

MACBETH

Translated

SJ Hills
and
William Shakespeare

Faithfully Translated
into Performable Modern English



THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

Book 33 in a series of 42



This Work First Published In 2018
by DTC Publishing, London.
www.InteractiveShakespeare.com

Typeset by DTC Publishing.

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Translated from Macbeth by Shakespeare, circa 1606.

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Revised 2023. A-28c

ISBN 978-1-731-27841-8

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Dedicated to my four little terrors;

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“From an ardent love of literature, a profound admiration of the men who have left us legacies of thought and beauty, and, I suppose, from that feature in man that induces us to strive to follow those we most admire, and looking upon the pursuit of literature as one of the noblest in which no labour should be deemed too great, I have sought to add a few thoughts to the store already bequeathed to the world. If they are approved, I shall have gained my desire; if not, I shall hope to receive any hints in the spirit of one who loves his work and desires to progress.”

R. Hilton. 1869

PREFACE

When we studied Shakespeare at school we had to flick back and forth to the notes at the back of the book to understand a confusing line, words we were not familiar with, expressions lost in time, or even current or political references of Shakespeare's time.

What if the text was rewritten to make each line clear without looking up anything?

There are plenty of modern translations just for this. But they are cumbersome to read, no flow, matter of fact translations (and most are of varying inaccuracy, despite being approved by exam boards).

As a writer and producer of drama, I wanted not only to translate the play faithfully line by line, but also to include the innuendos, the political satire, the puns and the bawdy humour in a way which would flow and bring the work to life for students, actors prepping for a performance or lovers of the work to enjoy today, faithful to the feel and meaning of the original script and language.

A faithful line-by-line translation into modern phrasing that flows, along with additional staging directions and contextual notes, making the play interesting to read, easy to understand, and very importantly, an invaluable study aid.

For me it all started at about eight or nine years of age. I was reading a comic which contained the story of Macbeth serialised in simple comic strip form. I loved the story so much I could not wait to see what happened next so I rushed out to the public library to get a copy of the book. Of course, when I got it home I didn't even recognise it as being the same story. It made no sense to me, being written in 'Olde' English and often using 'flowery' language. I remember thinking at the time that one day I should write my version of the story for others to understand.

Years went by and I had pretty much forgotten my idea. Then quite by chance I was approached by Encyclopaedia Britannica to produce a series of dramatised classic dramas as educational aids for children learning English as a second language. Included in the selection was Romeo And Juliet which I was to condense down to fifty minutes using modern English.

This brought flooding back the memories of being eight years old again, reading my comic and planning my translated version of Shakespeare. In turn it also led me to the realisation that even if a reader could understand English well, this did not mean they could fully understand and enjoy Shakespeare. I could understand English, yet I did not fully understand some of Shakespeare's text without serious research, so what hope did a person whose first language was not English have?

After some investigation, I discovered there was a great desire around the world to understand the text fully without the inconvenience of referring to footnotes or sidelines, or worse still, the internet. How can one enjoy the wonderful drama with constant interruption? I was also surprised to discover the desire was equally as great in English speaking countries as ones whose first language was not English.

The final kick to get me started was meeting fans of Shakespeare's works who knew scripts off by heart but secretly admitted to me that they did have trouble fully understanding the meaning of some lines. Although they knew the storyline well they could miss some of the subtlety and innuendo Shakespeare was renowned for. It is hardly surprising in this day and age as many of the influences, trends, rumours, beliefs and current affairs of Shakespeare's time are not valid today.

I do not pretend my work is any match for the great master, but I do believe in the greater enjoyment for all. These great works deserve to be understood by all, Shakespeare himself wrote for all levels of audience, he would even aim his work to suit a particular audience at times – for example changing historical facts if he knew a member of royalty would be seeing his play and it would cause them any embarrassment, or of course to curry favour with a monarch by the use of flattery.

I have been as faithful as possible with my version, but the original, iambic pentameter, (the tempo and pace the lines were written for), and other Elizabethan tricks of the trade that Shakespeare was so brilliant at are not included unless vital to the text and meaning. For example, rhyming couplets to signify the end of a scene, for in Shakespeare's day there were no curtains, no lights and mostly static scenery, so scene changes were not so obvious. These couplets, though not strictly necessary, are included to maintain the feel of the original.

This makes for a play that sounds fresh to today's listening audience. It is also a valuable educational tool; English Literature courses often include a section on translating Shakespeare. I am often asked the meaning of a particular line, sometimes scholars argue over the meaning of particular lines. I have taken the most widely agreed version and the one which flows best with the story line where there is dispute, and if you read this translation before reading the original work or going to see a stage version, you will find the play takes on a whole new meaning, making it infinitely more enjoyable.

SJ Hills. London. 2018

Author's Note: This version contains stage directions. These are included purely as a guide to help understand the script better. Any director staging the play would have their own interpretation of the play and decide their own directions. These directions are my own personal interpretation and not those of Shakespeare. You may change these directions to your own choosing or ignore them completely. For exam purposes these should be only regarded as guidance to the dialogue and for accuracy should not be quoted in any studies or examinations.

I have also replaced the word '*Thane*' with '*Lord*'. While not strictly in keeping with the Scottish heritage of the play, the word '*Lord*' is more readily understandable by readers of all nations.

To aid in understanding speeches and for learning lines, where possible, speeches by any character are not broken over two pages unless they have a natural break. As a result of this, gaps will be noticeable at the bottom of pages where the next speech will not fully fit onto the page. This was intentional. A speech cannot be fully appreciated if one has to turn the page back and forth when studying or learning lines. Please note, this is applicable only to printed versions, for ebooks, some readers will split speeches across pages.

The joy of having a highly accurate English translation is that it can be translated into other languages more readily, foreign language versions of the modern text will be available soon.

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Historical Notes

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is based on *Holinshed's Chronicles* (1577) which is not historically accurate. Shakespeare then introduced more inaccuracies for dramatic effect and because the play was to be first performed before *King James I* and the *King of Denmark*.

The real *Macbeth*, nicknamed *Rí Deircc*, "The Red King", lived from 1005 – 1057 and was King of Alba (or King of Scots) from 1040 until his death, though he ruled over only a portion of present-day Scotland.

All we know of *Macbeth's* early life is that he was the son of *Findláech of Moray* and may have been a grandson of *Malcolm II*. He became *Mormaer of Moray*, equivalent to a lord, in 1032, probably having killed the previous mormaer, *Gille Coemgáin*, whose widow, *Gruoch*, *Macbeth* married. *Lady Macbeth* had a son, *Lulach*, by her previous husband who then became *Macbeth's* stepson, though, as in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, they had no children together.

In 1040, the King of Alba, *Duncan I*, invaded Moray and was killed by *Macbeth's* army. *Macbeth* succeeded him as king, and was highly respected during his 17-year reign which was mostly peaceful, with the exception of an English invasion by *Siward, Earl of Northumbria*, which had the backing of the English king, *Edward the Confessor*, in 1054. *Macbeth* was killed at the Battle of Lumphanan in 1057, fighting the army of the future *King Malcolm III*. He was buried on Iona, the traditional resting place of Scottish kings.

Macbeth was succeeded by his stepson, *Lulach*, who ruled only a few months before also being killed by *Malcolm III* whose descendants would rule Scotland until the late 13th century.

One reason for Shakespeare's unflattering version of *Macbeth* is that *King James* was descended from *Malcolm III* via the House of Bruce and his own House of Stuart, whereas *Macbeth's* line died out with the death of *Lulach*. *King James* also believed he was descended from *Banquo* through *Walter Stuart*, 6th High Steward of Scotland.

The *Tragedy of Macbeth* was first performed on August 7, 1606, at Hampton Court Palace before *King James I* and *King Christian IV* of Denmark. It portrays the results of physical and psychological corruption when pursuing power for its own sake. It was first published in the *Folio* of 1623, and is notably Shakespeare's shortest tragedy by a long way, being over a thousand lines shorter than *Othello* and *King Lear*, and about half the length of *Hamlet*. This has led scholars to believe that it is based perhaps on a heavily cut prompt-book. In other Shakespearean plays the later *Quarto* version was usually longer than the early *Folio* version. *Macbeth* was included in the *First Folio*, but has no *Quarto* version, which would probably have been longer than the *Folio* version. This may explain the fast pace of the first act, and the lack of depth of the main characters apart from *Macbeth*.

There are three main sources for the play, principally *Holinshed's Chronicles* (1587), an inaccurate history of England, Scotland and Ireland. Shakespeare would heavily modify this history in his play. In *Chronicles*,

Donwald finds several of his family put to death by *King Duff* for his involvement with witches. After pressure from his wife, he and four of his servants kill *King Duff* in his own house. The new *King Duncan*'s poor rule alienates *Macbeth*, so he and *Banquo* meet the three witches who make the same prophecies as in Shakespeare's version. *Macbeth* and *Banquo*, with *Lady Macbeth*'s encouragement, murder *King Duncan*. *Macbeth* reigns for ten years before being overthrown by *Macduff* and *Malcolm*. Although the similarities are clear, some scholars believe that George Buchanan's *Rerum Scotticarum Historia* is closer to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* even though Buchanan's work was available only in Latin at the time.

Shakespeare made another important change. In *Chronicles*, *Banquo* is an accomplice in *Macbeth*'s murder of *King Duncan*, and plays an important part in ensuring that *Macbeth*, not *Malcolm*, takes the throne. In Shakespeare's day, *Banquo* was thought to be an ancestor of the Stuart King, *James I*. In more recent years it has been established that the Stuarts are actually descended from a Breton family which migrated to Scotland slightly later than *Macbeth*'s time, not from *Banquo*.

The first mention of *Banquo*, the *Weird Sisters*, and *Lady Macbeth* was in 1527 by Hector Boece in '*Historia Gentis Scotorum*' (History of the Scottish People) which was an attempt to damage the reputation of *Macbeth* to further the claim of the House of Stuart to the Scottish throne. *Banquo* was shown as an ancestor of the Stuart kings of Scotland, adding in a prophecy that the descendants of *Banquo* would be the future kings of Scotland while the *Weird Sisters* helped *King Macbeth* gain the throne with witchcraft. *Macbeth*'s wife, was portrayed as power-hungry and ambitious which further showed *Macbeth* lacked a proper claim to the throne, and only obtained it because his wife pushed him. Holinshed copied Boece's version of *Macbeth*'s reign in his *Chronicles*.

No other version of *Macbeth* had him kill the king in his own castle. Shakespeare probably added to the evil of *Macbeth*'s crime by violating his hospitality, as it was generally believed at the time that *Duncan* was killed in an ambush at Inverness, not in a castle.

The second source for the play is from the '*Daemonologie of King James*' published in 1597 which included a news pamphlet titled '*Newes from Scotland*' which recorded the famous North Berwick Witch Trials of 1590. Published just a few years before *Macbeth* and was a result of *James I*'s obsessive interest in witchcraft. The trials took place in Scotland, with the accused witches confessing to rituals similar to the three witches in *Macbeth*. The witches in the trial confessed to the use of witchcraft to raise a tempest and sabotage the boat of *King James* and his queen during their return trip from Denmark. One ship with *King James*'s fleet sank in the storm.

The third source is the *Gunpowder Plot* of 1605, and the execution of *Father Henry Garnett* for his alleged involvement in the *Gunpowder Plot*. He refused to give direct answers to questions under oath based on the beliefs of the Jesuit practice of equivocation. Shakespeare emphasised *James*'s belief that equivocation was a wicked practice, which reflected the wickedness of the Catholic Church. When arrested, *Garnett* had in his possession *A Treatise on Equivocation*.

In the theatre world, it is believed that the play is cursed, and the title of the

play should never be spoken aloud, instead calling it "*The Scottish Play*", though there is no single reason this should be so, but there are lots of varying stories claiming to be the true source of the myth.

Shakespeare's use of pre-existing material was not considered a lack of originality. In Elizabethan times copyright law did not exist, copying whole passages of text was frequently practiced and not considered theft as it is today. Nowadays, stage and movie productions are frequently 'adaptations' from other sources, the only difference being the need to obtain permission or rights to do so, unless the work is out of copyright.

The real skill Shakespeare displays is in how he adapts his sources in new ways, displaying a remarkable understanding of human psyche and emotion, and including a talent at building characters, adding characters for effect, dramatic pacing, tension building, interspersed by short bouts of relief before building the tension even further, and above all of course, his extraordinary ability to use and miss-use language to his and dramatic, bawdy or playful advantage.

It has been said Shakespeare almost wrote screenplays, predating modern cinema by over 400 years, however you view it, he wrote a powerful story and understood how to play on human emotions and weaknesses.

This play was written during the reign of James I (of England, James VI of Scotland – the first monarch to rule both countries). As Shakespeare often refers to the reigning monarch in his plays indirectly and often performed his plays before the monarch this is useful to know.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING DUNCAN - King of Scotland
Prince MALCOLM - Son of the King
Prince DONALBAIN - Son of the King

MACBETH - General of King's army
BANQUO - General of King's army
LADY MACBETH - Wife to Macbeth
FLEANCE - Son to Banquo

MACDUFF - Nobleman
LENNOX - Nobleman
ROSS - Nobleman
CAITHNESS - Nobleman
ANGUS - Nobleman
MENTEITH - Nobleman

LADY MACDUFF - Wife to Macduff
BOY - Son to Macduff

SIWARD - English Earl of Northumberland
YOUNG SIWARD - His son
SEYTON - Officer attending Macbeth
CAPTAIN - Serving under King Duncan

ENGLISH DOCTOR
SCOTTISH DOCTOR - Attending Lady Macbeth
WAITING-GENTLEWOMAN - Attending Lady Macbeth
PORTER
OLD MAN
SOLDIER
1st MURDERER
2nd MURDERER
3rd MURDERER

HECATE - Queen of the Witches

1st WITCH

2nd WITCH

3rd WITCH

Three other WITCHES

GHOST OF BANQUO

1st APPARITION - An Armoured Head

2nd APPARITION - A Bloodied Child

3rd APPARITION - A Crowned Child

EIGHT KINGS - A Show of Eight Apparitions.

Lords, Attendants, Trumpeters, Drummers, Torch-bearers,
Standard Bearers, Soldiers, Messengers, Serving Staff.

SETTING: SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND

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ACT I



*SCOTLAND
ELEVENTH CENTURY A.D.*

GOOD IS EVIL, AND EVIL IS GOOD

ACT I

ACT I SCENE I

A DESERTED CLEARING ON A STORMY MORNING.

THUNDER, LIGHTNING AND A FIERCE WIND RAGE.

THREE UGLY, BEARDED WITCHES MEET AT THE EDGE OF A CLEARING.

Note: To show the characters are comedic, mad or evil, Shakespeare writes their lines in prose rather than the usual blank verse – a form of poetry which doesn't rhyme except for dramatic effect. Shakespeare also used rhyme for certain characters, such as the witches, and the type of rhyme would vary depending on the character who spoke it. In Macbeth, characters who speak in rhyme are typically evil.

Rhymed lines are in italics.

WITCH 1

*When shall we three meet again?
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?*

WITCH 2

*When the hurly-burly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.*

FIRST WITCH

*When shall we three meet again?
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?*

SECOND WITCH

When the hurlyburly's done;
When the battle's lost and won.**

**Note: 'Hurlyburly' - loud, boisterous behaviour.*

'Lost and won' - playing on a theme of opposites. One side lost, one side won.

'Ere the set of sun' - it will happen today.

WITCH 3

Before the setting of the sun.

WITCH 1

Where to meet?

WITCH 2

*Upon the heath.**

WITCH 3

There to meet Macbeth.

THIRD WITCH

*That will be ere the set of sun.**

FIRST WITCH

Where the place?

SECOND WITCH

Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH

There to meet with Macbeth.

**Note: 'Heath' was pronounced 'heth' in Shakespeare's time so would have rhymed with 'Macbeth' in the line which followed it.*

Act I Scene I. A Deserted Clearing.

A CAT (WITCH 1'S FAMILIAR) CALLS A WEIRD WARNING CRY.

WITCH 1
I'm coming, old Moggins!

FIRST WITCH
I come, Graymalkin.*

A TOAD CROAKS AS IF TO ALSO NOTIFY THE WITCHES.

**Note: In Scottish folklore 'Greymalkin' was a fairy cat found in the highlands. 'Moggie' is a cat of mixed pedigree and 'moggins' is an affectionate term for any cat nowadays.*

'Puddock' was a Scottish word for toad.

WITCH 2
(cocking her head, listening)
Paddock calls.

SECOND WITCH
Paddock* calls.

WITCH 3
It will be soon!

THIRD WITCH
Anon!

THEY LAUGH WICKEDLY AND RAISE ARMS, CHANTING TOGETHER.

WITCHES
*Good is evil, and evil is good.
Fly us through mist and filthy fog!*

ALL
Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
Hover through the fog and filthy air.*

A THICK MIST ROLLS IN AND THEY VANISH INTO THIN AIR.

Note: The witches in Macbeth have been forever embedded into our culture. We still refer back to Shakespeare's version every year on Halloween. Shakespeare's version of witches was a mixture of the English and Scottish ideas of witches and witchcraft. Common beliefs of the time were that witches could fly, cast spells, place curses, cause plagues, and had an evil spirit accompany them which took the appearance of an animal, often a cat, and this was known as the witch's 'familiar', short for 'familiar spirit'. Here the witches' familiars are a cat and a toad (a 'puddock').

**Throughout the play there runs a theme of opposites. Prominently; good and evil – 'Fair is foul, and foul is fair'.*

Important Note: Scholars believe that Macbeth as we know it is based perhaps on a heavily cut prompt-book, concentrating only on the main action of the play, which would explain why the play is so much shorter than the other tragedies. It was not included in the earliest printings of his works, so we have nothing to compare it with as we have with other plays of his. This may explain the fast pace of the first act, and the lack of depth of the main characters apart from Macbeth. It may also explain the missing details and time jumps, and the inserted musical interludes written by another person or persons.



ACT I SCENE II

A MILITARY CAMP NEAR FORRES, SCOTLAND.

Note: The wording and phrasing in this scene is particularly difficult to understand at first read, leading to some scholars suggesting this was not the work of Shakespeare. It is likely that it has been edited down from the original wording but there is no proof it is not Shakespeare's work. Once the modern translation has been read the original wording will be easier to follow. Some editions call the soldier 'Sergeant' some call him 'Captain' - both were used here.

KING DUNCAN OF SCOTLAND RIDES TOWARDS A BATTLEFIELD WITH HIS SONS, MALCOLM AND DONALBAIN, AND THE NOBLEMAN LORD LENNOX.

ARRIVING AT A MILITARY CAMP THEY COME ACROSS A WOUNDED SOLDIER.

THE GROUP STOP BY HIS SIDE.

KING DUNCAN

Who is that bloodied man? Judging by his wounds, he can deliver fresh news of the rebellion.

PRINCE MALCOLM

It's the Captain, father, who fought so courageously to prevent my capture.
(to Captain) Greetings, brave friend!
Inform the King how the skirmish fared when you left it.

ARMY CAPTAIN

(in pain from his wounds) Your Majesty...
There was little between us, two sides like tired swimmers clinging together, dragging each other down. But the merciless, Macdonwald, - truly a vile traitor, judging by the dregs of humanity that swarm to him - was backed by foot soldiers and heavily armed mercenaries from the western isles.

DUNCAN

What bloody man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.

MALCOLM

This is the sergeant,
Who, like a good and hardy soldier fought
'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!
Say to the King the knowledge of the broil
As thou didst leave it.

SERGEANT:

(in pain from his wounds)
Doubtful it stood,
As two spent swimmers that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald—
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villainies of nature
Do swarm upon him—from the western isles*
Of kerns* and gallowglasses* is supplied;

**Note: The 'Western Isles' are the Outer Hebrides, a chain of islands off the west coast of Scotland, however it was likely to have been a reference to Ireland as 'kerns' were lightly armed foot soldiers from Ireland and 'gallowglasses' were ruthless mercenaries in the service of Irish tribal chieftains.*

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

For a while, fortune smiled like a rebel's whore in his favour. But 'twas not enough, no, for the brave Macbeth - and well he deserves that title - spitting in the face of fortune, brandishing his steaming, bloodied sword like the courageous hero of valour, carved his way through till he faced that low-life scum, Macdonwald. Then without so much as a by-your-leave, Macbeth had opened him from belly to jaw, and fixed his head high above our battle line for all to see.



**Note: What Macbeth does here is significant to the play's ending. The defeated leader would be beheaded and his head displayed impaled on a pike (a weapon) high for all to see. It served two purposes, one was for the victor to gloat, the other was for the losing side's men to see they had lost and "lay down their arms" (surrender or flee). Similarly, traitor's heads were displayed impaled on spikes on the battlements of London Bridge for all to see.*



KING DUNCAN

Oh my valiant cousin, Macbeth! Worthy nobleman.

DUNCAN

O valiant cousin!* Worthy gentleman!

**Note: In Shakespeare's time 'cousin' meant 'relative', though Duncan and Macbeth were actual first cousins in real life, sharing the same grandfather.*

ARMY CAPTAIN

And as, "*the calm before the storm is but short respite 'ere the dire thunders break*", from that same source where comforting news had sprung forth, discomfoting news was brewing. - Listen, King of Scotland, and take note! No sooner had our brave men, newly fortified in their victory, forced those footloose rebels to their heels, than the Viking King - now with restocked arms and fresh supplies of men - saw his opportunity and launched a fresh assault.

KING DUNCAN

(*shocked*) Were our Generals, Macbeth and Banquo, not overwhelmed by this?

SERGEANT

As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
Discomfort swells. Mark, King of Scotland, mark:
No sooner justice had, with valor arm'd,
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels,
But the Norwegian lord, surveying vantage,
With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.

DUNCAN

Dismay'd not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

ARMY CAPTAIN

(jokingly, but coughing with pain) Yes...
(he smiles) like lions overrun by hares, or
eagles by sparrows.

SERGEANT

Yes,
As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.

AT HIS STATEMENT THE ENTOURAGE LAUGH.

CAPTAIN (CON'T)

I swear they were like cannons loaded
with double charges. Heroically they
doubled and redoubled their strikes
against their foe, as if they planned to
bathe in blood or re-enact the fields of
dead at Calvary, I know not which...

SERGEANT

If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks,
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe.
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,*
I cannot tell —

COUGHING UP BLOOD, THE CAPTAIN STRUGGLES TO CARRY ON.

**Note: Golgotha (which means 'place of skulls') was the site of mass crucifixions on the hill of Calvary outside Jerusalem, including that of Jesus Christ.*

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

I feel faint, my wounds cry out for
attention.

SERGEANT

But I am faint; my gashes cry for help.

KING DUNCAN

Your words do you proud, as do your
wounds. Both smack of honour.

DUNCAN

So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;
They smack of honor both.

CAPTAIN GROANS LOUDLY AND SLUMPS, BECOMING DELIRIOUS.

KING DUNCAN (CON'T)

Call surgeons, quickly!

DUNCAN

Go get him surgeons.

Note: In Shakespeare's time pain killers and antibiotics didn't exist. A surgeon would amputate a damaged limb with a saw while the man was conscious. The man would likely die from infection or shock.

If a patient was lucky, he would be given strong alcohol to alleviate the shock and the pain to some extent. At sea there was an old saying "four measures of ship's grog is sufficient to amputate a limb". Grog was rum mixed with water, the rum on board ship was very high in alcohol as less was required to be carried and have the same alcoholic effect.

TWO HORSES FAST APPROACH AND DISTRACT THE ROYAL ENTOURAGE.

KING DUNCAN (CON'T)

Who comes there?

DUNCAN

Who comes here?*

Act I Scene II. A Military Camp.

**Note: The cry of "Halt. Who comes there?" can be heard every day at the Tower of London during the Ceremony of the Keys, the same wording used for 700 years.*

PRINCE MALCOLM
It's the honourable Lord of Ross, father.

LORD LENNOX
And by the look in his eyes, a man in all
haste to give us some alarming news

MALCOLM
The worthy Thane of Ross.

LENNOX
What a haste looks through his eyes!
So should he look that seems to speak things
strange.

LORD ROSS AND LORD ANGUS, TWO LOYAL NOBLEMEN, RIDE UP.

LORD ROSS
(*riding up, rushed*) God save the King!

KING DUNCAN
From where do you come, noble Lord?

LORD ROSS
(*Rushing to get the news out*) From Fife,
your majesty, where the Viking banners
fan our people with their cold terror.
There, the King of Norway himself, with
terrible numbers of men, aided by that
treacherous traitor, the Lord of Cawdor,
launched a terrible onslaught. - That was,
until that god of war himself, Macbeth, in
battle-scarred armour, confronted him
with a taste of his own medicine. Point to
point, hand to hand, he cut his high spirits
down to size. And to conclude... The
victory was ours!

ROSS
God save the King!

DUNCAN
Whence cam'st thou, worthy Thane?

ROSS
From Fife, great King,
Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
And fan our people cold.
Norway himself, with terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor
The Thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict,
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,
Confronted him with self-comparisons,
Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish spirit; and, to conclude,
The victory fell on us.

ALL LAUGH AND CHEER AT THE NEWS.

KING DUNCAN
Great news!

DUNCAN
Great happiness!

LORD ROSS THROWS THE ROYAL SEAL OF CAWDOR TO PRINCE MALCOLM
WHO CATCHES IT AND STUDIES IT. UPON IT IS ENGRAVED 'CAWDOR' AND A
COAT OF ARMS. HE HANDS IT TO HIS FATHER, THE KING.

LORD ROSS

Now King Sweno of Norway seeks a truce. We have refused him permission to bury his men on the holy isle of Inchcolm until he pays us ten thousand pounds compensation.

KING DUNCAN

The Lord of Cawdor shall deceive us with his treachery no longer.

Now go at once and put Cawdor to death, Present his former title to Macbeth.

ROSS

That now Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition; Nor would we deign him burial of his men Till he disbursed, at Saint Colme's Inch, Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

DUNCAN

No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive Our bosom interest. Go pronounce his present death, And with his former title greet Macbeth.

THE KING HANDS THE SEAL BACK TO PRINCE MALCOLM,
WHO IN TURN HANDS IT BACK TO LORD ROSS

LORD ROSS

I'll see it is done.

KING DUNCAN

What he has lost, noble Macbeth has won.

ROSS

I'll see it done.

DUNCAN

What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.*

ROSS AND ANGUS DEPART AT SPEED TO DELIVER THE NEWS TO MACBETH.

**Note: Rhyming couplets here signify the end of a scene. In Shakespeare's day there were no curtains, no lights and mostly static scenery – so scene changes were not so obvious. The rhyming lines, though not strictly necessary, are included to maintain the feel of the original.*

Audiences were conditioned to hear the rhyme and knew the significance. The remainder of the play would be mostly written in blank verse, which is not rhymed, so the contrast was apparent.

Shakespeare also used rhyme for certain characters, such as the witches, and the type of rhyme would vary depending on the character who spoke it. In Macbeth, characters who speak in rhyme are typically evil.

Note: The title 'Thane' has been replaced in this translation with 'Lord'. While not strictly in keeping with the Scottish heritage of the play, the word 'Lord' is more readily understandable by present day readers of all nations.

Important Note: The stage directions (between main text in capital letters) are included purely as the author's guide to understand the script better. Any director staging the play would have their own interpretation of the play and decide their own directions. These directions are not those of Shakespeare. You can change these directions to your own choosing or ignore them completely. For exam purposes these should be only regarded as guidance to the dialogue and for accuracy should not be quoted in any studies or examinations.



ACT I SCENE III

A DESERTED HEATH.

THUNDER AND LIGHTNING. THE THREE WITCHES ARE
GATHERED TOGETHER ON A HEATH AROUND AN OPEN FIRE.

WITCH 1

Where have you been, sister?

WITCH 2

Killing swine.

WITCH 3

And sister, where were you?

WITCH 1

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munched and munched and munched.

'Give me one!' said I

'Be gone, you witch!' the bloated slut did
cry.

Her husband's sailed to Aleppo, Captain of
the 'Tiger'.

But in a sieve, I'll to it sail,
And like a rat without a tail,
I'll do him, do him, do him!

FIRST WITCH

Where hast thou been, sister?

SECOND WITCH

Killing swine.

THIRD WITCH

Sister, where thou?

FIRST WITCH

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd.

"Give me," quoth I.

"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the

Tiger;*

But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,*
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.*

**Note: The 'Tiger' was a ship which sailed to Aleppo on 5th Dec 1604 and arrived back after fearful experiences on 27th June 1606 after 568 days - exactly the seven nights times nine times nine, and importantly, two months before this play was first staged.*

The symbolism of a 'rat without a tail' is a naked, wretched human. Witches were thought to cast spells on people, rather like hypnotising or drugging them and having their evil, lusty way with them. Here it is used with the additional double meaning of doing him harm.

'I'll do' is a bawdy innuendo.

Historic Note: There is good reason for including the witches and their effect on ships. King James published Daemonologie in 1597 which included details of the famous North Berwick Witch Trials of 1590. It was published a few years before Macbeth was first performed in front of King James who was obsessively interested in witchcraft. The witches involved were said to have conducted rituals with the same mannerisms as the three witches here. The witches in the trial confessed to using witchcraft to raise a tempest and sabotage the ship King James and his Queen were on during their return trip from Denmark. One ship sailing with King James' fleet sank in the storm.

WITCH 2

I'll give you a wind.

WITCH 1

You're kind.

WITCH 3

And I another.

WITCH 1

*I myself have all the others,
And the ports to which they blow,
From all directions that they know
Upon the sailor's chart.
I will drain him dry as hay,
He will not sleep night or day.
With drooping lids upon his eyes,
He'll live but barely be alive.
Through weary weeks, nine times nine,
He shall weaken, starve and pine.
Though his ship will not be lost,
It shall e'er be tempest tossed...
- Look what I have...*

WITCH 2

Show me, Show me!

WITCH 1

*Here I have a sailor's thumb,
Ripped off as homeward he did come.*

SECOND WITCH

I'll give thee a wind.

FIRST WITCH

Thou'rt kind.

THIRD WITCH

And I another.

FIRST WITCH

*I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card.
I will drain him dry as hay:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his penthouse lid;
He shall live a man forbid.
Weary se'n nights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine;
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
Look what I have.*

SECOND WITCH

Show me, show me.

FIRST WITCH

*Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wrack'd as homeward he did come.*

A VIOLENT THUNDER CRACK.

WITCH 3

*A drum, a drum!
Macbeth does come.*

THIRD WITCH

*A drum, a drum!**
Macbeth doth come.

**Note: Two senior military figures such as Macbeth and Banquo would have been accompanied by attendants and a military guard. Attendants would bang a drum to keep time as they marched onto stage. Realistically they would have been riding horses, but they could not be used on stage. Drums were also used to announce arrival of someone royal or high up and for various sound effects. As there is no mention of other personnel, thunder makes a convenient replacement for the translation.*

Note: Thunder sound effect was created by rolling a cannon ball down a metal chute.

HOLDING HANDS THEY CIRCLE THE FIRE, CHANTING TOGETHER.

Act I Scene III. A Deserted Heath.

WITCHES

*We Witch Sisters, hand in hand,
Travellers of the sea and land,
Now do go around, around.
Thrice to yours and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make it nine.
Enough! The spell is done.*

ALL

*The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! The charm's wound up.*

RAISING THEIR ARMS, THE FIRE ERUPTS FLAME AND SMOKE.

THUNDER CRACKS AGAIN. IT STARTS TO RAIN HEAVILY.

MACBETH AND BANQUO, BOTH BLOODIED, BATTERED, AND TRIUMPHANT,
RIDE ONTO THE SAME OPEN HEATH ON WAR HORSES.

AS THEY NEAR THE EDGE OF THE HEATH WHERE THERE IS A ROCKY OUTCROP
THE HORSES SPOOK AND STOP.

MACBETH

I've not seen a day like it, Banquo. Such
evil weather after such good fortune.

MACBETH

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO LOOKS UP AT THE SKY, WISHING THE JOURNEY TO BE OVER SOON, TO
BE OUT OF THE RAIN AND CELEBRATING.

BANQUO

How much farther to Forres, Macbeth?

BANQUO

How far is't call'd to Forres?*

*Note: Forres is where the King's royal palace is located.

BANQUO THEN NOTICES THE WITCHES AND PULLS HIS RELUCTANT HORSE
OVER TO THEM. THE HORSE REACTS WITH FEAR.

BANQUO (CON'T)

Whoa. (*calming his horse*)
What are these creatures? So withered, and
wild of attire. Like beings not of this earth,
though apparently on it.

BANQUO

What are these
So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't!

MACBETH JOINS BANQUO.

THE WITCHES RAISE THEIR ARMS AND THE RAIN MAGICALLY CLEARS.

BANQUO (CON'T)

(*to witches*) Are you alive? Or are you
spirits men may question?

BANQUO

Live you? or are you aught
That man may question?

THE WITCHES LOOK UP AT BANQUO AND EACH PUT A GNARLED FINGER TO THEIR SHRIVELLED LIPS. IT IS NOT BANQUO THEY WISH TO TALK TO.

BANQUO (CON'T)

They seem to understand me, look, they put their craggy fingers to their shrivelled lips.

BANQUO

You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips.

BANQUO EXAMINES THEM, CONFUSED.

BANQUO (CON'T)

You look like women, yet your beards suggest otherwise.

BANQUO

You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

MACBETH

Speak, if you can. Who are you?

MACBETH

Speak, if you can. What are you?*

THE WITCHES TURN THEIR GAZE TO MACBETH.

**Note: Now that Macbeth has spoken with them they can reply to him. It was believed supernatural beings could only speak if they had been spoken to first. The ghost of Hamlet's father could not speak to Hamlet until he had spoken first to the ghost. See Hamlet Translated, also by SJ Hills.*

WITCH 1

All praise, Macbeth!
Praise be to you, Lord of Glamis!

FIRST WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

MACBETH AND BANQUO LOOK AT EACH OTHER, SURPRISED THE WITCH KNEW HIS NAME AND TITLE.

WITCH 2

All praise, Macbeth!
Praise be to you, Lord of Cawdor!

SECOND WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

WITCH 3

All praise, Macbeth!
(*she points to Macbeth*) Who shall be King!

THIRD WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be King hereafter!

BANQUO

Good sir, why so startled? Are you afraid to hear good things?

BANQUO

Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair?

Note: Macbeth is taken aback by the prophecy. Banquo is not so taken in by the Witches, it all sounds too far-fetched. Macbeth's shock may also have been because he had been plotting before, which may have originally been explored in more detail in the full length version of Macbeth of which no known copy exists.

BANQUO IS A LITTLE ANNOYED THEY TALK WITH MACBETH BUT NOT HIM.

BANQUO (CON'T)
(to Witches) In the name of God, are you spirits, or as mortal as your appearance suggests? You greet my noble friend with his noble title, then predict hope of further titles, one of them so great he is lost in bewilderment. Yet to me you say nothing.

BANQUO
(to witches) I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal. To me you speak not.

THE WITCHES TURN TO BANQUO BUT SAY NOTHING.

BANQUO (CON'T)
If you truly can look into the seeds of time,
and say which seed will grow, and which
will not, then tell me my fortune. I ask for
no kindness, nor do I fear your words.

BANQUO
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favors nor your hate.

THE WITCHES FINALLY ANSWER BANQUO.

WITCH 1
Praise!

WITCH 2
Praise!

WITCH 3
Praise!

WITCH 1
Lesser than Macbeth you will be... And yet,
greater.

WITCH 2
Not so happy... And yet, much happier.

WITCH 3
You will sire kings, though you'll not be
one. So all praise Macbeth and Banquo!

WITCH 1
Banquo and Macbeth, all praise!

FIRST WITCH
Hail!

SECOND WITCH
Hail!

THIRD WITCH
Hail!

FIRST WITCH
Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

SECOND WITCH
Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH
Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

FIRST WITCH
Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

Note: The witches are vague with their answers to Banquo, unlike with Macbeth. It was falsely believed at the time that the royal house of Stuart, which included James, who the play was written and first performed for, began with Banquo's son, Fleance.

THE WITCHES TURN AND BEGIN TO WALK AWAY.

MACBETH MAKES AFTER THEM, CALLING AFTER THEM.

MACBETH

Wait, you've not explained yourselves! Tell me more! I am Lord of Glamis by my father's death, but how of Cawdor? The Lord of Cawdor lives a healthy, prosperous life. And to be King is even more preposterous than the title of Cawdor! Tell me how you came by such knowledge, and why, upon this God-forsaken heath, you stop us with such prophetic words?

MACBETH

Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more. By Sinel's* death I know I am Thane of Glamis; But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives, A prosperous gentleman; and to be King Stands not within the prospect of belief, No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence You owe this strange intelligence, or why Upon this blasted heath you stop our way With such prophetic greeting?

**Note: Shakespeare took the name 'Sinel' from Holinshed's Chronicles, which was not historically accurate. The real Macbeth, born in 1005, had a father named Findlaech, who was the ruler of Moray in Northern Scotland.*

A SUDDEN THICK MIST ROLLS OVER THE CACKLING WITCHES, OBSCURING THEM FROM VIEW. THE WIND GETS LOUDER AS THE WITCHES VANISH, SUCKING THE MIST WITH THEM INTO A VACUUM.

MACBETH (CON'T)

Wait! Speak, I order you!

MACBETH

Speak, I charge you.

THE MIST CLEARS TO REVEAL THE WITCHES HAVE VANISHED.

MACBETH RIDES OVER TO EXAMINE A ROCK FORMATION TOWARDS WHICH THE MIST HAD HEADED. THERE IS NO SIGN OF THE WITCHES.

BANQUO

It seems the earth has bubbles like water does, and these are some of them. Where did they vanish to?

MACBETH

Into the air, Banquo. They seemed solid, but melted like breath in the wind. If only they'd stayed longer.

BANQUO

Were they really there? Or have we eaten a poisonous root and lost our minds?

BANQUO

The earth hath bubbles as the water has, And these are of them. Whither are they vanish'd?

MACBETH

Into the air, and what seem'd corporal melted As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!

BANQUO

Were such things here as we do speak about? Or have we eaten on the insane root* That takes the reason prisoner?

**Note: Insane root - a root believed in medieval times to cause madness in those eating it and usually identified with either henbane or hemlock.*

MACBETH RIDES SLOWLY BACK TOWARDS BANQUO, DEEP IN THOUGHT, HE HAS TAKEN THE WITCHES PROPHECY FAR MORE SERIOUSLY THAN BANQUO.

MACBETH
Your children will be kings...

BANQUO
...you will be King...

MACBETH
And Lord of Cawdor too, didn't they say?

BANQUO
The self-same words they used.

MACBETH
Your children shall be kings.

BANQUO
You shall be King.

MACBETH
And Thane of Cawdor too. Went it not so?

BANQUO
To the self same tune and words.

HORSES APPROACH FROM A DISTANCE. BANQUO TURNS.

BANQUO
Who's this?

BANQUO
Who's here?

MACBETH REACHES FOR HIS SWORD BEFORE RELAXING AS HE RECOGNISES LORD ROSS AND LORD ANGUS APPROACHING. THEY RIDE UP AND STOP.

ROSS NODS IN GREETING TO EACH MAN THEN ADDRESSES MACBETH DIRECTLY.

LORD ROSS
We come from a happy king, Macbeth, at the news of your success.

ROSS
The King hath happily received, Macbeth, The news of thy success;

MACBETH NODS HAPPILY AT THE WORDS.

LORD ROSS (CON'T)
When he heard of your heroic deeds in the fight against the rebels, he was too overcome to sing the praises you deserved, and then overcome with so many praises, words failed him.

ROSS
and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his. Silenced with that,

MACBETH REACTS WITH SATISFACTION, LOOKING TOWARDS BANQUO.

LORD ROSS (CON'T)
Reviewing the rest of the day's conflict, the king then finds you among the staunch Norwegian lines inflicting carnage all round with no fear for your own life,.

ROSS
In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks,
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death.

AGAIN, MACBETH LOOKS PLEASED.

BANQUO IS ANXIOUS TO HEAR OF HIS PRAISES.

LORD ROSS (CON'T)

As thick as hail report after report came
raining down on him, each one singing
your praises in defence of his kingdom.

ANGUS

We were sent to convey thanks from our
royal master, and to bring you before him
in order for him to reward you personally.

ROSS

As thick as hail
Came post with post, and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defense,
And pour'd them down before him.

ANGUS

We are sent
To give thee, from our royal master, thanks;
Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.

ROSS TURNS TO A SADDLE BAG TO RETRIEVE SOMETHING.

LORD ROSS

And as proof of a greater honour to come,
he ordered we address you...

ROSS

And for an earnest of a greater honor,
He bade me, from him, call thee...

ROSS HOLDS UP THE SEAL OF CAWDOR, OFFERING IT TO MACBETH.

LORD ROSS (CON'T)

...'Lord of Cawdor'! To which I add; God
save you, most noble Lord, for the title is
deservedly yours.

ROSS

...Thane of Cawdor.
In which addition, hail, most worthy Thane,
For it is thine.

MACBETH TAKES THE SEAL FROM ROSS, STUDYING IT THOUGHTFULLY.

BANQUO LOOKS VISIBLY SHOCKED.

BANQUO

(*shocked*) What? Did those devils speak the
truth?

BANQUO

What, can the devil speak true?

MACBETH

But the Lord of Cawdor lives. Why do you
address me with a borrowed title?

MACBETH

The Thane of Cawdor lives. Why do you dress me
In borrow'd robes?

ANGUS

The previous Lord lives, but under sentence
of death hangs that life which he will soon
deservedly lose.

ANGUS

Who was the Thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgement bears that life
Which he deserves to lose.

TAKEN ABACK, MACBETH LOOKS TO ANGUS FOR AN EXPLANATION.

ANGUS (CON'T)

Whether he was siding with the Vikings, or
secretly aiding that vile rebel,
McDonwald...

ANGUS

Whether he was combined
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel -

ANGUS SPITS IN DISGUST AT THE NAME

ANGUS (CON'T)
...or attempting to overthrow his country
with both, I know not. But high treason,
proven and confessed, has sealed his fate.

MACBETH
(*thinking aloud*) Lord of Glamis and now
Cawdor, with the greatest title to follow!
(*to Ross & Angus*) I thank you for your
trouble, gentlemen.

ANGUS
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labor'd in his country's wrack, I know not;
But treasons capital, confess'd and proved,
Have overthrown him.

MACBETH
(*aside*) Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor!
The greatest is behind.
(*to Ross and Angus*) Thanks for your pains.

ROSS AND ANGUS TURN THEIR HORSES TO LEAD OFF.

MACBETH (CON'T)
(*aside to Banquo*) Don't you hope your
children will be kings, Banquo, after those
creatures who promised it to you promised
the title 'Lord of Cawdor' to me?

BANQUO
(*aside to Macbeth*) And that same promise
may lead you to the crown to sit alongside
the title of Cawdor. But I'm uneasy. The
disciples of darkness often lead us to harm
by tempting us with tales of fortune and
offers of petty rewards, before betraying us
with their evil consequences.
(*to Ross and Angus*) Friends, a word if I
may.

MACBETH
(*aside to Banquo*) Do you not hope your children
shall be kings,
When those that gave the Thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?

BANQUO
(*aside to Macbeth*) That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange;
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence —
(*to Ross and Angus*) Cousins, a word, I pray you.

BANQUO HEADS TO ROSS AND ANGUS.

MACBETH REMAINS, DEEP IN THOUGHT.

Note: The speech which follows is Macbeth's first soliloquy. Speaking his thoughts aloud, only he and the audience can hear them.

A soliloquy differs from a monologue or an aside. A monologue is a long speech spoken by only one person. An aside is a short thought or an actor speaking briefly to himself. A soliloquy is a longer speech, with the character speaking his thoughts only to the audience and himself. Unlike a monologue other characters on stage do not hear or react in any way to the words. Only the speaker of the soliloquy and the audience hear the words, which are usually the inner struggles of the speaker's mind.

The following soliloquy is interrupted by interactions of others, but to them it seems that Macbeth is just deep in thought, overwhelmed by the happenings of the day.

MACBETH

(deep in thought) Two predictions have come true, as if in joyful prelude to the greatest reward of all; the royal throne!

(aloud) I thank you, gentlemen.

(aside) Is this supernatural intervention good or bad though? If bad, why did it give notice of success to come, starting with an accurate prediction? I am Lord of Cawdor. If good, why does my hair stand on end and my heart pound in my ribs with dread at the thought of it.

MACBETH

(aside) Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme! — I thank you, gentlemen.

(aside) This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart* knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature?

MACBETH SHUDDERS AT HIS THOUGHTS.

**Note: 'Seated heart' means heart at rest, one not being exerted. Seated also means 'established', a part usually in tune with the rest of the body. In this case it is quite obviously not. Clever punning.*

MACBETH (CON'T)

(aside) My fears are no more than horrible figments of my wild imagination: but the thought of murder, though still a fantasy, so shakes me to the core it stifles my reasoning. I no longer know what is real and what is not.

MACBETH

Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

BANQUO AND THE OTHERS TURN TO WAIT FOR MACBETH AND SEE HE IS DEEP IN THOUGHT. BANQUO KNOWS WHY, AND TRIES TO MAKE LIGHT OF IT.

BANQUO

See how lost our partner is in his thoughts.

BANQUO

Look, how our partner's* rapt.

**Note: Banquo says "our partner" rather than using Macbeth's name. Banquo fears the glory is all going to Macbeth, he feels he earned an equal share.*

MACBETH

(still in thought) Well, if fate will have me as king, then let fate crown me without my intervention.

MACBETH

(aside) If chance will have me king, why, chance
may crown me
Without my stir.

BANQUO AND THE OTHERS ARE STILL WAITING FOR MACBETH.

BANQUO
(to Ross and Angus) New honours
overwhelm him, like new clothes they'll
take a while for him to be comfortable with.

MACBETH
(in thought) Even so, time still goes on
come what may,
There's an end to even the roughest day.

BANQUO
New honors come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their
mould
But with the aid of use.

MACBETH
(aside) Come what come may,
Time and the hour* runs through the roughest
day.

**Note: Because 'the hour' is inserted here, it could also mean there will be a favourable window of opportunity to do a horrible deed. Like the one he had just decided he wouldn't do – kill the king. He is wavering.*

Macbeth finishes his soliloquy with a rhyming couplet.

BANQUO
Noble Macbeth, we await your company.

BANQUO
Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

BANQUO'S WORDS WAKEN MACBETH FROM HIS DAYDREAMING.

SHAKING HIS HEAD HE STEERS HIS MOUNT TO JOIN THE OTHERS.

MACBETH
Forgive me. My mind was elsewhere, I was
forgetting myself. But rest assured, kind
gentlemen, your efforts are noted on a fresh
page in my memory where I cannot forget
them. Let us ride to the King.

MACBETH
Give me your favor; my dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are register'd where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.

MACBETH TURNS TO SPEAK TO BANQUO IN CONFIDENCE.

MACBETH (CON'T)
(to Banquo only) Think about our chance
meeting earlier, Banquo. When we've had
time to weigh up the implications, we need
to share our thoughts on the matter.

BANQUO
Gladly.

MACBETH
Until then – keep it to yourself.
(shouted to all) Come, friends.

MACBETH
Think upon what hath chanced, and at more time,
The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

BANQUO
Very gladly.

MACBETH
Till then, enough. Come, friends.

MACBETH GALLOPS AHEAD, THE OTHERS FOLLOW BEHIND.



ACT I SCENE IV

THE KING'S PALACE AT FORRES.

KING DUNCAN IS HOLDING COURT WITH HIS LORDS IN THE GREAT HALL
HE IS A LIKABLE RULER. THE KING IS IN JUBILANT MOOD.

MALCOLM, ELDEST SON OF KING DUNCAN, ENTERS THE HALL.

KING DUNCAN

Ah, Malcolm! Has Cawdor been executed? Have the officers overseeing it returned yet?

PRINCE MALCOLM

They are not yet back, father, but I have spoken with one who witnessed his death. He reported that Cawdor openly confessed his treason, before begging the pardon of your highness and announcing his deep repentance. He was more honourable leaving his life than he was in living it. He died as if he'd rehearsed his death scene, throwing away the dearest thing he owned as if it were a mere trifle.

DUNCAN

Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not Those in commission yet return'd?

MALCOLM

My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
Implored your highness' pardon, and set forth
A deep repentance. Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle.*

**Note: Another veiled reference to the Gunpowder Plot which is explored later in the 'Porter Scene' (Act 2, Scene 3). Guy Fawkes was caught red-handed in a Catholic plot to blow up Parliament and the king. He was tortured and sentenced to a very cruel public death. Rather than endure a slow public death he jumped off the scaffold, killing himself, 'throwing away the dearest thing...'*

KING DUNCAN

There's no telling the make up of a man's mind from his appearance. He was once a gentleman in whom I had absolute trust...

DUNCAN

There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face:
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust...

ROSS, ANGUS, MACBETH, AND BANQUO ENTER THE HALL INTERRUPTING
THE KING WHO JOYOUSLY HOLDS OUT HIS OPEN ARMS AND STEPS
TOWARDS MACBETH, EMBRACING HIM IN AN UN-KINGLY MANNER.

Note the timing of Macbeth's arrival. The King is lamenting the betrayal of a man he trusted, then greets Macbeth lovingly – who is a much bigger threat.