

Original Text

No less to have done so, let me infold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

BANQUO

There, if I grow,
The harvest is your own.

DUNCAN

- My plenteous joys,
35 Wanton in fullness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
40 The prince of Cumberland; which honor must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. (*to MACBETH*) From hence to
Inverness,
And bind us further to you.

MACBETH

- 45 The rest is labor which is not used for you:
I'll be myself the harbinger and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach.
So humbly take my leave.

DUNCAN

My worthy Cawdor!

Modern Text

it. Let me bring you close to me and give you the
benefit of my love and good will.

BANQUO

Then if I accomplish anything great, it will be a
credit to you.

DUNCAN

My joy is so overwhelming it brings tears to my
eyes. My sons, relatives, lords, and all those
closest to me, I want you to witness that I will
bestow my kingdom on my eldest son, Malcolm.
Today I name him the prince of Cumberland. But
Malcolm isn't going to be alone in receiving
honors—titles of nobility will shine like stars on all
of you who deserve them. (*to MACBETH*) And
now, let's go to your castle at Inverness, where I
will become even more obliged to you because of
your hospitality.

MACBETH

I'm not happy unless I can be working for you. I
will go ahead and bring my wife the good news
that you are coming. With that, I'll be off.

DUNCAN

My worthy Cawdor!

Act 1, Scene 4, Page 3

MACBETH

- 50 (*aside*) The prince of Cumberland! That is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires.
The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be
55 Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

DUNCAN

- True, worthy Banquo. He is full so valiant,
And in his commendations I am fed;
It is a banquet to me.—Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome:
60 It is a peerless kinsman.

Exit

MACBETH exits.

DUNCAN

(*to BANQUO, in the middle of a conversation we
haven't heard*) You're right, Banquo. Macbeth is
every bit as valiant as you say, and I am satisfied
with these praises of him. Let's follow after him,
now that he has gone ahead to prepare our
welcome. He is a man without equal.

Flourish. Exeunt

Trumpet fanfare. They exit.

Act 1, Scene 5

Enter LADY MACBETH, alone, with a letter

LADY MACBETH

(*reading*) "They met me in the day of success, and I
have learned by the perfectest report they have more

LADY MACBETH enters, reading a letter.

LADY MACBETH

"The witches met me on the day of my victory in
battle, and I have since learned that they have

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in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it came missives from the king, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor,' by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time with 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou might'st not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell."

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness

- 5 To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst
highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
10 And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'd'st have, great
Glamis,
That which cries, "Thus thou must do," if thou have it,
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
15 That I may pour my spirits in thine ear
And chastise with the valor of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

Enter **SERVANT**

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supernatural knowledge. When I tried desperately to question them further, they vanished into thin air. While I stood spellbound, messengers from the king arrived and greeted me as the thane of Cawdor, which is precisely how the weird sisters had saluted me before calling me 'the future king!' I thought I should tell you this news, my dearest partner in greatness, so that you could rejoice along with me about the greatness that is promised to us. Keep it secret, and farewell."

(she looks up from the letter) You are thane of Glamis and Cawdor, and you're going to be king, just like you were promised. But I worry about whether or not you have what it takes to seize the crown. You are too full of the milk of human kindness to strike aggressively at your first opportunity. You want to be powerful, and you don't lack ambition, but you don't have the mean streak that these things call for. The things you want to do, you want to do like a good man. You don't want to cheat, yet you want what doesn't belong to you. There's something you want, but you're afraid to do what you need to do to get it. You want it to be done for you. Hurry home so I can persuade you and talk you out of whatever's keeping you from going after the crown. After all, fate and witchcraft both seem to want you to be king.

A **SERVANT** enters.

Act 1, Scene 5, Page 2

What is your tidings?

SERVANT

The king comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Thou 'rt mad to say it.

- 20 Is not thy master with him, who, were 't so,
Would have informed for preparation?

SERVANT

So please you, it is true: our thane is coming.
One of my fellows had the speed of him,
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
25 Than would make up his message.

LADY MACBETH

Give him tending.
He brings great news.

Exit **SERVANT**

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan

What news do you bring?

SERVANT

The king is coming here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

You must be crazy to say that! Isn't Macbeth with the king, and wouldn't Macbeth have told me in advance so I could prepare, if the king were really coming?

SERVANT

I'm sorry, but it's the truth. Macbeth is coming. He sent a messenger ahead of him who arrived here so out of breath that he could barely speak his message.

LADY MACBETH

Take good care of him. He brings great news.

The **SERVANT** exits.

So the messenger is short of breath, like a hoarse raven, as he announces Duncan's entrance into

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- 30 Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood.
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
35 That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
40 You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry "Hold, hold!"

Modern Text

my fortress, where he will die. Come, you spirits
that assist murderous thoughts, make me less like
a woman and more like a man, and fill me from
head to toe with deadly cruelty! Thicken my blood
and clog up my veins so I won't feel remorse, so
that no human compassion can stop my evil plan
or prevent me from accomplishing it! Come to my
female breast and turn my mother's milk into
poisonous acid, you murdering demons,
wherever you hide, invisible and waiting to do
evil! Come, thick night, and cover the world in the
darkest smoke of hell, so that my sharp knife
can't see the wound it cuts open, and so heaven
can't peep through the darkness and cry, "No!
Stop!"

Act 1, Scene 5, Page 3

Enter MACBETH

- 45 Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor,
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter,
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

MACBETH

My dearest love,

- 50 Duncan comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

And when goes hence?

MACBETH

Tomorrow, as he purposes.

LADY MACBETH

O, never

Shall sun that morrow see!

Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,

- 55 Look like the time. Bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue. Look like th' innocent flower,
But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming
Must be provided for; and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch,
60 Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

MACBETH

We will speak further.

LADY MACBETH

Only look up clear.

To alter favor ever is to fear.

- 65 Leave all the rest to me.

*Exeunt**MACBETH enters.*

Great thane of Glamis! Worthy thane of Cawdor!
You'll soon be greater than both those titles, once
you become king! Your letter has transported me
from the present moment, when who knows what
will happen, and has made me feel like the future
is already here.

MACBETH

My dearest love, Duncan is coming here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

And when is he leaving?

MACBETH

He plans to leave tomorrow.

LADY MACBETH

That day will never come. Your face betrays
strange feelings, my lord, and people will be able
to read it like a book. In order to deceive them,
you must appear the way they expect you to look.
Greet the king with a welcoming expression in
your eyes, your hands, and your words. You
should look like an innocent flower, but be like the
snake that hides underneath the flower. The king
is coming, and he's got to be taken care of. Let
me handle tonight's preparations, because
tonight will change every night and day for the
rest of our lives.

MACBETH

We will speak about this further.

LADY MACBETH

You should project a peaceful mood, because if
you look troubled, you will arouse suspicion.

Leave all the rest to me.

They exit.