

Macbeth

3.4

Banquet prepared. Enter Macbeth as King, Lady Macbeth as Queen, Ross, Lennox, Lords, and attendants. [Lady Macbeth sits]

MACBETH

You know your own degrees; sit down. At first and last
The hearty welcome.

LORDS

Thanks to your majesty.

They sit

MACBETH

Ourself will mingle with society
And play the humble host. Our hostess keeps her
state,
But in best time we will require her welcome. 5

LADY MACBETH

Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends,
For my heart speaks they are welcome.
Enter First Murderer [to the door]

MACBETH

See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.
Both sides are even. Here I'll sit, i'th' midst.
Be large in mirth. Anon we'll drink a measure 10
The table round. *(To First Murderer)* There's blood
upon thy face.

FIRST MURDERER *(aside to Macbeth)* 'Tis Banquo's, then.

MACBETH

'Tis better thee without than he within.
Is he dispatched?

FIRST MURDERER

My lord, his throat is cut. That I did for him. 15

MACBETH

Thou art the best o'th' cut-throats. Yet he's good
That did the like for Fleance. If thou didst it,
Thou art the nonpareil.

FIRST MURDERER

Most royal sir,
Fleance is scaped.

MACBETH

Then comes my fit again; I had else been perfect, 20

Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad and general as the casing air,
But now I am cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears. But Banquo's safe?

FIRST MURDERER

Ay, my good lord. Safe in a ditch he bides, 25
With twenty trencher-Ad gashes on his head,
The least a death to nature.

MACBETH

Thanks for that.

There the grown serpent lies. The worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for th' present. Get thee gone. Tomorrow 30
We'll hear ourselves again.

Exit First Murderer

LADY MACBETH

My royal lord,

You do not give the cheer. The feast is sold
That is not often vouched, while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome. To feed were best at home.
From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony, 35
Meeting were bare without it.

Enter the Ghost of Banquo, and sits in Macbeth's place

MACBETH

Sweet remembrancer.

Now good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both.

LENNOX

May't please your highness sit?

MACBETH

Here had we now our country's honour roofed
Were the graced person of our Banquo present, 40
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance.

ROSS

His absence, sir,

Lays blame upon his promise. Please't your highness
To grace us with your royal company?

MACBETH

The table's full.

LENNOX

Here is a place reserved, sir. 45

MACBETH

Where?

LENNOX

Here, my good lord. What is't that moves your

highness?

MACBETH

Which of you have done this?

LORDS

What, my good lord?

MACBETH *(to the Ghost)*

Thou canst not say I did it. Never shake

Thy gory locks at me.

50

ROSS *(rising)*

Gentlemen, rise. His highness is not well.

LADY MACBETH *(rising)*

Sit, worthy friends. My lord is often thus,

And hath been from his youth. Pray you, keep seat.

The fit is momentary. Upon a thought

He will again be well. If much you note him

55

You shall offend him, and extend his passion.

Feed, and regard him not.

She speaks apart with Macbeth

Are you a man?

MACBETH

Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that

Which might appal the devil.

LADY MACBETH

O proper stuff!

This is the very painting of your fear;

60

This is the air-drawn dagger which you said

Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,

Impostors to true fear, would well become

A woman's story at a winter's fire

Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself,

65

Why do you make such faces? When all's done

You look but on a stool.

MACBETH

Prithee see there. Behold, look, lo±±how say you?

Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak, too!

If charnel-houses and our graves must send

70

Those that we bury back, our monuments

Shall be the maws of kites.

Exit Ghost

LADY MACBETH

What, quite unmanned in folly?

MACBETH

If I stand here, I saw him.

LADY MACBETH

Fie, for shame!

MACBETH

Blood hath been shed ere now, i'th' olden time,
Ere human statute purged the gentle weal; 75
Ay, and since, too, murders have been performed
Too terrible for the ear. The time has been
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end. But now they rise again
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns, 80
And push us from our stools. This is more strange
Than such a murder is.

LADY MACBETH (*aloud*) My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.

MACBETH I do forget.

Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends.
I have a strange infirmity which is nothing 85
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all,
Then I'll sit down.
(*To an attendant*) Give me some wine. Fill full.

Enter Ghost

I drink to th' general joy of th' whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss.
Would he were here. To all and him we thirst, 90
And all to all.

LORDS Our duties, and the pledge.

They drink

MACBETH (*seeing the Ghost*)

Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee.
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold.
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with.

LADY MACBETH Think of this, good peers, 95
But as a thing of custom. 'Tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

MACBETH What man dare, I dare.

Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The armed rhinoceros, or th' Hyrcan tiger; 100
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble. Or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword.

If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow, 105
Unreal mock'ry, hence!

Exit Ghost

Why so, being gone,

I am a man again. Pray you sit still.

LADY MACBETH

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting
With most admired disorder.

MACBETH

Can such things be
And overcome us like a summer's cloud, 110
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks
When mine is blanched with fear.

ROSS

What sights, my lord?

115

LADY MACBETH

I pray you, speak not. He grows worse and worse.
Question enrages him. At once, good night.
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

LENNOX Good night, and better health
Attend his majesty.

LADY MACBETH A kind good-night to all. 120

Exeunt Lords

MACBETH

It will have blood, they say. Blood will have blood.
Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak,
Augurs and understood relations have
By maggot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood. What is the night? 125

LADY MACBETH

Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

MACBETH

How sayst thou that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?

LADY MACBETH Did you send to him, sir?

MACBETH

I hear it by the way, but I will send.

There's not a one of them but in his house 130
I keep a servant fee'd. I will tomorrow,
And betimes I will, to the weird sisters.
More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know
By the worst means the worst. For mine own good
All causes shall give way. I am in blood 135
Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
Which must be acted ere they may be scanned.

LADY MACBETH

You lack the season of all natures, sleep. 140

MACBETH

Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use.
We are yet but young in deed.

Exeunt