

Macbeth

4.3

Enter 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 downfall 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 and yelled out
Like syllable of dolour.

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MALCOLM

What I believe I'll wail,
What know believe; and what I can redress,
As I shall find the time to friend, I will.
What you have spoke it may be so, perchance.
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,
Was once thought honest. You have loved him well.
He hath not touched you yet. I am young, but
something
You may discern of him through me: and wisdom
To offer up a weak poor innocent lamb
T'appease an angry god.

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MACDUFF I am not treacherous.

MALCOLM But Macbeth is.

A good and virtuous nature may recoil
In an imperial charge. But I shall crave your pardon.
That which you are my thoughts cannot transpose.
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell.
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
Yet grace must still look so.

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MACDUFF

I have lost my hopes. 25

MALCOLM

Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.
Why in that rawness left you wife and child,
Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,
Without leave-taking? I pray you,

Let not my jealousies be your dishonours, 30
But mine own safeties. You may be rightly just,
Whatever I shall think.

MACDUFF Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee. Wear thou thy
 wrongs;
The title is affeered. Fare thee well, lord. 35
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, yet 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? 50

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, and the poor state
Esteem him as a lamb, being compared
With my confineless harms.

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

MALCOLM I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin 60
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, and my desire
All continent impediments would o'erbear 65
That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth
Than such an one to reign.

MACDUFF Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny. It hath been
Th'untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet 70
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 75
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
Finding it so inclined.

MALCOLM With this there grows
In my most ill-composed affection such
A staunchless avarice that were I king
I should cut off the nobles for their lands, 80
Desire his jewels and this other's house,
And my more having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more, that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.

MACDUFF This avarice 85
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings. Yet do not fear.
Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will
Of your mere own. All these are portable, 90
With other graces weighed.

MALCOLM
But I have none. The king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temp'rance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude, 95
I have no relish of them, but abound
In the division of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power I should

Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth. 100

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. O nation miserable,
With an untitled tyrant bloody-sceptered, 105
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accursed
And does blaspheme his breed? Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king. The Queen that bore thee, 110
Oft'ner upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she lived. Fare thee well.
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Hath banished me from Scotland. O, my breast±±
Thy hope ends here!

MALCOLM Macduff, this noble passion, 115

Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me 120
From over-credulous haste; but God above
Deal between thee and me, for even now
I put myself to thy direction and
Unspeak mine own detraction, here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself 125
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, would not betray
The devil to his fellow, and delight 130
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,
Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,

Old Siward with ten thousand warlike men, 135
Already at a point, was setting forth.
Now we'll together; and the chance of goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel!±±Why are you silent?

MACDUFF

Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
'Tis hard to reconcile. 140
Enter a Doctor

MALCOLM

Well, more anon. *(To the Doctor)* Comes the King
forth, I pray you?

DOCTOR

Ay, sir. There are a crew of wretched souls
That stay his cure. Their malady convinces
The great essay of art, but at his touch,
Such sanctity hath Heaven given his hand, 145
They presently amend.

MALCOLM I thank you, doctor.
Exit Doctor

MACDUFF

What's the disease he means?

MALCOLM 'Tis called the evil±±

A most miraculous work in this good King,
Which often since my here-remain in England
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven 150
Himself best knows, but strangely visited people,
All swell'n and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers; and 'tis spoken, 155
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne
That speak him full of grace.

Enter Ross

MACDUFF See who comes here. 160

MALCOLM

My countryman, but yet I know him not.

MACDUFF

My ever gentle cousin, welcome hither.

MALCOLM

I know him now. Good God betimes remove
The means that makes us strangers!

ROSS

Sir, amen.

MACDUFF

Stands Scotland where it did?

ROSS

Alas, poor country, 165

Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot
Be called our mother, but our grave, where nothing
But who knows nothing is once seen to smile;
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air
Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems 170
A modern ecstasy. The dead man's knell
Is there scarce asked for who, and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or ere they sicken.

MACDUFF

O relation

Too nice and yet too true!

MALCOLM

What's the newest grief? 175

ROSS

That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;
Each minute teems a new one.

MACDUFF

How does my wife?

ROSS

Why, well.

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 'em. 180

MACDUFF

Be not a niggard of your speech. How goes't?

ROSS

When I came hither to transport the tidings
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
Of many worthy fellows that were out,
Which was to my belief witnessed the rather 185
For that I saw the tyrant's power afoot.
Now is the time of help. (*To Malcolm*) Your eye in
Scotland

Would create soldiers, make our women fight
To doff their dire distresses.

MALCOLM Be't their comfort
We are coming thither. Gracious England hath 190
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men;
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.

ROSS Would I could answer
This comfort with the like. But I have words
That would be howled out in the desert air 195
Where hearing should not latch them.

MACDUFF What concern
they±±
The general cause, or is it a fee-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, 200
Keep it not from me; quickly let me have it.

ROSS
Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
That ever yet they heard.

MACDUFF H'm, I guess at it.

ROSS
Your castle is surprised, your wife and babes 205
Savagely slaughtered. To relate the manner
Were on the quarry of these murdered deer
To add the death of you.

MALCOLM Merciful heaven!
(To Macduff) What, man, ne'er pull your hat upon
your brows.
Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak 210
Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break.

MACDUFF
My children too?

ROSS Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.

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 215
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? 220

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 225
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee. Naught that I am,
Not for their own demerits but for mine
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now.

MALCOLM

Be this the whetstone of your sword. Let grief 230
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
Cut short all intermission. Front to front
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself. 235
Within my sword's length set him. If he scape,
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 240
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may:
The night is long that never finds the day.

Exeunt