

# MACBETH

By

William Shakespeare

Act 2, Scene 3



SCENE. The same.

(Knocking within. Enter a Porter)

Porter

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

(Knocking within)

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty: come in time; have napkins enow about you; here you'll sweat for't.

(Knocking within)

Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven: O, come in, equivocator.

(Knocking within)

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose: come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose.

(Knocking within)

Knock, knock; never at quiet! What are you? But  
this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter  
it no further: I had thought to have let in  
some of all professions that go the primrose  
way to the everlasting bonfire.

(Knocking within)

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

(Opens the gate)

(Enter MACDUFF and LENNOX)

MACDUFF

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

Porter

'Faith sir, we were carousing till the  
second cock: and drink, sir, is a great  
provoker of three things.

MACDUFF

What three things does drink especially provoke?

Porter

Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and  
urine. Lechery, sir, it provokes, and unprovokes;  
it provokes the desire, but it takes  
away the performance: therefore, much drink  
may be said to be an equivocator with lechery:  
it makes him, and it mars him; it sets  
him on, and it takes him off; it persuades him,  
and disheartens him; makes him stand to, and

not stand to; in conclusion, equivocates him  
in a sleep, and, giving him the lie, leaves him.

MACDUFF

I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

Porter

That it did, sir, i' the very throat on  
me: but I requited him for his lie; and, I  
think, being too strong for him, though he took  
up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift to cast  
him.

MACDUFF

Is thy master stirring?

(Enter MACBETH)

Our knocking has awaked him; here he comes.

LENNOX

Good morrow, noble sir.

MACBETH

Good morrow, both.

MACDUFF

Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

MACBETH

Not yet.

MACDUFF

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

MACBETH

I'll bring you to him.

MACDUFF

I know this is a joyful trouble to you;  
But yet 'tis one.

MACBETH

The labour we delight in physics pain.  
This is the door.

MACDUFF

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

(Exit)

LENNOX

Goes the king hence to-day?

MACBETH

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' the air; strange screams of death,  
And prophesying with accents terrible  
Of dire combustion and confused events  
New hatch'd to the woeful time: the obscure bird  
Clamour'd the livelong night: some say, the earth  
Was feverous and did shake.

MACBETH

'Twas a rough night.

LENNOX

My young remembrance cannot parallel  
A fellow to it.

(Re-enter MACDUFF)

MACDUFF

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

MACBETH LENNOX

What's the matter.

MACDUFF

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

MACBETH

What is 't you say? the life?

LENNOX

Mean you his majesty?

MACDUFF

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

(Exeunt MACBETH and LENNOX)

Awake, awake!

Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason!  
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!

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

(Bell rings)

(Enter LADY MACBETH)

LADY MACBETH

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

MACDUFF

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

(Enter BANQUO)

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

LADY MACBETH

Woe, alas!  
What, in our house?

BANQUO

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

(Re-enter MACBETH and LENNOX, with ROSS)

MACBETH

Had I but died an hour before this chance,  
I had lived a blessed time; for, from this instant,  
There 's nothing serious in mortality:  
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;  
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees  
Is left this vault to brag of.

(Enter MALCOLM and DONALBAIN)

DONALBAIN

What is amiss?

MACBETH

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

MACDUFF

Your royal father 's murder'd.

MALCOLM

O, by whom?

LENNOX

Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done 't:  
Their hands and faces were an badged with blood;  
So were their daggers, which unwiped we found  
Upon their pillows:  
They stared, and were distracted; no man's life  
Was to be trusted with them.



MACBETH

O, yet I do repent me of my fury,  
That I did kill them.

MACDUFF

Wherefore did you so?

MACBETH

Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,  
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:  
The expedition my violent love  
Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,  
His silver skin laced with his golden blood;  
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature  
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers,  
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers  
Unmannerly breech'd with gore: who could refrain,  
That had a heart to love, and in that heart  
Courage to make 's love known?

LADY MACBETH

Help me hence, ho!

MACDUFF

Look to the lady.

MALCOLM

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

DONALBAIN

[Aside to MALCOLM] What should be spoken here,  
where our fate,  
Hid in an auger-hole, may rush, and seize us?

Let 's away;  
Our tears are not yet brew'd.

MALCOLM

[Aside to DONALBAIN] Nor our strong sorrow  
Upon the foot of motion.

BANQUO

Look to the lady:

(LADY MACBETH is carried out)

And when we have our naked frailties hid,  
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,  
And question this most bloody piece of work,  
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us:  
In the great hand of God I stand; and thence  
Against the undivulged pretence I fight  
Of treasonous malice.

MACDUFF

And so do I.

ALL

So all.

MACBETH

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

ALL

Well contented.

(Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain.)

MALCOLM

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

DONALBAIN

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

MALCOLM

This murderous shaft that's shot  
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way  
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse;  
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,  
But shift away: there's warrant in that theft  
Which steals itself, when there's no mercy left.

(Exeunt)