

Macbeth

3.1

Enter Banquo

BANQUO

Thou hast it now: King, Cawdor, Glamis, all
As the weird women promised; and I fear
Thou played'st most foully for't. Yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
But that myself should be the root and father 5
Of many kings. If there come truth from them±±
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine±±
Why by the verities on thee made good
May they not be my oracles as well,
And set me up in hope? But hush, no more. 10

*Sennet sounded. Enter Macbeth as King, Lady Macbeth
as Queen, Lennox, Ross, lords, and attendants*

MACBETH

Here's our chief guest.

LADY MACBETH

If he had been forgotten
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all thing unbecoming.

MACBETH *(to Banquo)*

Tonight we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.

BANQUO

Let your highness 15

Command upon me, to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit.

MACBETH Ride you this afternoon?

BANQUO

Ay, my good lord. 20

MACBETH

We should have else desired your good advice,
Which still hath been both grave and prosperous,
In this day's council; but we'll talk tomorrow.
Is't far you ride?

BANQUO

As far, my lord, as will fill up the time 25
'Twixt this and supper. Go not my horse the better,

I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain.

MACBETH Fail not our feast.

BANQUO My lord, I will not. 30

MACBETH

We hear our bloody cousins are bestowed
In England and in Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention. But of that tomorrow,
When therewithal we shall have cause of state 35
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse. Adieu,
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

BANQUO

Ay, my good lord. Our time does call upon 's.

MACBETH

I wish your horses swift and sure of foot,
And so I do commend you to their backs. 40
Farewell.

Exit Banquo

Let every man be master of his time
Till seven at night. To make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper-time alone. While then, God be with you. 45

Exeunt all but Macbeth and a Servant

Sirrah, a word with you. Attend those men
Our pleasure?

SERVANT

They are, my lord, without the palace gate.

MACBETH

Bring them before us.

Exit Servant

To be thus is nothing

But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo 50
Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be feared. 'Tis much he dares,
And to that dauntless temper of his mind
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he 55
Whose being I do fear, and under him
My genius is rebuked as, it is said,

Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him. Then, prophet-like, 60
They hailed him father to a line of kings.
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my grip,
Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If't be so, 65
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind,
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered,
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man 70
To make them kings, the seeds of Banquo kings.
Rather than so, come fate into the list
And champion me to th'utterance. Who's there?

Enter Servant and two Murderers

(To the Servant) Now go to the door, and stay there till
we call.

Exit Servant

Was it not yesterday we spoke together? 75

MURDERERS

It was, so please your highness.

MACBETH

Well then, now

Have you considered of my speeches? Know
That it was he in the times past which held you
So under fortune, which you thought had been
Our innocent self. This I made good to you 80
In our last conference, passed in probation with you
How you were borne in hand, how crossed, the
instruments,
Who wrought with them, and all things else that
might
To half a soul, and to a notion crazed,
Say 'Thus did Banquo'.

FIRST MURDERER You made it known to us. 85

MACBETH

I did so, and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting. Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature

That you can let this go? Are you so gospelled
To pray for this good man and for his issue, 90
Whose heavy hand hath bowed you to the grave
And beggared yours for ever?

FIRST MURDERER We are men, my liege.

MACBETH

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,
As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are clept 95
All by the name of dogs. The valued file
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed; whereby he does receive 100
Particular addition from the bill
That writes them all alike. And so of men.
Now, if you have a station in the file,
Not i'th' worst rank of manhood, say't,
And I will put that business in your bosoms 105
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

SECOND MURDERER I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world 110
Hath so incensed that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.

FIRST MURDERER And I another,
So weary with disasters, tugged with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance
To mend it or be rid on't.

MACBETH Both of you 115
Know Banquo was your enemy.

MURDERERS True, my lord.

MACBETH

So is he mine, and in such bloody distance
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life; and though I could
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight 120
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,

For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
Who I myself struck down. And thence it is
That I to your assistance do make love, 125
Masking the business from the common eye
For sundry weighty reasons.

SECOND MURDERER We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.

FIRST MURDERER Though our lives±±

MACBETH

Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most
I will advise you where to plant yourselves, 130
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o'th' time,
The moment on't; for't must be done tonight,
And something from the palace; always thought
That I require a clearness; and with him,
To leave no rubs nor botches in the work, 135
Fleance, his son, that keeps him company±±
Whose absence is no less material to me
Than is his father's±±must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart.
I'll come to you anon.

MURDERERS We are resolved, my lord. 140

MACBETH

I'll call upon you straight. Abide within.

Exeunt Murderers

It is concluded. Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out tonight.

Exit