

## Act 1, Scene 5 Inverness - Macbeth's castle

*(LADY MACBETH, reading a letter.)*

LADY MACBETH

'They met me in the day of success; and I have learned they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives\* from the King, who all hailed me Thane of Cawdor, by which title these weird sisters saluted me before, and referred me to the coming on of time,\* with 'Hail, King that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. 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 of the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great, art not without ambition, but without the illness\* should attend it. Hie thee hither, that I may pour my spirits in thine ear and chastise with the valor of my tongue all that impedes thee from the golden round.\*

*(Enter a MESSENGER.)*

What is your tidings?

MESSENGER

The King comes here to-night.

LADY MACBETH

Thou art mad to say it!

Is not thy master with him, who, were it so, would have informed for preparation?

MESSENGER

So please you, it is true. Our Thane is coming.

One of my fellows had the speed of him, who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more than would make up his message.

LADY MACBETH

Give him tending; he brings great news.

*(Exit MESSENGER)*

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.

*missives* - messengers, *coming on of time* - future,

*illness* - ruthlessness, *golden round* - crown, *mortal* - deadly,

*take my milk for gall* - exchange my breast milk with gall (green fluid secreted by the liver)

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!

MACBETH  
My dearest love. Duncan comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH  
And when goes hence?

MACBETH  
Tomorrow, as he purposes.

LADY MACBETH  
O, never shall sun that morrow see.  
Your face, my Thane, is as a book where men may read strange matters.  
Bear welcome in your eye, your hand, your tongue; look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it.  
He that's coming must be provided for; and you shall put this night's great business into my dispatch.

MACBETH  
We will speak further.

LADY MACBETH  
Only look up clear. To alter favor\* ever is to fear.\*  
Leave all the rest to me.

*(Exeunt.)*

*pall thee* - shroud thyself, *alter favor* - change countenance, *fear* - incur risk

## Act 4, Scene 3 England

(MALCOLM and MACDUFF.)

MALCOLM

Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there weep our sad bosoms empty.

MACDUFF

Let us rather hold fast the mortal sword and, like good men, bestride our down-fallen birthdom. Each new morn new widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows strike heaven on the face, that it resounds as if it felt with Scotland.

MALCOLM

This tyrant, whose name blisters our tongues, was once thought honest; you have loved him well; he hath not touched you yet.

MACDUFF

I am not treacherous.

MALCOLM

But Macbeth is.

Why in that rawness left you wife and child, those strong knots of love, without leave taking?

I pray you, let not my suspicions be your dishonors, but mine own safeties.

You may be rightly just whatever I shall think.

MACDUFF

Lord, I would not be the villain that thou think'st for the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp, and the rich East to boot.

MALCOLM

Be not offended. I speak not as in absolute fear of you.

I think our country sinks beneath the yoke, it weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash is added to her wounds.

I think withal there would be hands uplifted in my right;

and here from gracious England have I offer of goodly thousands.

But, for all this, when I shall tread upon the tyrant's head or wear it on my sword,

my poor country shall have more vices than it had before,

more suffer and more sundry ways than ever, by him that shall succeed.

MACDUFF

What should he be?

MALCOLM

It is myself I mean, in whom I know all the particulars\* of vice so grafted\*

that, when they shall be opened, black Macbeth will seem as pure as snow.

MACDUFF

Not in the legions of horrid hell can come a devil more damned in evils to top Macbeth.

*particulars* - varieties, *grafted* - implanted

MALCOLM

I grant him bloody, luxurious, avaricious,\* false, deceitful, sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin that has a name. But there's no bottom, none, in my voluptuousness. Your wives, your daughters, your matrons and your maids, could not fill up the cistern\* of my lust. Better Macbeth than such a one to reign.

MACDUFF

Boundless intemperance\* in nature is a tyranny. It hath been the untimely emptying of the happy throne and fall of many kings. But fear not yet to take upon you what is yours. You may convey\* your pleasures in a spacious plenty, and yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink. We have willing dames enough. There cannot be that vulture in you, to devour so many as will to greatness dedicate themselves.

MALCOLM

With this there grows in my most ill-composed affection such a stanchless avarice\* that, were I king, I should cut off the nobles for their lands, desire his jewels, and this other's house, and my more having would be as a sauce to make me hunger more.

MACDUFF

This avarice sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root than summer-seeming lust. Yet do not fear. Scotland hath riches to fill up your will of your mere own. All these are bearable, with other graces weighed.

MALCOLM

But I have none, as justice, perseverance, mercy, devotion, patience, courage, fortitude, I have no relish of them, but abound in each several\* crime, acting it many ways. Had I power, I should pour the sweet milk of concord into hell, confound all unity on earth.

MACDUFF

O Scotland, Scotland!

MALCOLM

If such a one be fit to govern, speak. I am as I have spoken.

MACDUFF

Fit to govern? No, not to live! Thy royal father was a most sainted King; the Queen that bore thee, oftener upon her knees\* than on her feet. Fare thee well. These evils thou repeatest upon thyself have banished me from Scotland. O my breast, thy hope ends here.

MALCOLM

Macduff, this noble passion, child of integrity, hath from my soul wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts to thy good truth and honor.

*avaricious* - greedy, *cistern* - large tank for storing water, *intemperance* - overindulgence, in this case with sex, *convey* - obtain by stealth, *stanchless avarice* - greed that is impossible to control, *several* - particular, *her knees* - i.e. praying

Devilish Macbeth by many of these trains\* hath sought to win me into his power,  
 and modest wisdom plucks me from over credulous haste.  
 But God above deal between thee and me!  
 For even now I unspeak mine own detraction,  
 here abjure the taints and blames I laid upon myself, for strangers to my nature.  
 I am yet unknown to woman, never was forsworn, scarcely have coveted\* what was mine own,  
 at no time broke my faith, and delight no less in truth than life.  
 My first false speaking was this upon myself.  
 What I am truly, is thine and my poor country's to command;  
 which before thy approach, with ten thousand warlike men, was setting forth.  
 Why are you silent?

MACDUFF

Such welcome and unwelcome things at once, is hard to reconcile.

*(Enter ROSS.)*

MACDUFF

See who comes here?

MALCOLM

My countryman; but yet I know him not.

MACDUFF

My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.

MALCOLM

I know him now.

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.  
 The dead man's knell is there scarce asked for who,  
 and good men's lives expire before the flowers in their caps.

MACDUFF

O, too true.

How does my wife?

ROSS

Why, well.

*trains* - plots, *coveted* - desired ownership of

MACDUFF  
And all my children?

ROSS  
Well too.

MACDUFF  
The tyrant has not battered at their peace?

ROSS  
No, they were well at peace when I did leave them.

MACDUFF  
Be not niggard of your speech. How goes it?

ROSS  
When I came hither to transport the tidings, there ran a rumor of many worthy fellows that were out.\*  
Now is the time of help. Your eye in Scotland would create soldiers, make our women fight.

MALCOLM  
Be it their comfort we are coming thither.  
Gracious England 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, where hearing should not latch\* them.

MACDUFF  
What concern they? The general cause or is it a grief due to some single breast?

ROSS  
No mind that's honest but in it shares some woe, though the main part pertains to you alone.

MACDUFF  
If it be mine, keep it not from me; quickly let me have it.

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.

*out* - up in arms, *latch* - catch hold of

MACDUFF

And I must be from thence? My wife killed too?

ROSS

I have said.

MALCOLM

Be comforted.

Let's make us medicines of our great revenge to cure this deadly grief.

MACDUFF

He\* has no children. All my pretty ones? Did you say all? O hell kite! All?  
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam\* at one fell swoop?

MALCOLM

Dispute it like a man.

MACDUFF

I shall do so; but I must also feel it as a man.  
I cannot but remember such things were, that were most precious to me.  
Did heaven look on, and would not take their part?  
Sinful Macduff, they were all struck for thee.  
Heaven rest them now.

MALCOLM

Be this the whetstone\* of your sword. Let grief convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

MACDUFF

O, I could play the woman with mine eyes and braggart with my tongue.  
But, gentle heavens, front to front bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself.  
Within my sword's length set him. If he escape, heaven forgive him too.

MALCOLM

This tune goes manly.  
Come, go we to the King. Our power is ready; our lack is nothing but our leave.  
Macbeth is ripe for shaking, and the powers above put on their instruments.\*

*(Exeunt.)*

*He* - Macbeth, *dam* - mother, *whetstone* - sharpening stone,  
*put on their instruments* - arm themselves; urge us to act

## Act 5, Scene 1    Dunsinane - a room in the castle

*(A DOCTOR and a WAITING GENTLEWOMAN.)\**

DOCTOR

When was it she last walked?

GENTLEWOMAN

Since his majesty went into the field I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon it, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

DOCTOR

What, at any time, have you heard her say?

GENTLEWOMAN

That, sir, which I will not report after her.

DOCTOR

You may to me, and 'tis most meet\* you should.

GENTLEWOMAN

Neither to you nor any one, having no witness to confirm my speech.

*(Enter LADY MACBETH, with a candle.)*

Lo you, here she comes. This is her very guise,\* and, upon my life, fast asleep.

DOCTOR

How came she by that light?

GENTLEWOMAN

Why, it stood by her. She has light by her continually. 'Tis her command.

DOCTOR

You see her eyes are open.

GENTLEWOMAN

Ay, but their sense is shut.

DOCTOR

What is it she does now? Look how she rubs her hands.

GENTLEWOMAN

It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands. I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

**WAITING GENTLEWOMAN** - likely a noblewoman and not just a servant, **meet** - fitting, **guise** - habit

LADY MACBETH

Yet here's a spot.

DOCTOR

She speaks.

LADY MACBETH

Out, damned spot! Out, I say! One—two—why, then, 'tis time to do it. Hell is murky!

Fie, my lord, fie, a soldier and afeard?

What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?

Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

DOCTOR

Do you mark that?

LADY MACBETH

The Thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now?

What, will these hands never be clean?

No more of that, my lord, no more of that! You mar all with this starting.

DOCTOR

You have known what you should not.

GENTLEWOMAN

She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that.

LADY MACBETH

Here's the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.

Oh, oh, oh!

DOCTOR

What a sigh is there. The heart is sorely charged.

GENTLEWOMAN

I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

DOCTOR

Well, well, well.

GENTLEWOMAN

Pray God it be, sir.

DOCTOR

This disease is beyond my practice.

LADY MACBETH

Wash your hands, put on your nightgown, look not so pale.

I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried. He cannot come out on his grave.

DOCTOR

Even so?

LADY MACBETH

To bed, to bed!

There's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand.

What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed.

*(Exit LADY MACBETH.)*

DOCTOR

Will she go now to bed?

GENTLEWOMAN

Directly.

DOCTOR

More needs she the divine than the physician.

God, God forgive us all!

Look after her; remove from her the means of all annoyance, and still keep eyes upon her.

So, good night.

GENTLEWOMAN

Good night, good doctor.

*(Exeunt.)*