth aside.
70 Are you a man?

MACBETH

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

LADY MACBETH

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

KM12

A3, S4: As Macbeth's banquet begins, one of Banquo's murderers appears at the door to tell Macbeth of Banquo's death and Fleance's escape. Returning to the table, Macbeth is confronted by Banquo's ghost, invisible to all but Macbeth. While Lady Macbeth is able to dismiss as a momentary fit Macbeth's expressions of horror at the ghost's first appearance, the reappearance of the ghost and Macbeth's outcries in response to it force Lady Macbeth to send all the guests away. Alone with Lady Macbeth, Macbeth resolves to meet the witches again. He foresees a future marked by further violence.

MACBETH

Prithee, see there. Behold, look! [To the Ghost.] Lo, how say you

Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.—

85 If charnel houses and our graves must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites

Ghost exits.

LADY MACBETH

What, quite unmanned in folly?

MACBETH

If I stand here, I saw him.

LADY MACBETH

90 Fie, for shame!

MACBETH

Blood hath been shed ere now, i' th' olden time,
Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal;
Ay, and since too, murders have been performed
Too terrible for the ear. The [time] has been
95 That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end. But now they rise again
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns
And push us from our stools. This is more strange
Than such a murder is.

LADY MACBETH

100 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

105 To those that know me. Come, love and health to
all.

Then I'll sit down.—Give me some wine. Fill full.

Enter Ghost.

...

MACBETH

, to the Ghost

Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee.

Thy bones are marrowless; thy blood is cold;

115 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;

120 Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

MACBETH

to the Ghost

What man dare, I dare.

Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,

The armed rhinoceros, or th' Hyrcan tiger;

Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves

125 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!

KM12

A3, S4: As Macbeth's banquet begins, one of Banquo's murderers appears at the door to tell Macbeth of Banquo's death and Fleance's escape. Returning to the table, Macbeth is confronted by Banquo's ghost, invisible to all but Macbeth. While Lady Macbeth is able to dismiss as a momentary fit Macbeth's expressions of horror at the ghost's first appearance, the reappearance of the ghost and Macbeth's outcries in response to it force Lady Macbeth to send all the guests away. Alone with Lady Macbeth, Macbeth resolves to meet the witches again. He foresees a future marked by further violence.

LADY MACBETH

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting
With most admired disorder.

MACBETH

135 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
140 And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks
When mine is blanched with fear.

ROSS

What sights, my lord?

LADY MACBETH

I pray you, speak not. He grows worse and worse.
145 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

150A kind good night to all.

Lords and all but Macbeth and Lady Macbeth exit.

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

155 By maggot 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
160 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
165 (And betimes I will) to the Weird Sisters.
More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know
By the worst means the worst. For mine own good,
All causes shall give way. I am in blood
Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more,
170 Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
Which must be acted ere they may be scanned.

LADY MACBETH

You lack the season of all natures, sleep.

MACBETH

Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse
175 Is the initiate fear that wants hard use.
We are yet but young in deed.

They exit.

ACT 4– FALLING ACTION

Scene Summaries

A4, S1: Macbeth approaches the witches to learn how to make his kingship secure. In response they summon for him three apparitions: an armed head, a bloody child, and finally a child crowned, with a tree in his hand. These apparitions instruct Macbeth to beware Macduff but reassure him that no man born of woman can harm him and that he will not be overthrown until Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane. Macbeth is greatly reassured, but his confidence in the future is shaken when the witches show him a line of kings all in the image of Banquo. After the witches disappear, Macbeth discovers that Macduff has fled to England and

A4, S2: Ross visits Lady Macduff and tries to justify to her Macduff's flight to England, a flight that leaves his family defenseless. After Ross leaves, a messenger arrives to warn Lady Macduff to flee. Before she can do so, Macbeth's men attack her and her son.

A4, S3: Macduff finds Malcolm at the English court and urges him to attack Macbeth at once. Malcolm suspects that Macduff is Macbeth's agent sent to lure Malcolm to his destruction in Scotland. After Malcolm tests Macduff and finds him sincere, Malcolm reveals that Edward, king of England, has provided a commander (Siward) and ten thousand troops for the invasion of Scotland. Ross then arrives with the news of the slaughter of Macduff's entire household. At first grief-stricken, Macduff follows Malcolm's advice and converts his grief into a desire to avenge himself on Macbeth.

KM13

A4, S1: Macbeth approaches the witches to learn how to make his kingship secure. In response they summon for him three apparitions: an armed head, a bloody child, and finally a child crowned, with a tree in his hand. These apparitions instruct Macbeth to beware Macduff but reassure him that no man born of woman can harm him and that he will not be overthrown until Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane. Macbeth is greatly reassured, but his confidence in the future is shaken when the witches show him a line of kings all in the image of Banquo. After the witches disappear, Macbeth discovers that Macduff has fled to England and decides to kill Macduff's family immediately.

Enter Macbeth.

MACBETH

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

ALL

50 A deed without a name.

MACBETH

I conjure you by that which you profess
(Howe'er you come to know it), answer me.
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches, though the yeasty waves
55 Confound and swallow navigation up,
Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown
down,
Though castles topple on their warders' heads,
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
60 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

65 Speak.

SECOND WITCH

Demand.

THIRD WITCH

We'll answer.

FIRST WITCH

Say if th' hadst rather hear it from our mouths
Or from our masters'.

MACBETH

70 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 murderers' gibbet throw
Into the flame.

ALL

75 Come high or low;
Thyself and office deftly show.

Thunder. First Apparition, an Armed Head.

MACBETH

Tell me, thou unknown power—

FIRST WITCH

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

FIRST APPARITION

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! Beware Macduff!
Beware the Thane of Fife! Dismiss me. Enough.
He descends.

MACBETH

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

KM13

A4, S1: Macbeth approaches the witches to learn how to make his kingship secure. In response they summon for him three apparitions: an armed head, a bloody child, and finally a child crowned, with a tree in his hand. These apparitions instruct Macbeth to beware Macduff but reassure him that no man born of woman can harm him and that he will not be overthrown until Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane. Macbeth is greatly reassured, but his confidence in the future is shaken when the witches show him a line of kings all in the image of Banquo. After the witches disappear, Macbeth discovers that Macduff has fled to England and decides to kill Macduff's family immediately.

FIRST WITCH

He will not be commanded. Here's another
More potent than the first.

Thunder. Second Apparition, a Bloody Child.

SECOND APPARITION

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!—

MACBETH

Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

SECOND APPARITION

90 Be bloody, bold, and resolute. Laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth. He descends.

MACBETH

Then live, Macduff; what need I fear of thee?
But yet I'll make assurance double sure
95 And take a bond of fate. Thou shalt not live,
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.

*Thunder. Third Apparition, a Child Crowned, with a tree
in his hand.*

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

ALL

Listen but speak not to 't.

THIRD APPARITION

Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care

Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are.

105 Macbeth shall never vanquished be until
Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill
Shall come against him.

He descends.

MACBETH

That will never be.

Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
110 Unfix his earthbound root? Sweet bodements, good
! Rebellious dead, rise never till the Wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
115 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,
120 And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know!

Cauldron sinks.

Hautboys.

Why sinks that cauldron? And what noise is this?

FIRST WITCH Show.

SECOND WITCH Show.

THIRD WITCH Show.

KM13

A4, S1: Macbeth approaches the witches to learn how to make his kingship secure. In response they summon for him three apparitions: an armed head, a bloody child, and finally a child crowned, with a tree in his hand. These apparitions instruct Macbeth to beware Macduff but reassure him that no man born of woman can harm him and that he will not be overthrown until Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane. Macbeth is greatly reassured, but his confidence in the future is shaken when the witches show him a line of kings all in the image of Banquo. After the witches disappear, Macbeth discovers that Macduff has fled to England and decides to kill Macduff's family immediately.

ALL

125 Show his eyes and grieve his heart.
Come like shadows; so depart.

MACBETH

Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo. Down!
Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs. And thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.
130 A third is like the former.—Filthy hags,
Why do you show me this?—A fourth? Start, eyes!
What, will the line stretch out to th' crack of doom?
Another yet? A seventh? I'll see no more.
And yet the eighth appears who bears a glass
135 Which shows me many more, and some I see
That twofold balls and treble scepters carry.
Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true,
For the blood-boltered Banquo smiles upon me
And points at them for his.

The Apparitions disappear.

KM14

A4, S3: Macduff finds Malcolm at the English court and urges him to attack Macbeth at once. Malcolm suspects that Macduff is Macbeth's agent sent to lure Malcolm to his destruction in Scotland. After Malcolm tests Macduff and finds him sincere, Malcolm reveals that Edward, king of England, has provided a commander (Siward) and ten thousand troops for the invasion of Scotland. Ross then arrives with the news of the slaughter of Macduff's entire household. At first grief-stricken, Macduff follows Malcolm's advice and converts his grief into a desire to avenge himself on Macbeth.

MALCOLM

Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
135 Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honor. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me
From overcredulous haste. But God above
140 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
145 Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
At no time broke my faith, would not betray
The devil to his fellow, and delight
No less in truth than life. My first false speaking
150 Was this upon myself. What I am truly
Is thine and my poor country's to command—
Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,
Old Siward with ten thousand warlike men,
Already at a point, was setting forth.
155 Now we'll together, and the chance of goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel. Why are you silent?

...

ROSS

240 Your castle is surprised, your wife and babes
Savagely slaughtered. To relate the manner
Were on the quarry of these murdered deer
To add the death of you.

MALCOLM

Merciful heaven!—

245 What, man, ne'er pull your hat upon your brows.
Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break.

MACDUFF

My children too?

ROSS

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

MACDUFF

250 And I must be from thence? My wife killed too?

ROSS

I have said.

MACDUFF

255 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

260 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,
265 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.

ACT 5– DENOUEMENT

Scene Summaries

A5, S1: Macbeth approaches the witches to learn how to make his kingship secure. In response they summon for him three apparitions: an armed head, a bloody child, and finally a child crowned, with a tree in his hand. These apparitions instruct Macbeth to beware Macduff but reassure him that no man born of woman can harm him and that he will not be overthrown until Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane. Macbeth is greatly reassured, but his confidence in the future is shaken when the witches show him a line of kings all in the image of Banquo. After the witches disappear, Macbeth discovers that Macduff has fled to England and decides to kill Macduff's family immediately.

A5, S2: A Scottish force, in rebellion against Macbeth, marches toward Birnam Wood to join Malcolm and his English army.

A5, S3: Reports are brought to Macbeth of the Scottish and English forces massed against him. He seeks assurance in the apparitions' promise of safety for himself. But he is anxious about Lady Macbeth's condition and impatient with her doctor's inability to cure her.

A5, S4: The rebel Scottish forces have joined Malcolm's army at Birnam Wood. Malcolm orders each soldier to cut down and carry a bough from the Wood so as to conceal their numbers from Macbeth.

A5, S5: Macbeth is confident that he can withstand any siege from Malcolm's forces. He is then told of Lady Macbeth's death and of the apparent movement of Birnam Wood toward Dunsinane Castle, where he waits. He desperately resolves to abandon the castle and give battle to Malcolm in the field.

A5, S6: Malcolm arrives with his troops before Dunsinane Castle.

A5, S7: On the battlefield Macbeth kills young Siward, the son of the English commander. After Macbeth exits, Macduff arrives in search of him. Dunsinane Castle has already been surrendered to Malcolm, whose forces have been strengthened by deserters from Macbeth's army.

A5, S8: Macduff finds Macbeth, who is reluctant to fight with him because Macbeth has already killed Macduff's whole family and is sure of killing Macduff too if they fight. When Macduff announces that he is not, strictly speaking, a man born of woman, having been ripped prematurely from his mother's womb, then Macbeth is afraid to fight. He fights with Macduff only when Macduff threatens to capture him and display him as a public spectacle. Macduff kills Macbeth, cuts off his head, and brings it to Malcolm. With Macbeth dead, Malcolm is now king and gives new titles to his loyal supporters.

KM15

A5, S1: Macbeth approaches the witches to learn how to make his kingship secure. In response they summon for him three apparitions: an armed head, a bloody child, and finally a child crowned, with a tree in his hand. These apparitions instruct Macbeth to beware Macduff but reassure him that no man born of woman can harm him and that he will not be overthrown until Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane. Macbeth is greatly reassured, but his confidence in the future is shaken when the witches show him a line of kings all in the image of Banquo. After the witches disappear, Macbeth discovers that Macduff has fled to England and decides to kill Macduff's family immediately.

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.

...

Enter Lady Macbeth with a taper.

Lo you, here she comes. This is her very guise and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.

DOCTOR

How came she by that light?

GENTLEWOMAN

Why, it stood by her. She has light by 25 her continually. 'Tis her command.

DOCTOR

You see her eyes are open.

GENTLEWOMAN

Ay, but their sense are shut.

DOCTOR

What is it she does now? Look how she rubs her hands.

GENTLEWOMAN

30It 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 35 from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

LADY MACBETH

Out, damned spot, out, I say! One. Two.

Why then, 'tis time to do 't. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord, fie, a soldier and afeard? What need we fear 40 who knows it, when none can call our power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

...

The Thane of Fife had a wife. Where is 45 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.

GENTLEWOMAN

50She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that. Heaven knows what she has known.

LADY MACBETH

Here's the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little 55 hand. O, O, O!

KM16

A5, S3: Reports are brought to Macbeth of the Scottish and English forces massed against him. He seeks assurance in the apparitions' promise of safety for himself. But he is anxious about Lady Macbeth's condition and impatient with her doctor's inability to cure her.

Enter Seyton.

SEYTON

35 What's your gracious pleasure?

MACBETH

What news more?

SEYTON

All is confirmed, my lord, which was reported.

MACBETH

I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hacked.
Give me my armor.

SEYTON

40'Tis not needed yet.

MACBETH

I'll put it on.
Send out more horses. Skirr the country round.
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine
armor.—
45 How does your patient, doctor?

DOCTOR

Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies
That keep her from her rest.

MACBETH

Cure her of that.
50 Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
55 Which weighs upon the heart?

KM17

A5, S3: Reports are brought to Macbeth of the Scottish and English forces massed against him. He seeks assurance in the apparitions' promise of safety for himself. But he is anxious about Lady Macbeth's condition and impatient with her doctor's inability to cure her.

KM18

A5, S4: Macbeth is confident that he can withstand any siege from Malcolm's forces. He is then told of Lady Macbeth's death and of the apparent movement of Birnam Wood toward Dunsinane Castle, where he waits. He desperately resolves to abandon the castle and give battle to Malcolm in the field.

Enter Seyton.

SEYTON

35 What's your gracious pleasure?

MACBETH

What news more?

SEYTON

All is confirmed, my lord, which was reported.

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Send out more horses. Skirr the country round.
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armor.—

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DOCTOR

Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies
That keep her from her rest.

MACBETH

Cure her of that.
50 Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff

MACBETH

What is that noise?—

SEYTON

10 It is the cry of women, my good lord. He exits.

MACBETH

I have almost forgot the taste of fears.
The time has been my senses would have cooled
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
15 As life were in 't. I have supped full with horrors.
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.

Enter Seyton

Wherefore was that cry?

SEYTON

The Queen, my lord, is dead.

MACBETH

20 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,
25 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
30 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

KM19

A5, S8: Macduff finds Macbeth, who is reluctant to fight with him because Macbeth has already killed Macduff's whole family and is sure of killing Macduff too if they fight. When Macduff announces that he is not, strictly speaking, a man born of woman, having been ripped prematurely from his mother's womb, then Macbeth is afraid to fight. He fights with Macduff only when Macduff threatens to capture him and display him as a public spectacle.

Enter Macduff.

MACDUFF

Turn, hellhound, turn!

MACBETH

5 Of all men else I have avoided thee.
But get thee back. My soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.

MACDUFF

I have no words;
My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain
10 Than terms can give thee out. Fight. Alarums.

MACBETH

Thou lovest labor.
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed.
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
15 I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.

MACDUFF

Despair thy charm,
And let the angel whom thou still hast served
Tell thee Macduff was from his mother's womb
20 Untimely ripped.

MACBETH

Accursèd be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cowed my better part of man!
And be these juggling fiends no more believed
That palter with us in a double sense,
25 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,
30 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.
35 Though Birnam Wood be come to Dunsinane
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last. Before my body
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff,
And damned be him that first cries "Hold! Enough!"

They exit fighting. Alarums.

KM20

A5, S8: Macduff kills Macbeth, cuts off his head, and brings it to Malcolm. With Macbeth dead, Malcolm is now king and gives new titles to his loyal supporters.

Enter Macduff with Macbeth's head.

MACDUFF

65 Hail, King! for so thou art. Behold where stands
Th' usurper's cursèd head. The time is free.
I see thee compassed with thy kingdom's pearl,
That speak my salutation in their minds,
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine.
70 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
75 kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honor named. What's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time,
As calling home our exiled friends abroad
80 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
85 That calls upon us, by the grace of grace,
We will perform in measure, time, and place.
So thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone.

Flourish. All exit.