

## Original Text

A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep  
 Their drenchèd natures lie as in a death,  
 What cannot you and I perform upon  
 70 The 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. Will it not be received,  
 75 When we have marked with blood those sleepy two  
 Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,  
 That they have done 't?

## Act 1, Scene 7, Page 4

**LADY MACBETH**

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

**MACBETH**

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

*Exeunt*

## Modern Text

do, we can lay all the blame on the drunken  
 servants.

**MACBETH**

May you only give birth to male children, because  
 your fearless spirit should create nothing that isn't  
 masculine. Once we have covered the two  
 servants with blood, and used their daggers to  
 kill, won't people believe that they were the  
 culprits?

**LADY MACBETH**

Who could think it happened any other way?  
 We'll be grieving loudly when we hear that  
 Duncan has died.

**MACBETH**

Now I'm decided, and I will exert every muscle in  
 my body to commit this crime. Go now, and  
 pretend to be a friendly hostess. Hide with a false  
 pleasant face what you know in your false, evil  
 heart.

*They exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 1

*Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE, with a torch before  
 him*

**BANQUO**

How goes the night, boy?

**FLEANCE**

The moon is down. I have not heard the clock.

**BANQUO**

And she goes down at twelve.

**FLEANCE**

I take 't 'tis later, sir.

**BANQUO**

Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heaven;  
 5 Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.  
 A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,  
 And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,  
 Restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature  
 Gives way to in repose.

*Enter MACBETH and a SERVANT with a torch*

Give me my sword. Who's there?

**MACBETH**

10 A friend.

*BANQUO enters with FLEANCE, who lights the  
 way with a torch.*

**BANQUO**

How's the night going, boy?

**FLEANCE**

The moon has set. The clock hasn't struck yet.

**BANQUO**

The moon sets at twelve, right?

**FLEANCE**

I think it's later than that, sir.

**BANQUO**

Here, take my sword. The heavens are being  
 stingy with their light. Take this, too. I'm tired and  
 feeling heavy, but I can't sleep. Merciful powers,  
 keep away the nightmares that plague me when I  
 rest!

*MACBETH enters with a SERVANT, who carries  
 a torch.*

Give me my sword. Who's there?

**MACBETH**

A friend.

## Original Text

**BANQUO**

What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed.  
 He hath been in unusual pleasure, and  
 Sent forth great largess to your offices.  
 This diamond he greets your wife withal,  
 15 By the name of most kind hostess, and shut up  
 In measureless content.

**MACBETH**

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

## Modern Text

**BANQUO**

You're not asleep yet, sir? The king's in bed. He's  
 been in an unusually good mood and has granted  
 many gifts to your household and servants. This  
 diamond is a present from him to your wife for her  
 boundless hospitality. (*he hands MACBETH a*  
*diamond*)

**MACBETH**

Because we were unprepared for the king's visit,  
 we weren't able to entertain him as well as we  
 would have wanted to.

## Act 2, Scene 1, Page 2

**BANQUO**

All's well.  
 I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:  
 20 To you they have showed some truth.

**MACBETH**

I think not of them.  
 Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,  
 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,  
 25 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 counselled.

**MACBETH**

Good repose the while!

**BANQUO**

30 Thanks, sir: the like to you!

*Exeunt BANQUO and FLEANCE*

**MACBETH**

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

*Exit SERVANT*

Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
 The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch  
 35 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  
 A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
 40 Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain?  
 I see thee yet, in form as palpable

**BANQUO**

Everything's OK. I had a dream last night about  
 the three witches. At least part of what they said  
 about you was true.

**MACBETH**

I don't think about them now. But when we have  
 an hour to spare we can talk more about it, if  
 you're willing.

**BANQUO**

Whenever you like.

**MACBETH**

If you stick with me, when the time comes, there  
 will be something in it for you.

**BANQUO**

I'll do whatever you say, as long as I can do it  
 with a clear conscience.

**MACBETH**

Rest easy in the meantime.

**BANQUO**

Thank you, sir. You do the same.

*BANQUO and FLEANCE exit.*

**MACBETH**

(*to the SERVANT*) Go and tell your mistress to  
 strike the bell when my drink is ready. Get  
 yourself to bed.

*The SERVANT exits.*

Is this a dagger I see in front of me, with its  
 handle pointing toward my hand? (*to the*  
*dagger*) Come, let me hold you. (*he grabs at the*  
*air in front of him without touching anything*) I  
 don't have you but I can still see you. Fateful  
 apparition, isn't it possible to touch you as well as  
 see you? Or are you nothing more than a dagger  
 created by the mind, a hallucination from my  
 fevered brain? I can still see you, and you look as

## Original Text

As this which now I draw.  
 Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,  
 And such an instrument I was to use.  
 45 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.  
 It is the bloody business which informs  
 50 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 offerings, and withered murder,  
 Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,  
 55 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,  
 Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear  
 Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,  
 60 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.

## Modern Text

real as this other dagger that I'm pulling out now. (*he draws a dagger*) You're leading me toward the place I was going already, and I was planning to use a weapon just like you. My eyesight must either be the one sense that's not working, or else it's the only one that's working right. I can still see you, and I see blood splashes on your blade and handle that weren't there before. (*to himself*) There's no dagger here. It's the murder I'm about to do that's making me think I see one. Now half the world is asleep and being deceived by evil nightmares. Witches are offering sacrifices to their goddess Hecate. Old man murder, having been roused by the howls of his wolf, walks silently to his destination, moving like **Tarquin**, as quiet as a ghost. (*speaking to the ground*) Hard ground, don't listen to the direction of my steps. I don't want you to echo back where I am and break the terrible stillness of this moment, a silence that is so appropriate for what I'm about to do. While I stay here talking, Duncan lives. The more I talk, the more my courage cools.

## Act 2, Scene 1, Page 3

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

A bell rings.

I'm going now. The murder is as good as done.  
 The bell is telling me to do it. Don't listen to the bell, Duncan, because it summons you either to heaven or to hell.

**MACBETH** exits.

## Act 2, Scene 2

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! It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal  
 5 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,  
 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,  
 10 And 'tis not done. Th' attempt and not the deed  
 Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;

**LADY MACBETH** enters.**LADY MACBETH**

The alcohol that got the servants drunk has made me bold. The same liquor that quenched their thirst has fired me up. Listen! Quiet! That was the owl that shrieked, with a scary "good night" like the bells they ring before they execute people. Macbeth must be killing the king right now. The doors to Duncan's chamber are open, and the drunk servants make a mockery of their jobs by snoring instead of protecting the king. I put so many drugs in their drinks that you can't tell if they're alive or dead.

**MACBETH**

(*from offstage*) Who's there? What is it?

**LADY MACBETH**

Oh no, I'm afraid the servants woke up, and the murder didn't happen. For us to attempt murder and not succeed would ruin us. (*She hears a*

## Original Text

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**

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

**MACBETH**

When?

## Act 2, Scene 2, Page 2

**LADY MACBETH**

Now.

**MACBETH**

As I descended?

**LADY MACBETH**

Ay.

**MACBETH**

Hark! Who lies i' th' second chamber?

**LADY MACBETH**

Donalbain.

**MACBETH**

20 *(looking at his hands)* This is a sorry sight.

**LADY MACBETH**

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

**MACBETH**

There's one did laugh in 's sleep, and one cried.  
"Murder!"

25 That they did wake each other. I stood and heard  
them.

But they did say their prayers, and addressed them  
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,"  
When they did say "God bless us!"

**LADY MACBETH**

30 Consider it not so deeply.

**MACBETH**

But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?

## Modern Text

*noise.*) Listen to that! I put the servants' daggers  
where Macbeth would find them. He couldn't  
have missed them. If Duncan hadn't reminded me  
of my father when I saw him sleeping, I would  
have killed him myself.

*MACBETH enters carrying bloody daggers.*

My husband!

**MACBETH**

I have done the deed. Did you hear a noise?

**LADY MACBETH**

I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.  
Didn't you say something?

**MACBETH**

When?

**LADY MACBETH**

Just now.

**MACBETH**

As I came down?

**LADY MACBETH**

Yes.

**MACBETH**

Listen! Who's sleeping in the second chamber?

**LADY MACBETH**

Donalbain.

**MACBETH**

*(looking at his bloody hands)* This is a sorry sight.

**LADY MACBETH**

That's a stupid thing to say.

**MACBETH**

One of the servants laughed in his sleep, and one  
cried, "Murder!" and they woke each other up. I  
stood and listened to them, but then they said  
their prayers and went back to sleep.

**LADY MACBETH**

Malcolm and Donalbain are asleep in the same  
room.

**MACBETH**

One servant cried, "God bless us!" and the other  
replied, "Amen," as if they had seen my bloody  
hands. Listening to their frightened voices, I  
couldn't reply "Amen" when they said "God bless  
us!"

**LADY MACBETH**

Don't think about it so much.

**MACBETH**

But why couldn't I say "Amen"? I desperately

**Original Text**

I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"  
Stuck in my throat.

**LADY MACBETH**

These deeds must not be thought  
After these ways. So, it will make us mad.

**Modern Text**

needed God's blessing, but the word "Amen"  
stuck in my throat.

**LADY MACBETH**

We can't think that way about what we did. If we  
do, it'll drive us crazy.

**Act 2, Scene 2, Page 3****MACBETH**

35 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,  
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,  
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,  
40 Chief nourisher in life's feast.

**LADY MACBETH**

What do you mean?

**MACBETH**

Still it cried, "Sleep no more!" to all the house.  
"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,  
45 You do unbend your noble strength to think  
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  
50 The sleepy grooms with blood.

**MACBETH**

I'll go no more:  
I am afraid to think what I have done;  
Look on 't again I dare not.

**LADY MACBETH**

Infirm of purpose!  
Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead  
Are but as pictures. 'Tis the eye of childhood  
55 That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,  
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,  
For it must seem their guilt.

*Exit*

*Knock within*

**MACBETH**

I thought I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more!  
Macbeth is murdering sleep." Innocent sleep.  
Sleep that soothes away all our worries. Sleep  
that puts each day to rest. Sleep that relieves the  
weary laborer and heals hurt minds. Sleep, the  
main course in life's feast, and the most  
nourishing.

**LADY MACBETH**

What are you talking about?

**MACBETH**

The voice kept crying, "Sleep no more!" to  
everyone in the house. "Macbeth has murdered  
sleep, and therefore Macbeth will sleep no more."

**LADY MACBETH**

Who said that? Why, my worthy lord, you let  
yourself become weak when you think about  
things in this cowardly way. Go get some water  
and wash this bloody evidence from your hands.  
Why did you carry these daggers out of the  
room? They have to stay there. Go take them  
back and smear the sleeping guards with the  
blood.

**MACBETH**

I can't go back. I'm afraid even to think about  
what I've done. I can't stand to look at it again.

**LADY MACBETH**

Coward! Give me the daggers. Dead and  
sleeping people can't hurt you any more than  
pictures can. Only children are afraid of scary  
pictures. If Duncan bleeds I'll paint the servants'  
faces with his blood. We must make it seem like  
they're guilty.

**LADY MACBETH** *exits.*

*A sound of knocking from offstage.*

**Act 2, Scene 2, Page 4****MACBETH**

Whence is that knocking?  
How is 't with me when every noise appals me?  
What hands are here? Ha! They pluck out mine eyes.  
60 Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood  
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather

**MACBETH**

Where is that knocking coming from? What's  
happening to me, that I'm frightened of every  
noise? (*looking at his hands*) Whose hands are  
these? Ha! They're plucking out my eyes. Will all  
the water in the ocean wash this blood from my

## Original Text

The multitudinous seas incarnadine,  
Making the green one red.

*Enter LADY MACBETH*

**LADY MACBETH**

My hands are of your color, but I shame  
65 To wear a heart so white.

*Knock within*

I hear a knocking  
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 within*

70 Hark! More knocking.  
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 within*

75 Wake Duncan with thy knocking. I would thou  
couldst.

*Exeunt*

## Modern Text

hands? No, instead my hands will stain the seas  
scarlet, turning the green waters red.

*LADY MACBETH enters.*

**LADY MACBETH**

My hands are as red as yours, but I would be  
ashamed if my heart were as pale and weak.

*A sound of knocking from offstage.*

I hear someone knocking at the south entry. Let's  
go back to our bedroom. A little water will wash  
away the evidence of our guilt. It's so simple!  
You've lost your resolve.

*A sound of knocking from offstage.*

Listen! There's more knocking. Put on your  
nightgown, in case someone comes and sees  
that we're awake. Snap out of your daze.

**MACBETH**

Rather than have to think about my crime, I'd  
prefer to be completely unconscious.

*A sound of knocking from offstage.*

Wake Duncan with your knocking. I wish you  
could!

*They exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 3

*Enter a PORTER. Knocking within*

**PORTER**

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

*Knock within*

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

*Knock within*

Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' 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.

*Knock within*

5 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.

*A sound of knocking from offstage. A PORTER ,  
who is obviously drunk, enters.*

**PORTER**

This is a lot of knocking! Come to think of it, if a  
man were in charge of opening the gates of hell to  
let people in, he would have to turn the key a lot.

*A sound of knocking from offstage.*

Knock, knock, knock! (*pretending he's the  
gatekeeper in hell*) Who's there, in the devil's  
name? Maybe it's a farmer who killed himself  
because grain was cheap. (*talking to the  
imaginary farmer*) You're here just in time! I hope  
you brought some handkerchiefs; you're going to  
sweat a lot here.

*A sound of knocking from offstage.*

Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's  
name? Maybe it's some slick, two-faced con man  
who lied under oath. But he found out that you  
can't lie to God, and now he's going to hell for  
perjury. Come on in, con man.

*A sound of knocking from offstage.*

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Maybe it's an  
English tailor who liked to skimp on the fabric for  
people's clothes. But now that tight pants are in

## Original Text

## Modern Text

fashion he can't get away with it. Come on in, tailor. You can heat your iron up in here.

*Knock within*

*A sound of knocking from offstage.*

## Act 2, Scene 3, Page 2

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.

*Knock 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**

10 '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.

Knock, knock! Never a moment of peace! Who are you? Ah, this place is too cold to be hell. I won't pretend to be the devil's porter anymore. I was going to let someone from every profession into hell.

*A sound of knocking from offstage.*

I'm coming, I'm coming! Please, don't forget to leave me a tip.

*The PORTER opens the gate.*

*MACDUFF and LENNOX enter.*

**MACDUFF**

Did you go to bed so late, my friend, that you're having a hard time getting up now?

**PORTER**

That's right sir, we were drinking until 3 A.M., and drink, sir, makes a man do three things.

**MACDUFF**

What three things does drink make a man do?

**PORTER**

Drinking turns your nose red, it puts you to sleep, and it makes you urinate. Lust it turns on but also turns off. What I mean is, drinking stimulates desire but hinders performance. Therefore, too much drink is like a con artist when it comes to your sex drive. It sets you up for a fall. It gets you up but it keeps you from getting off. It persuades you and discourages you. It gives you an erection but doesn't let you keep it, if you see what I'm saying. It makes you dream about erotic experiences, but then it leaves you asleep and needing to pee.

**MACDUFF**

I believe drink did all of this to you last night.

## Act 2, Scene 3, Page 3

**PORTER**

That it did, sir, i' th' 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**

15 Is thy master stirring?

*Enter MACBETH*

Our knocking has awaked him. Here he comes.

**PORTER**

It did, sir. It got me right in the throat. But I got even with drink. I was too strong for it. Although it weakened my legs and made me unsteady, I managed to vomit it out and laid it flat on the ground.

**MACDUFF**

Is your master awake?

*MACBETH enters.*

Our knocking woke him up. Here he comes.

**Original Text****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.

20 I have almost slipped 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 labor we delight in physics pain.  
This is the door.

**MACDUFF**

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

*Exit MACDUFF*

**LENNOX**

Goes the king hence today?

**Modern Text****LENNOX**

Good morning, noble sir.

**MACBETH**

Good morning to both of you.

**MACDUFF**

Is the king awake, worthy thane?

**MACBETH**

Not yet.

**MACDUFF**

He commanded me to wake him up early. I've  
almost missed the time he requested.

**MACBETH**

I'll bring you to him.

**MACDUFF**

I know the burden of hosting him is both an honor  
and a trouble, but that doesn't mean it's not a  
trouble just the same.

**MACBETH**

The work we enjoy is not really work. This is the  
door.

**MACDUFF**

I'll wake him, because that's my job.

*MACDUFF exits.*

**LENNOX**

Is the king leaving here today?

**Act 2, Scene 3, Page 4****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,  
30 Lamentings heard i' th' air, strange screams of death,  
And prophesying with accents terrible  
Of dire combustion and confused events  
New hatched to the woeful time. The obscure bird  
Clamored the livelong night. Some say the Earth  
35 Was feverous and did shake.

**MACBETH**

'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 & LENNOX**

What's the matter?

**MACBETH**

He is. He told us to arrange it.

**LENNOX**

The night has been chaotic. The wind blew down  
through the chimneys where we were sleeping.  
People are saying they heard cries of grief in the  
air, strange screams of death, and terrible voices  
predicting catastrophes that will usher in a woeful  
new age. The owl made noise all night. Some  
people say that the earth shook as if it had a  
fever.

**MACBETH**

It was a rough night.

**LENNOX**

I'm too young to remember anything like it.

*MACDUFF enters, upset.*

**MACDUFF**

Oh, horror, horror, horror! This is beyond words  
and beyond belief!

**MACBETH & LENNOX**

What's the matter?



## Original Text

**MACDUFF**

40 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**

What is 't you say? "The life"?

**LENNOX**

Mean you his majesty?

## Modern Text

**MACDUFF**

The worst thing imaginable has happened. A murderer has broken into [God's temple](#) and stolen the life out of it.

**MACBETH**

What are you talking about? "The life"?

**LENNOX**

Do you mean the king?

## Act 2, Scene 3, Page 5

**MACDUFF**

45 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 alarm bell. Murder and treason!

50 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,  
55 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:  
60 The repetition, in a woman's ear,  
Would murder as it fell.

*Enter BANQUO*

O Banquo, Banquo,  
Our royal master's murdered!

**LADY MACBETH**

Woe, alas!  
What, in our house?

**MACDUFF**

Go into the bedroom and see for yourself. What's in there will make you freeze with horror. Don't ask me to talk about it. Go look and then do the talking yourselves.

*MACBETH and LENNOX exit.*

Wake up, wake up! Ring the alarm bell. Murder and treason! Banquo and Donalbain, Malcolm! Wake up! Shake off sleep, which looks like death, and look at death itself! Get up, get up, and look at this image of doomsday! Malcolm! Banquo! Get up from your beds as if you were rising out of your own graves, and walk like ghosts to come witness this horror. Ring the bell.

*A bell rings. LADY MACBETH enters.*

**LADY MACBETH**

What's going on? Why is that terrifying trumpet calling together everyone who's sleeping in the house? Speak up and tell me!

**MACDUFF**

Oh gentle lady, my news isn't fit for your ears. If I repeated it to you, it would kill you as soon as you heard it.

*BANQUO enters.*

Oh Banquo, Banquo, the king has been murdered!

**LADY MACBETH**

How horrible! What, in our own house?

## Act 2, Scene 3, Page 6

**BANQUO**

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

*Enter MACBETH, LENNOX, and ROSS*

**MACBETH**

Had I but died an hour before this chance,

**BANQUO**

It would be a terrible event no matter where it happened. Dear Macduff, I beg you, tell us you were lying and say it isn't so.

*MACBETH and LENNOX reenter, with ROSS.*

**MACBETH**

If I had only died an hour before this event I could

## Original Text

I had lived a blessed time, for from this instant  
 70 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**

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

**MACDUFF**

Your royal father's murdered.

**MALCOLM**

Oh, by whom?

**LENNOX**

Those of his chamber, as it seemed, had done 't.  
 80 Their hands and faces were all 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**

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

## Modern Text

say I had lived a blessed life. Because from this  
 moment on, there is nothing worth living for.  
 Everything is a sick joke. The graceful and  
 renowned king is dead. The wine of life has been  
 poured out, and only the dregs remain.

*MALCOLM and DONALBAIN enter.*

**DONALBAIN**

What's wrong?

**MACBETH**

You are, but you don't know it yet. The source  
 from which your royal blood comes has been  
 stopped.

**MACDUFF**

Your royal father is murdered.

**MALCOLM**

Who did it?

**LENNOX**

It seems that the guards who were supposed to  
 be protecting his chamber did it. Their hands and  
 faces were all covered with blood. So were their  
 daggers, which we found on their pillows,  
 unwiped. They stared at us in confusion. No  
 one's life should have been entrusted to them.

**MACBETH**

And yet I still regret the anger that drove me to kill  
 them.

## Act 2, Scene 3, Page 7

**MACDUFF**

Wherefore did you so?

**MACBETH**

Who can be wise, amazed, temp'rate, and furious,  
 Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man.  
 Th' expedition of my violent love  
 90 Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,  
 His silver skin laced with his golden blood,  
 And his gashed stabs looked like a breach in nature  
 For ruin's wasteful entrance; there, the murderers,  
 Steeped in the colors of their trade, their daggers  
 95 Unmannerly breeched 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  
 100 tongues,  
 That most may claim this argument for ours?

**MACDUFF**

What did you do that for?

**MACBETH**

Is it possible to be wise, bewildered, calm,  
 furious, loyal, and neutral all at once? Nobody  
 can do that. The violent rage inspired by my love  
 for Duncan caused me to act before I could think  
 rationally and tell myself to pause. There was  
 Duncan, his white skin all splattered with his  
 precious blood. The gashes where the knives  
 had cut him looked like wounds to nature itself.  
 Then right next to him I saw the murderers,  
 dripping with blood, their daggers rudely covered  
 in gore. Who could have restrained himself, who  
 loved Duncan and had the courage to act on it?

**LADY MACBETH**

Help me out of here, quickly!

**MACDUFF**

Take care of the lady.

**MALCOLM**

*(speaking so that only DONALBAIN can hear)* Why are we keeping quiet? The two of us  
 have the most to say in this matter.

## Original Text

**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 brewed.

**MALCOLM**

(*aside to DONALBAIN*) Nor our strong sorrow  
105 Upon the foot of motion.

**BANQUO**

Look to the lady.

*Exit LADY MACBETH, attended*

## Act 2, Scene 3, Page 8

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.  
110 In the great hand of God I stand, and thence  
Against the undivulged pretense I fight  
Of treasonous malice.

**MACDUFF**

And so do I.

**ALL**

So all.

**MACBETH**

Let's briefly put on manly readiness,  
115 And meet it 'th' 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  
120 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  
125 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.

## Modern Text

**DONALBAIN**

(*speaking so that only MALCOLM can hear*) What  
are we going to say here, where danger may be  
waiting to strike at us from anywhere? Let's get  
out of here. We haven't even begun to weep  
yet—but there will be time for that later.

**MALCOLM**

(*speaking so that only DONALBAIN can  
hear*) And the time hasn't come yet for us to turn  
our deep grief into action.

**BANQUO**

Take care of the lady.

*LADY MACBETH is carried out.*

When we're properly dressed for the cold, let's  
meet and discuss this bloody crime to see if we  
can figure anything out. Right now we're shaken  
up by fears and doubts. I'm putting myself in  
God's hands, and with his help I plan to fight  
against the secret plot that caused this  
treasonous murder.

**MACDUFF**

So will I.

**ALL**

So will we all.

**MACBETH**

Let's get dressed quickly and then meet in the  
hall.

**ALL**

Agreed.

*Everyone exits  
except MALCOLM and DONALBAIN.*

**MALCOLM**

What are you going to do? Let's not stay here  
with them. It's easy for a liar to pretend to feel  
sorrow when he actually feels none. I'm going to  
England.

**DONALBAIN**

I'll go to Ireland. We'll both be safer if we go  
separate ways. Wherever we go, men will smile  
at us while hiding daggers. Our closest relatives  
are the ones most likely to murder us.

**MALCOLM**

We haven't yet encountered that danger, and the  
best thing to do is avoid it entirely. With that in  
mind, let's get on our horses. We'd better not  
worry about saying polite good-byes; we should  
just get away quickly. There's good reason to  
escape when there's no mercy to be found  
anymore.

## Original Text

## Modern Text

*Exeunt**They exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 4

*Enter ROSS with an OLD MAN**ROSS and an OLD MAN enter.***OLD MAN**

Threescore and ten I can remember well,  
 Within the volume of which time I have seen  
 Hours dreadful and things strange, but this sore night  
 Hath trifled former knowings.

**ROSS**

Ha, good father,  
 5 Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act,  
 Threatens his bloody stage. By th' clock 'tis day,  
 And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.  
 Is 't night's predominance or the day's shame  
 That darkness does the face of Earth entomb  
 10 When living light should kiss it?

**OLD MAN**

'Tis unnatural,  
 Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,  
 A falcon, tow'ring in her pride of place,  
 Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.

**ROSS**

And Duncan's horses—a thing most strange and  
 15 certain—  
 Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,  
 Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,  
 Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would  
 Make war with mankind.

**OLD MAN**

'Tis said they eat each other.

**ROSS**

They did so, to th' amazement of mine eyes  
 20 That looked upon 't. Here comes the good Macduff.

*Enter MACDUFF***OLD MAN**

I can remember the past seventy years pretty  
 well, and in all that time I have seen dreadful  
 hours and strange things. But last night's horrors  
 make everything that came before seem like a  
 joke.

**ROSS**

Ah yes, old man. You can see the skies. They  
 look like they're upset about what mankind has  
 been doing, and they're threatening the Earth  
 with storms. The clock says it's daytime, but dark  
 night is strangling the sun. Is it because night is  
 so strong, or because day is so weak, that  
 darkness covers the earth when it's supposed to  
 be light?

**OLD MAN**

It's unnatural, just like the murder that has been  
 committed. Last Tuesday a falcon was circling  
 high in the sky, and it was caught and killed by an  
 ordinary owl that usually goes after mice.

**ROSS**

And something else strange happened. Duncan's  
 horses, which are beautiful and swift and the best  
 of their breed, suddenly turned wild and broke out  
 of their stalls. Refusing to be obedient as usual,  
 they acted like they were at war with mankind.

**OLD MAN**

They say the horses ate each other.

**ROSS**

I saw it with my own eyes. It was an amazing  
 sight. Here comes the good Macduff.

*MACDUFF enters.*

## Act 2, Scene 4, Page 2

How goes the world, sir, now?

**MACDUFF**

Why, see you not?

**ROSS**

Is 't known who did this more than bloody deed?

**MACDUFF**

Those that Macbeth hath slain.

**ROSS**

Alas, the day!  
 What good could they pretend?

How are things going now?

**MACDUFF**

Can't you see for yourself?

**ROSS**

Does anyone know who committed this horrible  
 crime?

**MACDUFF**

The servants Macbeth killed.

**ROSS**

It's too bad he killed them. What good would it  
 have done those men to kill Duncan?

**Original Text****MACDUFF**

They were suborned.

- 25 Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,  
Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon them  
Suspicion of the deed.

**ROSS**

'Gainst nature still!

Thriftless ambition, that will raven up

- 30 Thine own lives' means! Then 'tis most like  
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

**MACDUFF**

He is already named and gone to Scone  
To be invested.

**ROSS**

Where is Duncan's body?

**MACDUFF**

- 35 Carried to Colmekill,  
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,  
And guardian of their bones.

**ROSS**

Will you to Scone?

**MACDUFF**

No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

**ROSS**

Well, I will thither.

**Modern Text****MACDUFF**

They were paid to betray their master. Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons, have run away and fled, which makes them the prime suspects.

**ROSS**

Everything about this is unnatural! What a stupid ambition, causing a son to kill the father who supports him. Then it looks like Macbeth will become king.

**MACDUFF**

He has already been named king and has left for Scone to be crowned.

**ROSS**

Where is Duncan's body?

**MACDUFF**

It was carried to Colmekill to be placed in the tomb of his ancestors, where their bones are kept safe.

**ROSS**

Are you going to Scone?

**MACDUFF**

No, cousin, I'm going to Fife.

**ROSS**

Well, I'll go to Scone.

**Act 2, Scene 4, Page 3****MACDUFF**

- 40 Well, may you see things well done there. Adieu,  
Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

**ROSS**

Farewell, father.

**OLD MAN**

God's benison go with you and with those  
That would make good of bad and friends of foes.

*Exeunt*

**MACDUFF**

I hope things go well there. Good-bye! And let's hope things don't get worse.

**ROSS**

Farewell, old man.

**OLD MAN**

May God's blessing go with you and with all who turn bad into good, and enemies into friends!

*They all exit.*

**Act 3, Scene 1**

*Enter BANQUO*

**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.

*BANQUO enters.*

**BANQUO**

Now you have it all: you're the king, the thane of Cawdor, and the thane of Glamis, just like the weird women promised you. And I suspect you cheated to win these titles. But it was also prophesied that the crown would not go to your descendants, and that my sons and grandsons would be kings instead. If the witches tell the truth—which they did about you—maybe what they said about me will come true too. But shhh! I'll shut up now.