

Macbeth

2.3

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 th'expectation of plenty. Come in time! Have napkins enough about you; here you'll sweat for't. 5

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 10 heaven. O, come in, equivocator.

Knock 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.

Knock within

Knock, knock. Never at quiet. What are you?±±But this 15 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 th'everlasting bonfire.

Knock within

Anon, anon!

He opens the gate

I pray you remember the porter. 20

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 25 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 30
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. 35

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. 40

MACDUFF Is thy master stirring?

Enter Macbeth

Our knocking has awaked him: here he comes.

[Exit Porter]

LENNOX *(to Macbeth)*

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. 45

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 labour we delight in physics pain.

This is the door.

MACDUFF

I'll make so bold to call,

50

For 'tis my limited service.

Exit Macduff

LENNOX

Goes the King hence today?

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'th' air, strange screams of death, 55
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confused events
New-hatched to th' woeful time. The obscure bird
Clamoured the livelong night. Some say the earth
Was feverous and did shake.

MACBETH 'Twas a rough night. 60

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 AND LENNOX What's the matter?

MACDUFF

Confusion now hath made his masterpiece. 65
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? 70

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! 75
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.

Bell rings. Enter Lady Macbeth

LADY MACBETH What's the business, 80

That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? Speak, speak.

MACDUFF

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 gentle

O Banquo, Banquo,

85

Our royal master's murdered!

LADY MACBETH

Woe, alas±±

What, in our house?

BANQUO

Too cruel anywhere.

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
I had lived a blesseÁd 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.

90

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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 stopped, the very source of it is stopped.

MACDUFF

Your royal father's murdered.

MALCOLM

O, by whom?

100

LENNOX

Those of his chamber, as it seemed, had done't.
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.

105

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, temp'rate and furious,
Loyal and neutral in a moment? No man.
Th'expedition of my violent love 110
Outran 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 colours of their trade, their daggers 115
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 tongues,
That most may claim this argument for ours? 120

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
Upon the foot of motion.

BANQUO

Look to the lady;

Exit Lady Macbeth, attended

And when we have our naked frailties hid, 125
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 130
Of treasonous malice.

MACDUFF

And so do I.

ALL

So all.

MACBETH

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

135

DONALBAIN

To Ireland, I. Our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer. Where we are
There's daggers in men's smiles. The nea'er in blood,
The nearer bloody.

MALCOLM This murderous shaft that's shot 140

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.

145

Exeunt