

Scenes from Macbeth: Old man scene

SCENE IV. Outside Macbeth's castle.

Enter ROSS and an old Man

Old Man

Threescore and ten I can remember well:
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange; but this sore night
Hath trifled former knowings.

ROSS

Ah, good father,
Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threaten his bloody stage: by the clock, 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp:
Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?

Old Man

'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

ROSS

And Duncan's horses--a thing most strange and certain--
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.

Old Man

'Tis said they eat each other.

ROSS

They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes
That look'd upon't. Here comes the good Macduff.

Enter MACDUFF

How goes the world, sir, now?

MACDUFF

Why, see you not?

ROSS

Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?

MACDUFF

Those that Macbeth hath slain.

ROSS

Alas, the day!

What good could they pretend?

MACDUFF

They were suborn'd:

Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled; which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

ROSS

'Gainst nature still!

Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up
Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

MACDUFF

He is already named, and gone to Scone
To be invested.

ROSS

Where is Duncan's body?

MACDUFF

Carried to Colmekill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.

ROSS

Will you to Scone?

MACDUFF

No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

ROSS

Well, I will thither.

MACDUFF

Well, may you see things well done there: adieu!
Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

ROSS

Farewell, father.

Old Man

God's benison go with you; and with those
That would make good of bad, and friends of foes!

Macbeth

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Is this a dagger I see in front of me, with its handle pointing toward my hand? *(to the dagger)* Come, let me hold you. *(he grabs at the air in front of him without touching anything)* I don't have you but I can still see you. Fateful apparition, isn't it possible to touch you as well as see you? Or are you nothing more than a dagger created by the mind, a hallucination from my fevered brain? I can still see you, and you look as real as this other dagger that I'm pulling out now. *(he draws a dagger)* You're leading me toward the place I was going already, and I was planning to use a weapon just like you. My eyesight must either be the one sense that's not working, or else it's the only one that's working right. I can still see you, and I see blood splotches on your blade and handle that weren't there before. *(to himself)* There's no dagger here. It's the murder I'm about to do that's making me think I see one. Now half the world is asleep and being deceived by evil nightmares. Witches are offering sacrifices to their goddess Hecate. Old man murder, having been roused by the howls of his wolf, walks silently to his destination, moving like [Tarquin](#), as quiet as a ghost. *(speaking to the ground)* Hard ground, don't listen to the direction of my steps. I don't want you to echo back where I am and break the terrible stillness of this moment, a silence that is so appropriate for what I'm about to do. While I stay here talking, Duncan lives. The more I talk, the more my courage cools.

PORTER SPEECH

Porter. Here's a knocking
indeed! If a
man were porter of hell-gate,
he should have
old turning the key.

[Knocking within]

Knock,
knock, knock! Who's there, i'
the name of
Beelzebub? Here's a farmer,
that hanged
himself on the expectation of
plenty: come in
time; have napkins enow
about you; here
you'll sweat for't.

[Knocking within]

Knock,
knock! Who's there, in the
other devil's
name? Faith, here's an
equivocator, that could
swear in both the scales
against either scale;
who committed treason
enough for God's sake,
yet could not equivocate to
heaven: O, come
in, equivocator.

[Knocking within]

Knock,
knock, knock! Who's there?
Faith, here's an
English tailor come hither, for
stealing out of
a French hose: come in,
tailor; here you may
roast your goose.

[Knocking within]

Knock,
knock; never at quiet! What
are you? But
this place is too cold for hell.
I'll devil-porter

it no further: I had thought
to have let in
some of all professions that
go the primrose
way to the everlasting
bonfire.

[Knocking within]

Anon, anon! I pray you,
remember the porter.

2 II,3,784 **Macduff.** *Was it so late, friend, ere
you went to bed,
That you do lie so late?*

Porter. 'Faith sir, we were
carousing till the
second cock: and drink, sir, is a
great
provoker of three things.

3 II,3,788 **Macduff.** *What three things does
drink especially provoke?*

Porter. Marry, sir, nose-painting,
sleep, and
urine. Lechery, sir, it provokes, and
unprovokes;
it provokes the desire, but it takes
away the performance: therefore,
much drink
may be said to be an equivocator
with lechery:
it makes him, and it mars him; it
sets
him on, and it takes him off; it
persuades him,
and disheartens him; makes him
stand to, and
not stand to; in conclusion,
equivocates him
in a sleep, and, giving him the lie,
leaves him.

4 II,3,799 **Macduff.** *I believe drink gave thee*

the lie last night.

Porter. That it did, sir, i' the very throat on me: but I requited him for his lie; and, I think, being too strong for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift to cast him.

LADY MACBETH:

LADY MACBETH He has almost supped. Why have you left the chamber? MACBETH Hath he asked for me? 30 LADY MACBETH Know you not he has? MACBETH We will proceed no further in this business: He hath honoured me of late, and I have bought Golden opinions from all sorts of people, Which would be worn now in their newest gloss, 35 Not cast aside so soon. **LADY MACBETH Was the hope drunk Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since? And wakes it now, to look so green and pale At what it did so freely? From this time 40 Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard 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, 45 Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would', Like the poor cat i'th'adage? MACBETH Prithee, peace. I dare do all that may become a man: Who dares do more is none. 50 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 Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place 55 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, 60 Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums, And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you Have done to this. MACBETH If we should fail? LADY MACBETH We fail? 65 But screw your courage to the sticking-place 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, 70 That memory, the warder of the brain, Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep Their drenchèd natures lies as in a death, What cannot you and I perform upon 75 Th'unguarded Duncan? What not put upon His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt Of our great quell? MACBETH Bring forth men-children only, For thy undaunted mettle should compose 80 Nothing but males. Will it not be received, When we have marked 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, 85 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: 90 False face must hide
what the false heart doth know. (Exeunt)

THE WITCHES SCENE

SCENE I. A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches

First Witch

Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

Second Witch

Thrice and once the hedge-pig whined.

Third Witch

Harpier cries 'Tis time, 'tis time.

First Witch

Round about the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

ALL

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Second Witch

Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

ALL

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Third Witch

Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat, and slips of yew
Silver'd in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab:
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

ALL

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Second Witch

Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter HECATE to the other three Witches

Duncan

Duncan. My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulness, 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
The Prince of Cumberland; which honour must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. From hence to Inverness,
And bind us further to you.