Macbeth

by

William Shakespeare

Abridged for the Shakespeare Schools Festival

by

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30 MINUTE VERSION

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“We are such stuff as dreams are made on.”

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Duncan      KING OF SCOTLAND
Malcolm    /HIS SONS
Donalbain  
Macbeth    A GENERAL IN THE KING’S ARMY, LATER KING
Banquo     A GENERAL
Macduff    
Lennox     
Ross      /NOBLEMEN OF SCOTLAND
Angus      
Mentieth  
Fleance   BANQUO’S SON
Siward    EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND, AN ENGLISHMAN

A Porter
Seton      MACBETH’S MANSERVANT
Three Murderers
Lady Macbeth
Three Witches
Apparitions
Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Attendants and Messengers

Scene 1
A deserted place¹. Thunder and lightning.

Three WITCHES

1ˢᵗ WITCH When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

2ⁿᵈ WITCH When the hurlyburly’s done,
When the battle’s lost and won.

3ʳᵈ WITCH That will be ere the set of sun.

1ˢᵗ WITCH Where the place?

2ⁿᵈ WITCH Upon the heath.

3ʳᵈ WITCH There to meet with Macbeth

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

They vanish

Scene 2

A camp near the Royal Palace at Forres².
A trumpet sounds.

KING DUNCAN, MALCOLM,
DONALBAIN and LENNOX

Enter ROSS, fresh from fighting

ROSS God save King Duncan!

DUNCAN Whence cam’st thou, worthy thane?

¹ In Scotland
² Unless otherwise indicated, all locations are in Scotland. Forres is not a great distance east from Inverness. Macbeth’s castle at Dunsinane and Macduff’s castle are traditionally a bit further south.
ROSS From Fife, great king,
Where that most disloyal traitor
The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict,
Till brave Macbeth – well he deserves that name –
Confronted him with brandished steel,
Point against point, rebellious arm ‘gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish spirit: and, to conclude,
The victory fell on us.

DUNCAN Great happiness!
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

Scene 3

A heath. Thunder.

Three WITCHES

Drum within

3RD WITCH A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

Enter MACBETH and BANQUO

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

BANQUO What are these,
So withered, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like th’ inhabitants o’ the earth,
And yet are on’t? Live you? Or are you aught
That man may question?

MACBETH Speak, if you can: what are you?

1ST WITCH All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

3 A bit further east
4 Thane is a Scottish term for Earl
5 Macbeth brought the King of Norway to his knees in hand to hand fighting and forced his surrender. Interesting to note that he did not kill him.
6 This is Macbeth’s current title.
All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

All hail, Macbeth! That shalt be king hereafter.

MACBETH stands apart to consider his good fortune.

(aside to the WITCHES)
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.

As the WITCHES speak, MACBETH returns to listen.

Hail!
Hail!
Hail!

Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.
Not so happy yet much happier.
Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:
So all hail Macbeth and Banquo!

I know I am thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? The thane of Cawdor lives;
And to be king
Stands not within the prospect belief,
No more than Cawdor.
Speak I charge you

The WITCHES vanish.

Whither are they vanished?
Your children shall be kings.
You shall be king.
And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

Enter ROSS and ANGUS
ROSS

The king hath happily received, Macbeth, The news of thy success. He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor.

BANQUO

(Aside) What, can the devil speak true?

MACBETH

The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me In borrowed robes?

ANGUS

Treasons capital, confessed, and proved; Have overthrown him.

MACBETH

(Aside) Glamis, and thane of Cawdor: The greatest is behind.

BANQUO

(To MACBETH) 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.

Exeunt

Scene 4

Forres. The Palace.

KING DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX and ATTENDANTS.

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, and ANGUS

DUNCAN

O worthiest cousin! Noble Banquo! We will establish our estate upon Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter The prince of Cumberland. (to MACBETH) My worthy Cawdor! From hence to Inverness.

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7 King Duncan has heard of Macbeth’s victory against the King of Norway amongst other fighting successes.
8 Banquo warns Macbeth that the devil lulls people into a false sense of security. This is what happens to Macbeth who ultimately believes he is invincible but discovers he’s been tricked (in Act 5).
9 His son Malcolm is to be his successor.
10 Duncan is using Macbeth’s new title.
11 Shakespeare staged the murder of Duncan at Macbeth’s castle of Dunsinane, which is not at Inverness. Nonetheless, by tradition, Duncan was murdered at Inverness. (See Macbeth – man and myth by Nick Aitchison, Sutton Publishing)
MACBETH  I’ll make joyful the hearing of my wife with your approach; so humbly take my leave.

MACBETH (Aside) The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step On which I must fall down, or else o’er-leap, For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires! Let not light see my black and deep desires.

Exeunt

Scene 5

Macbeth’s castle, Dunsinane.

Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a letter

LADY MACBETH ‘This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.’
Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature; It is too full o’th’ milk of human kindness To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great; Art not without ambition, but without The illness should attend it.

Enter a MESSENGER

What is your tiding?

MESSENGER The king comes here to-night.

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! Come to my woman’s breasts, And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers. Come, thick night, And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell, That my keen knife see not the wound it makes, Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark, To cry ‘Hold, hold!’

Enter MACBETH

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

12 Macbeth has begun to believe he might succeed Duncan as King when Duncan dies, but realises he can’t wait for the young son Malcolm to die as well.
13 Too tender-hearted to make things happen.
14 Lady Macbeth does not plan to let the king leave her castle alive. The raven is the traditional messenger of death.
15 According to the weird sisters.
MACBETH       My dearest love,
             Duncan comes here to-night.
LADY MACBETH  And when goes hence?
MACBETH       To-morrow, as he purposes.
LADY MACBETH  O, never
             Shall sun that morrow see!
             Look like the innocent flower,
             But be the serpent under’t.

_Exeunt_

_Scene 6_

_Same._

KING 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.

_Exeunt LADY MACBETH who curtseys_

Conduct me to mine host; we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.

_Exeunt_

_Scene 7_

_Same._

Enter MACBETH

MACBETH       If it were done when ’tis done, then ’twere well
             It were done quickly.16
             _Pausing to doubt_ 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.

_Exeunt LADY MACBETH_

16 It’ll be better to get Duncan’s murder over and done with.
How now! what news?

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

MACBETH  We will proceed no further in this business.

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

MACBETH  I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH  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.
I have given suck, and know
How tender’stis to love the babe that milks me-
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

MACBETH  If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH  We fail?
But screw your courage to the sticking place,
And we’ll not fail.
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.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know

Exeunt

Scene 8

Same, a few hours later.

MACBETH  Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,

17 They plan to frame his drunken guards for the murder
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
*(becoming excited)*
Thou marshall’st me the way that I was going,
And such an instrument I was to use!
*(he closes his eyes and opens them again)*
I see thee still;
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes.
*A bell rings*
I go, and it is done: the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven, or to hell.

**EXIT**

**Scene 9**

Enter LADY MACBETH with goblet

LADY MACBETH *(pauses to listen)* Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shrieked. He is about it. ¹⁸:

MACBETH *(O.S.)* Who’s there? what, ho!

LADY MACBETH Alack! I am afraid they have awaked,
And ‘tis not done.

**Enter MACBETH**
My husband!

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

LADY MACBETH I heard the owl scream.

MACBETH Methought I heard a voice cry ‘Sleep no more!...’

LADY MACBETH What do you mean?

MACBETH ‘...Glamis’, ¹⁹ hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more: Macbeth shall sleep no more!’

LADY MACBETH *(noticing the daggers)*
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH I’ll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done.

---

¹⁸ She refers to Macbeth committing the murder
¹⁹ Pronounced Glarms.
LADY MACBETH  Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers. If he do bleed,
I’ll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.

_She exits. Knocking within._

MACBETH  
(startled) Whence is that knocking?
How is’t with me, when every noise appals me?
Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine, Making the green one red.

LADY MACBETH returns

LADY MACBETH  My hands are of your colour; but I shame
To wear a heart so white.
Knocking.
A little water clears us of this deed.
Knocking.

MACBETH  Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!

Exeunt

**Scene 10**

Same.

Knocking within. Enter a PORTER

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

(Opens the gate)

_Enter MACDUFF and LENNOX_

MACDUFF  Is thy master stirring?

_Enter MACBETH_

Our knocking has awaked him; here he comes.

LENNOX  Good-morrow, noble sir.

MACBETH  Good-morrow, both.

---

20 Turn red
21 Her hands are covered in blood
MACDUFF  Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

MACBETH  Not yet.

MACDUFF  He did command me to call timely on him; I have almost slipped the hour.

MACBETH  I’ll bring you to him.

MACBETH shows MACDUFF into the king’s chamber. He backs out at speed.

MACDUFF  O horror! horror! horror!

MACBETH, LENNOX  What’s the matter?

MACBETH  What is’t you say?

LENNOX  Mean you his majesty?

MACDUFF  Approach the chamber.

MACBETH and LENNOX enter the chamber
Awake! Awake!
Ring the alarum bell! Murder and treason!
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!

Bell rings.

LENNOX returns.

Enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH  What’s the business? speak, speak!

MACDUFF  O, gentle lady, Tis not for you to hear what I can speak.

Enter BANQUO
O Banquo! Banquo! Our royal master’s murdered!

LADY MACBETH  Woe, alas! What, in our house?

MACBETH returns.

Enter MALCOLM and DONALBAIN.

DONALBAIN  What is amiss?

MACDUFF  Your royal father’s murdered.
MALCOLM  O, by whom?
LENNOX  Those of his chamber, as it seemed, had done’t.
MACBETH  O, yet I do repent me of my fury.\(^{22}\)
That I did kill them.
MACDUFF  Wherefore did you so?\(^{23}\)
MACBETH  Who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make’s love known?
LADY MACBETH  \((Seeming to faint)\)^{24}
Help me hence, ho!
MACDUFF  Look to the lady.

\textit{Exeunt all but MALCOLM and DONALBAIN}

MALCOLM  I’ll to England.
DONALBAIN  To Ireland, I. Where we are
There’s daggers in men’s smiles: the near in blood
The nearer bloody.

\textit{Exeunt.}

\textbf{Scene 11}

The royal palace at Forres.

MACBETH and LADY MACBETH wear crowns.
Enter BANQUO, observing from a distance.

BANQUO  Thou has it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and I fear
Thou play’dst most fouilly for’t: yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity\(^{25}\),
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. But hush no more.

\textit{MACBETH, as King, LADY MACBETH, as Queen, LENNOX,}

\(^{22}\) When Macbeth entered Duncan’s chamber with Lennox he killed the drugged grooms so that they couldn’t protest their innocence
\(^{23}\) This is news to everyone and they are all shocked by Macbeth’s unilateral action.
\(^{24}\) Lady Macbeth conveniently distracts attention from Macbeth’s actions
\(^{25}\) The Weird Sisters said Macbeth’s children would not be kings, but Banquo’s
ROSS, LORDS, LADIES and ATTENDANTS approach

MACBETH (to BANQUO) Here’s our chief guest. To-night we hold a solemn supper, sir, And I’ll request your presence.

BANQUO Let you highness command upon me.

MACBETH Ride you this afternoon?

BANQUO Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH Is’t far you ride?

BANQUO As far, my lord, as will fill up the time ‘Twixt this and supper.

MACBETH Fail not our feast.

BANQUO My lord, I will not.

MACBETH Goes Fleance with you?

BANQUO Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH I wish your horses swift and sure of foot. Farewell. Exit BANQUO (to LORDS) Let every man be master of his time Till seven at night; God be with you! All depart but MACBETH and a SERVANT Sirrah, a word with you: attend those men Our pleasure? Bring them before us. The SERVANT goes.

To be thus is nothing, But to be safely thus: our fears in Banquo Stick deep.
The Sisters hailed him father to a line of kings.
If’t be so,
For Banquo’s issue have I filed my mind,
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
Who’s there?

Enter TWO MURDERERS to whom MACBETH hands over money.

2ND MURDERER We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.

26 corrupted
Exit MURDERERS
It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul’s flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night.
Exit

Scene 12

Same.

Enter LADY MACBETH and a SERVANT

LADY MACBETH Is Banquo gone from court?

SERVANT Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

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

SERVANT Madam, I will.

He goes

LADY MACBETH Nought’s had, all’s spent,
Where our desire is got without content:27
‘Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

Enter MACBETH

MACBETH We have scotched the snake, not killed it.

LADY MACBETH Come on;
Gentle my lord, sleek o’er your rugged looks.
Be bright and jovial among your guests tonight.

MACBETH So shall I, love, and so I pray be you.
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo.
Ere the bat hath flown his cloistered flight,
There shall be done a deed of dreadful note.

LADY MACBETH What’s to be done?

MACBETH Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. 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

27 The anxiety she feels about Banquo is ruining their happiness
28 Night that closes up eyes. A term from falconry, when a hawk’s eyes are sewn shut.
Which keeps me paled!

Scene 13

Some way from the palace at Forres.

Enter THREE MURDERERS

1ST MURDERER (to 3RD MURDERER) But who bid thee join us?

3RD MURDERER Macbeth.

Enter BANQUO and FLEANCE with a torch

BANQUO It will be rain tonight.

1ST MURDERER Let it come down.

They set upon BANQUO

BANQUO O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!

He dies; FLEANCE escapes

Exeunt

Scene 14

The palace at Forres. A banquet prepared.

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.

The 1ST MURDERER appears at the door

MACBETH There’s blood upon thy face.

1ST MURDERER ‘Tis Banquo’s then.

MACBETH Is he dispatched29?

1ST MURDERER My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.

29 killed
MACBETH  Thou art the best o’th’ cut-throats. Yet he’s good That did the like for Fleance.

1ST MURDERER  Most royal sir, Fleance is ’scaped.

MACBETH  Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect. But Banquo’s safe?

1ST MURDERER  Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides, With twentyrenched gashes on his head.

MACBETH  Get thee gone; to-morrow we’ll hear ourselves again.

*Exit MURDERER*

LADY MACBETH  My royal lord, you do not give the cheer.

*The ghost of BANQUO enters and sits in MACBETH’s place.*

LENNOX  May’t please your highness sit?

MACBETH  *(pointing at the GHOST)* Which of you have done this?

LORDS  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  Pray you, keep seat, The fit is momentary; upon a thought He will again be well: *(aside)* Are you a man?

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

LADY MACBETH  Why do you make such faces? When all’s done, You look but on a stool.

*The GHOST vanishes*

MACBETH  If I stand here, I saw him.

LADY MACBETH  Fie, for shame!

MACBETH  *(summoning courage)* Give me some wine, fill full.
The GHOST returns
MACBETH
I drink to th’general joy o’th’whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
Would he were here!

MACBETH
(seeing the GHOST) Avaunt! and quit my sight!

The GHOST goes

LADY MACBETH
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!

They leave

MACBETH
It will have blood; they say, blood will have blood.
I will to-morrow, to the Weird Sisters:
More shall they speak; for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. I am in blood
Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o’er.

Exeunt

Scene 15

The Palace at Forres.

A LORD reports to LENNOX

LORD
The son of Duncan lives in the English court.
Thither Macduff is gone to pray the holy king,
That by the help of him,
We may again sleep to our nights.

Exeunt
Scene 16

A cavern and in the middle a fiery cauldron. Thunder.

THREE WITCHES

1ST WITCH Round about the cauldron go:
In the poisoned entrails throw.

ALL Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

2ND WITCH By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.

Enter MACBETH

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

1ST WITCH Speak.

2ND WITCH Demand.

3RD WITCH We’ll answer.

1ST WITCH Say if thou’dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters.

MACBETH Call ‘em, let me see ‘em!30

Thunder. FIRST APPARITION: an armed head31

1ST APPARITION Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware
Macduff,
Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me. Enough.
Descends

Thunder. SECOND APPARITION: a bloody child32

2ND APPARITION Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!
Be bloody, bold, and resolute: laugh to scorn
The power of man; for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

30 Macbeth is prepared to make direct contact with the powers of darkness
31 Symbolically Macbeth’s head cut off and brought to Malcolm by Macduff
32 Macduff, untimely “torn” from his mother’s body rather than “born”
Descends

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

Thunder. THIRD APPARITION: a child crowned, with a tree in his hand

3RD APPARITION Macbeth shall never vanquished be until Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill Shall come against him.

Descends

MACBETH That will never be; sweet bodements! Good. Yet my heart Throbs to know one thing: shall Banquo’s issue ever Reign in this kingdom?

ALL Seek to know no more.

MACBETH Deny me this, And an eternal curse fall on you!

The WITCHES dance, and vanish

MACBETH (calls) Come in, without there!

Enter LENNOX

LENNOX What’s your grace’s will?

LENNOX Macduff is fled to England.

MACBETH Fled to England!

LENNOX Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH (to himself) Time, thou anticipat’st my dread exploits. The castle of Macduff I will surprise, Seize upon Fife, give to the edge o’th’sword His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls That trace him in his line.

Exeunt

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33 Royal Malcolm and the boughs of trees that march on Dunsinane
34 children
Scene 17

England. Before the King's palace.

MALCOLM and MACDUFF

Enter ROSS

MACDUFF My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.
ROSS Sir, amen.
MACDUFF Stands Scotland where it did?
ROSS Alas, poor country,
Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot
Be called our mother, but our grave.
MALCOLM Be't their comfort
We are coming thither: gracious England35 hath
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men.
ROSS Would I could answer
This comfort with the like! But I have words
That would be howled out in the desert air.
MACDUFF What concern they?
ROSS Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughtered.
MALCOLM Merciful heaven!
MACDUFF My children too?
ROSS Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.
MACDUFF My wife killed too?
ROSS I have said.
MACDUFF All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? O, hell-kite36! All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop?
Sinful Macduff, they were all struck for thee!

35 Edward king of England
MALCOLM  

Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
Convert to anger.

MACDUFF  

Gentle heavens, front to front
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself\(^{37}\);
Within my sword’s length set him.

MALCOLM  

Macbeth is ripe for shaking.

*Exeunt*

**Scene 18**

Macbeth’s castle at Dunsinane.

Enter LADY MACBETH with a candle.

LADY MACBETH  

Out, damned spot! *(smelling her hand)* Here’s the smell of
the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten
this little hand. Oh! oh! Oh. *(reassuring Macbeth)* Wash
your hands\(^{38}\), look not so pale: I tell you yet again, Banquo’s
buried; he cannot come out on’s grave. Give me your hand:
what’s done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed.

*She exits*

**Scene 19**

Countryside near Macbeth’s castle at
Dunsinane. Distant drumming.

MENTIETH, ANGUS, CAITHNESS,
LENNOX, and SOLDIERS\(^{39}\)

MENTIETH  

The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward and the good Macduff.

ANGUS  

Near Birnam wood
Shall we meet them, and that way are they coming.

*Exeunt, marching*

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\(^{36}\) The Kite is traditionally thought of as a bird of prey even if it takes only dead animals.

\(^{37}\) He prays to God to let him fight Macbeth

\(^{38}\) she imagines she’s speaking to Macbeth first, after Duncan’s murder, and second when he sees
Banquo’s ghost

\(^{39}\) Some of Macbeth’s nobles are defecting to the approaching English
Scene 20

Dunsinane.

MACBETH, SETON and ATTENDANTS

MACBETH Bring me no more reports, let them fly all:
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane
I cannot taint with fear. What’s the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman.
(to SETON)
Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff;
I will not be afraid of death and bane
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

Exeunt

Scene 21

Near Birnam Wood. Drumming.

MALCOLM, SIWARD, MACDUFF, MENTIETH, ANGUS, CAITHNESS, LENNOX, ROSS, and SOLDIERS

SIWARD What wood is this before us?
MENTIETH The wood of Birnam.
MALCOLM Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
And bear’t before him.

Exeunt, marching.

Scene 22

Dunsinane.

MACBETH, SETON, and SOLDIERS

MACBETH Hang out our banners on the outward walls!
A cry of women within
(calmly) What is that noise?

SETON It is the cry of women, my good lord.
Exit
MACBETH  The time has been, my senses would have cooled
To hear a night-shriek.

Re-enter SETON
Wherefore was that cry?

SETON  The queen, my lord, is dead.

MACBETH  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

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

MACBETH  I begin
To doubt th’equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth40: ‘Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane’; and now a wood
Comes towards Dunsinane. Blow, wind! come,
wrack41!
At least we’ll die with harness on our back42.

Exeunt

Scene 23

Same.

MACBETH, hot from fighting.

Enter MACDUFF

MACDUFF  Turn hell-hound, turn!

MACBETH  Of all men else I have avoided thee:
My soul is too charged with blood of thine already.43

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40 He realises that the apparitions have given him ambiguous information
41 Wrack and ruin.
42 at least we’ll die fighting
43 he refers to the murder of Macduff’s wife and children
MACDUFF  Thou bloodier villain
            Than terms can give thee out!

            They fight and MACBETH appears to be winning.

MACBETH  I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
            To one of woman born.

MACDUFF  Despair thy charm,
            Macduff was from his mother’s womb
            Untimely ripped.

MACBETH  Lay on⁴⁴, Macduff,
            And damned be him that first cries ‘Hold, enough’.

Exeunt, fighting
Enter MALCOLM and SIWARD

Re-enter MACDUFF with MACBETH’s head

MACDUFF  Hail, king! for so thou art. Behold where stands
            Th’usurper’s cursed head. Hail, king of Scotland!

ALL    Hail, king of Scotland!

MALCOLM Let us call home our exiled friends abroad
            That fled the snares
            Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen.
            Who, as ’tis thought, by self and violent hands
            Took off her life.
            So thanks to all at once, and to each one,
            Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ Fight on
⁴⁵ Malcolm, heir to Duncan, will be the next King.