

Macbeth

5.5

Enter Macbeth, Seyton, and soldiers, with a drummer and colours

MACBETH

Hang out our banners on the outward walls.
The cry is still 'They come.' Our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn. Here let them lie
Till famine and the ague eat them up.
Were they not forced with those that should be ours 5
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home.
A cry within of women

What is that

noise?

SEYTON

It is the cry of women, my good lord.
[Exit]

MACBETH

I have almost forgot the taste of fears.
The time has been my senses would have cooled 10
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
As life were in't. I have supped full with horrors.
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.
[Enter Seyton]

Wherefore was that cry?

15

SEYTON

The Queen, my lord, is dead.

MACBETH

She should have died hereafter.

There would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time, 20
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle.

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale 25
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Enter a Messenger

Thou com'st to use

Thy tongue: thy story quickly.

MESSENGER

Gracious my lord,

I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do't.

MACBETH

Well, say, sir. 30

MESSENGER

As I did stand my watch upon the hill
I looked toward Birnam, and anon methought
The wood began to move.

MACBETH

Liar and slave!

MESSENGER

Let me endure your wrath if't be not so.
Within this three mile may you see it coming. 35
I say, a moving grove.

MACBETH

If thou speak'st false

Upon the next tree shall thou hang alive
Till famine cling thee. If thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pall in resolution, and begin 40

To doubt th'equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth. `Fear not till Birnam Wood
Do come to Dunsinane'±±and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out.
If this which he avouches does appear 45
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.

I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,
And wish th'estate o'th' world were now undone.
Ring the alarum bell. *[Alarums]* Blow wind, come wrack,
At least we'll die with harness on our back. 50

Exeunt