

ACT I SCENE VII

The same. A room in Macbeth's castle.

Hautboys and torches. Enter a Sewer, and divers Servants with dishes and service, and pass over the stage. Then enter MACBETH.

MACBETH If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
 It were done quickly: if the assassination
 Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
 With his surcease success; that but this blow
 Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
 We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
 We still have judgment here; 10
 that we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
 To plague the inventor:
 this even-handed justice
 Commends the ingreience of our poison'd chalice
 To our own lips. He's here in double trust;
 First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
 Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
 Who should against his murderer shut the door,
 Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
 Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues
 Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
 The deep damnation of his taking-off; 20
 And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
 Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
 Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
 Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
 That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur

- Comment [A1]:** Recall those of Shakespeare's tragic hero
- Comment [A2]:** Foreshadowing, Wrestling with the consequences of Duncan's murder will be Macbeth's downfall.
- Comment [A3]:** Intention to achieve
- Comment [A4]:** Fear of consequences in this world
- Comment [A5]:** Alliteration words and sounds attract and suggest each other
- Comment [A6]:** Repetition of words- if, were, but, be, done and here, give the impression of a train of thought
- Comment [A7]:** Corresponds to the previous metaphor suggested by "trammel" and "catch", and that "bank" means "sand-bank" and "shoal" means "shallow"
- Comment [A8]:** Judgment will await him in this life
- Comment [A9]:** Macbeth knows that if he murders the king to gain the crown, another, hungry for power, will surely do the same to him when he becomes king
- Comment [A10]:** He is aware of the duplicity and imbalance of the proposed murder and of the equality and balance of earthly and heavenly law: "this even-handed justice"
- Comment [A11]:** Duncan has been a kind, gentle, and dedicated ruler. Disparity between his own reputation and the world's perception of Duncan as a good and virtuous king
- Comment [A12]:** Pure
- Comment [A13]:** IMAGERY, imagines Duncan's virtue and pity proclaimed as if by angels and cherubim from a storm-filled sky. Also reflects the biblical Day of Judgment, gives way in turn to a nagging self-doubt.
- Comment [A14]:** a euphemism for Duncan's death
- Comment [A15]:** Simile
- Comment [A16]:** invisible messengers, in this case the wind
- Comment [A17]:** The tears of all who learn of Macbeth's crime will come as a downpour and "check the storm of their anger"

To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself

And falls on th'other.

Enter LADY MACBETH.

How now! what news?

LADY
MACBETH

He has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?

MACBETH

Hath he ask'd for me?

LADY
MACBETH

Know you not he has?

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Comment [A18]: Macbeth's last words are interrupted by the entrance of Lady Macbeth. Here for the last time we see Macbeth as an free man

Comment [A19]: Detect Macbeth's self-doubt

MACBETH

We will proceed no further in this business:

He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought

Golden opinions from all sorts of people,

Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,

Not cast aside so soon.

LADY
MACBETH

Was the hope drunk

Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?

And wakes it now, to look so green and pale

At what it did so freely? From this time

Such I account thy love. Art thou afraid

To be the same in thine own act and valour

As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that

Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,

And live a coward in thine own esteem,

Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'

Like the poor cat i' the adage?

MACBETH

Prithee, peace:

I dare do all that may become a man;

Who dares do more is none.

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Comment [A20]: His golden reputation might lose it "gloss"

Comment [A21]: Metaphors ('Hope' being a person and clothing at the same time)
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought Golden opinions from all sorts of people, Which would be worn now in their newest gloss, Not cast aside so soon.

Comment [A22]: Rhetorical Question

Comment [A23]: Her questions drive further the wedge between daring and doing, between courage and action, between desire and fulfilment.

Comment [A24]: To these, she adds a distinction between masculinity and femininity: In contrast to her own self-proclaimed manliness, she pours scorn upon her husband's lack of courage

LADY
MACBETH

What beast was't, then,

That made you break this enterprise to me?

When you durst do it, **then you were a man;**

And, to be more than what you were, you would

50

Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place

Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:

They have made themselves, and that their fitness now

Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:

I would, while it was smiling in my face,

Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,

And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you

Have done to this.

Comment [A25]: Lady Macbeth-Highly vindictive to her husband

- Challenges his greatness and manliness
- Challenges his love and honour for life

Comment [A26]: She tells him that her own lack of pity would extend to murdering her own child as it suckled at her breast. With this one terrifying example, she confirms that "the milk of human kindness" is absent in her.

MACBETH
LADY
MACBETH

If we should fail?

We fail!

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,

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And we'll not fail. **When Duncan is asleep--**

Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey

Soundly invite him--his two chamberlains

Will I **with wine and wassail so convince**

That memory, the warder of the brain,

Shall be a **fume**, and the **receipt** of reason

A **limbeck** only: when in swinish sleep

Their drenched natures lie as in a death,

What cannot you and I perform upon

The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon

70

His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt

Of our great quell?

Comment [A27]: Macbeth switches her attention to the details of the murder itself.

Comment [A28]: plan to drug the guards with alcohol is couched in metaphorical language derived from the ancient science of alchemy.

Comment [A29]: refer to this process, whose purpose was to turn base metal (such as lead) into gold. It is heavily ironic that, in the Macbeths' experiment, that which is gold — the king himself — will become base and doubly ironic that Macbeth's golden reputation will be reduced to worthlessness.

MACBETH Bring forth men-children only;
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,
That they have done't?

LADY
MACBETH Who dares receive it other,

As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?

MACBETH I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:

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False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

Exeunt.

Comment [A30]: Macbeth has been convinced. In words that uncannily recall his wife's, he now puts on the mantle of murderer: the monosyllabic "False face must hide what the false heart doth know" has a certainty to it that completely overturns his earlier vacillation.