

# MACBETH

By

William Shakespeare

Act 1, Scene 2



SCENE. A camp near Forres.

(Alarum within. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Sergeant)

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  
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.

Sergeant

Doubtful it stood;  
As two spent swimmers, that do cling together  
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald—  
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that  
The multiplying villanies of nature  
Do swarm upon him—from the western isles  
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;  
And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,  
Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:  
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—  
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,  
Which smok'd with bloody execution,  
Like valour's minion carved out his passage  
Till he faced the slave;  
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,

Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,  
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

DUNCAN

O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

Sergeant

As whence the sun 'gins his reflection  
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,  
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come  
Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland, mark:  
No sooner justice had with valour arm'd  
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels,  
But the Norwegian lord surveying vantage,  
With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men  
Began a fresh assault.

DUNCAN

Dismay'd not this  
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

Sergeant

Yes;

As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.  
If I say sooth, I must report they were  
As cannons overcharged with double cracks, so they  
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:  
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,  
Or memorise another Golgotha,  
I cannot tell.  
But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

DUNCAN

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

(Exit Sergeant, attended)

Who comes here?

(Enter ROSS)

MALCOLM

The worthy thane of Ross.

LENNOX

What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look  
That seems to speak things strange.

ROSS

God save the king!

DUNCAN

Whence camest thou, worthy thane?

ROSS

From Fife, great king;  
Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky  
And fan our people cold. Norway himself,  
With terrible numbers,  
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor  
The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;  
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,  
Confronted him with self-comparisons,  
Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm.  
Curbing his lavish spirit: and, to conclude,  
The victory fell on us.

DUNCAN

Great happiness!

ROSS

That now Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition:  
Nor would we deign him burial of his men  
Till he disbursed at Saint Colme's inch  
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

DUNCAN

No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive  
Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death,  
And with his former title greet Macbeth.

ROSS

I'll see it done.

DUNCAN

What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath won.

(Exeunt)