

# MACBETH

By

William Shakespeare

Act 3, Scene 1



SCENE. Forres. The palace.

(Enter BANQUO)

BANQUO

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

(Sennet sounded. Enter MACBETH, as king, LADY MACBETH, as queen, LENNOX, ROSS, Lords, Ladies, 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

To-night 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  
For ever 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,  
In this day's council; but we'll take to-morrow.  
Is't far you ride?

BANQUO

As far, my lord, as will fill up the time  
'Twi'xt this and supper: go not my horse the better,  
I must become a borrower of the night  
For a dark hour or twain.

MACBETH

Fail not our feast.

BANQUO

My lord, I will not.

MACBETH

We hear, our bloody cousins are bestow'd  
In England and in Ireland, not confessing  
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers  
With strange invention: but of that to-morrow,  
When therewithal we shall have cause of state  
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse: adieu,  
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

BANQUO

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

MACBETH

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

(Exit BANQUO)

Let every man be master of his time  
Till seven at night: to make society  
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself  
Till supper-time alone: while then, God be with you!

(Exeunt all but MACBETH, and an attendant)

Sirrah, a word with you: attend those men  
Our pleasure?

ATTENDANT

They are, my lord, without the palace gate.

MACBETH

Bring them before us.

(Exit Attendant)

To be thus is nothing;  
But to be safely thus.—Our fears in Banquo  
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature  
Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares;  
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,  
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour  
To act in safety. There is none but he  
Whose being I do fear: and, under him,  
My Genius is 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  
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:  
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,  
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,  
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,  
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,  
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;  
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;  
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace  
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel  
Given to the common enemy of man,  
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!  
Rather than so, come fate into the list.  
And champion me to the utterance! Who's there!

(Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers)

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

(Exit Attendant)

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

First Murderer

It was, so please your highness.

MACBETH

Well then, now

Have you consider'd of my speeches? Know  
That it was he in the times past which held you  
So under fortune, which you thought had been  
Our innocent self: this I made good to you  
In our last conference, pass'd in probation with you,  
How you were borne in hand, how cross'd, the instruments,  
Who wrought with them, and all things else that might

To half a soul and to a notion crazed  
Say 'Thus did Banquo.'

First Murderer  
You made it known to us.

MACBETH

I did so, and went further, which is now  
Our point of second meeting. Do you find  
Your patience so predominant in your nature  
That you can let this go? Are you so gospell'd  
To pray for this good man and for his issue,  
Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave  
And beggar'd yours for ever?

First Murderer  
We are men, my liege.

MACBETH

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;  
As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,  
Shoughs, water-rugs and demi-wolves, are clept  
All by the name of dogs: the valued file  
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,  
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one  
According to the gift which bounteous nature  
Hath in him closed; whereby he does receive  
Particular addition. from the bill  
That writes them all alike: and so of men.  
Now, if you have a station in the file,  
Not i' the worst rank of manhood, say 't;  
And I will put that business in your bosoms,  
Whose execution takes your enemy off,  
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,

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

Second Murderer

I am one, my liege,  
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world  
Have so incensed that I am reckless what  
I do to spite the world.

First Murderer

And I another  
So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,  
That I would set my lie on any chance,  
To mend it, or be rid on't.

MACBETH

Both of you  
Know Banquo was your enemy.

Both Murderers

True, my lord.

MACBETH

So is he mine; and in such bloody distance,  
That every minute of his being thrusts  
Against my near'st of life: and though I could  
With 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,  
That I to your assistance do make love,  
Masking the business from the common eye  
For sundry weighty reasons.

Second Murderer

We shall, my lord,  
Perform what you command us.  
First Murderer  
Though our lives—

MACBETH

Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most  
I will advise you where to plant yourselves;  
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,  
The moment on't; for't must be done to-night,  
And something from the palace; always thought  
That I require a clearness: and with him—  
To leave no rubs nor botches in the work—  
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,  
Whose absence is no less material to me  
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate  
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart:  
I'll come to you anon.  
Both Murderers  
We are resolved, my lord.

MACBETH

I'll call upon you straight: abide within.

(Exeunt Murderers)

It is concluded. Banquo, thy soul's flight,  
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night.

(Exit)